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Department for  
Work and Pensions:  
Secretary of State  
Report on Disability Equality

**DWP**

Department for  
Work and Pensions

Report on Disability Equality  
Secretary of State  
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## Foreword by the Secretary of State

When I first met the current chair of Equality 2025, Rowen Jade, she made clear to me what her priorities were. She made clear that she didn't want society to patronise her. She didn't want anyone to have low expectations of her. She just wanted society to make sure she could get up in the morning and get to work, as she had ever since she left education.

The point she made was that it is not her disability that is the issue. Her problem is society's discrimination against her. Britain has done more to tackle that discrimination than many. The Disability Discrimination Act leads the world. Over the last ten years, the employment rate of disabled people has increased from around 39% to over 48%.

But we are still a long way from our goal of equality for disabled people by 2025. We need to take the next step. And the next step for me is about power. I believe in empowering people so they can have control over their lives.

We have taken a number of radical steps to achieve this goal, not least in our welfare to work policies. Employment is now seen as a road to equality. We are changing our policies to reflect the fact that equality has to come from equal opportunities to work and participate:

- by introducing the Employment and Support Allowance we are changing the way we help disabled people by actively supporting work as a route out of inequality;
- the new Work Capability Assessment will assess what disabled people can do and not what they cannot;
- the support group will be given additional money to reflect their greater needs;
- everyone will now be able to take part in tailored programmes of training and advice through Pathways to Work; and
- we are doubling the budget for Access to Work, improving in-work support to help employers widen opportunities for disabled people.

In addition, to put power in the hands of those who need it, we will give disabled people greater freedom over the support the state gives to manage their conditions. Our proposals around the right to control, through Individual Budgets, will give the person the freedom to create their own package of care and support, so they are in control of their own lives.

Equality for disabled people will mean the opportunity to make decisions over work, training and skills in a genuine meritocracy. Our responsibility is to ensure that the appropriate support, as well as the appropriate incentives, are put in place to ensure that disabled people can achieve this.

Our welfare reforms are a major part of the steps we must take and must be allied with equal pressure on employers and service providers to remove discrimination from their decisions of who to employ and how to provide their services.

This report is a reflection of how far we have come, but comes with no illusions as to how far we must continue to progress if we are to achieve our goal of equality by 2025.

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

James Purnell  
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions



## Executive Summary

1. In line with the Department's commitments under the Disability Equality Duty, this report outlines the progress towards disability equality made by public authorities in policy sectors led by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. It also sets out proposals for the coordination of action by public authorities operating in those sectors so as to bring about further progress towards disability equality.
2. The report illustrates that whilst good progress towards disability equality has been made in a number of the Secretary of State's policy sectors, action needs to be taken to ensure further progress.

## Chapter One: Employment

### Progress towards disability equality

3. Significant progress towards disability equality has been made in the employment sector. The employment rate of disabled people has increased by nine percentage points since 1998, **from 39 per cent in 1998 to 48 per cent in 2008**<sup>1</sup> and the gap between that and the overall GB rate has narrowed from 35 per cent to 26 per cent over that period.
4. The proportion of disabled people achieving sustained employment has also increased in recent years. Upon leaving benefit, **the proportion of disabled people who reach a full 6 months off out-of-work benefits has increased from 75 per cent in 2000 to 80 per cent in 2006**<sup>2</sup>.
5. However, there remains a wide variation in employment rates for different impairment types. In particular, the employment rate of people with learning difficulties remains low at **15 to 25 per cent** as does the employment rate of people with mental health problems (**10 to 16 per cent**)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Labour Force Survey 2008, Quarter 2; values have a statistical sampling error of +/- one percentage point.

<sup>2</sup> Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study. Data is for GB.

<sup>3</sup> Labour Force Survey 2008, Quarter 2; owing to statistical sampling error, range values are given. Most health conditions have a sampling error of around plus or minus 5 percentage points but where sample numbers are low the sampling error can be much higher.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – mental health and employment

The Department is developing a **National Strategy for Mental Health and Employment**, to ensure a coordinated response across government to the challenges faced by people of working age with mental health conditions and to improve their employment chances. The strategy will focus on **bringing employment and health services closer together**, supporting employers and healthcare professionals and tackling issues such as stigma and discrimination.

6. In recent years, there have been several public reports that have identified the need for improvements to specialist disability employment provision. These have included reports from the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, the National Audit Office and the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. Main areas identified for improvement have included the need to:

- **rationalise** our specialist disability employment programmes to provide a more flexible modular approach;
- **drive up** quality standards; and
- **focus** more on progression to unsupported employment.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – new specialist disability employment provision and Access to Work

The Department received a very positive response to its consultation exercise on proposals on Access to Work and improving specialist disability provision. Following this, in July it announced a doubling of the Access to Work budget, as well as a **new supported employment service (with some additional funding) for those with specific and high support needs**<sup>4</sup>.

## Chapter Two: Child Poverty

### Progress towards disability equality

7. Considerable progress has been made towards tackling child poverty. Since 1998/99, **600,000 children** have been lifted out of poverty (including **200,000 in families with at least one disabled member**) and the number of children living in poverty stands at 2.9 million<sup>5</sup>. Reforms to the tax and benefits system have been crucial: had the Government done

<sup>4</sup> DWP Green Paper (July 2008), 'No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility'.

<sup>5</sup> 2006/07 Households Below Average Income data. Data is for the UK.

nothing other than simply uprate the 1997 tax and benefits system, there might have been 1.9 million more children in poverty than there are today.

8. However, as the table below shows, disabled children, and children in families with one or more disabled adults, still face a higher risk of poverty than other children.

### The risk of living in relative low income before housing costs (per cent)

Prevalence of disability	1998/99 GB	2006/07 UK	Direction since 1998/99
No disabled adult, no disabled child	23	20	↓
No disabled adult, at least one disabled child	29	25	↓
At least one disabled adult, no disabled child	34	33	↓
Disabled adult and disabled child	42	31	↓
All children	26	22	↓

#### ➤ Proposal for further progress – child poverty

Going forwards, the Government will seek to **introduce legislation to enable it to achieve its commitment to tackle child poverty by 2020**. This is ground-breaking, and will ensure there is a real focus on ending child poverty for the long-term. To support this, the Government will be working with stakeholders to develop a strategy for the next decade. In preparation, the Government will undertake further research and establish new pilots and approaches that will inform and shape future policy. The Government **is investing £125m over 2008-2011 in a series of child poverty pilots to develop innovative solutions to tackle child poverty**. A number of these – for example, the Local Authority Innovation Fund – should help to identify approaches that are effective in lifting disabled children, or those with disabled parents, out of poverty.

## Chapter Three: Paying Benefits

### Progress towards disability equality

9. The Department pays a number of benefits to disabled people in Great Britain, either to contribute towards extra costs or to replace lost income:

- **Disability Living Allowance** is a tax-free, non-contributory benefit. It is paid to disabled children and adults with physical or mental impairments who claim before the age of 65 and need help with personal care or have walking difficulties.
- **Attendance Allowance** is a tax-free, non-contributory benefit. It is paid to disabled people who claim over the age of 65 with physical or mental impairments who need help with personal care.
- **Carer's Allowance** is a taxable benefit paid to people not in full-time work who provide at least 35 hours care a week for someone receiving a qualifying benefit. This is usually the highest or middle rate of Disability Living Allowance for personal care or Attendance Allowance.

10. The amount of financial support provided by the Department in Great Britain through these benefits has significantly increased in recent years and is forecast to continue to do so.

11. The Department also pays **Incapacity Benefit** to people who are incapable of work and who either have paid or been credited with sufficient national insurance contributions, or became incapable of work in youth. The number of people claiming incapacity benefits rose significantly in the 1980s and early 1990s, though it has been falling consistently since 2003 and is forecast to continue to do so.

12. The Department believes that work is good for people: good for individuals of all ages, for families and for society as a whole. That is why the Department is aiming to reduce the numbers on incapacity benefits by 1 million people through the new Employment and Support Allowance and Pathways to Work programme.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Employment and Support Allowance

- The new Employment and Support Allowance includes the robust new Work Capability Assessment, and **focuses on what people can do, not what they can't**. It is the longer term intention to move all existing recipients of incapacity benefits to the Employment and Support Allowance by 2013. As part of this process these customers will have the new Work Capability Assessment applied to them.
- Most people receiving Employment and Support Allowance are required to prepare for work and should expect to be on the benefit only for a temporary period. In support of this **the Pathways to Work Programme is available to everyone receiving incapacity benefits in Great Britain**. The most severely disabled are not required to undertake any work-related activity, but can volunteer to do so if they wish.
- The poorest and most severely disabled are **nearly £16 a week better off** on the Employment and Support Allowance than on incapacity benefits. They have a guaranteed minimum income of £102.10 compared to £86.35 under the previous system.

### Customer service

13. The Department's delivery agencies are committed to delivering a good service to all their customers, including making adjustments for those who face particular barriers in accessing services.

### Jobcentre Plus

14. Jobcentre Plus has undertaken a number of initiatives to make the benefit claiming process easier and more flexible for customers, to ensure they have all the support they are entitled to. This includes alternative forms of access for customers who are unable to use telephones.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – retrieving the requirements of customers

The Department is proposing the development of a strategic IT solution which is capable of capturing an individual's requirements, and which can then routinely be retrieved and action taken as appropriate.

## The Pension, Disability and Carers Service

15. The merger of The Pension Service and the Disability and Carers Service will allow the new agency to **deliver products and services designed around its customers' needs**. Over 50 per cent of the Disability and Carers Service's customers are over pension age and predictions suggest that this figure will increase over time. The merger of The Pension Service and Disability and Carer's Service will, therefore, create a more cohesive service for all customers, including children and those of working age, allowing the agency to build on its working relationship with Jobcentre Plus.

16. The Pension, Disability and Carers Service adjust their processes according to the **different needs of their customers, including disabled people**. They are able to handle claims and changes of circumstances over the telephone. Where a telephone call is not the best or most appropriate way to contact them, their Local Service provides face-to-face help and advice to customers in their homes or by appointment in designated community locations.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Local Service

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service plans to **continue expanding the reach of Local Service through extending local partnership-working, in particular with Local Authorities, health services and key local voluntary agencies**. This is to improve customer choice of access to a wider range of services and thereby increase the independence and well-being for disabled people and other vulnerable members of society.

17. The Disability Living Allowance/Attendance Allowance helpline answered over 3.8 million calls between 1 November 2007 and 31 October 2008. The helpline uses both textphones and Typetalk as media through which to communicate with deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired customers.

## Chapter Four: Later Life

### Progress towards disability equality

18. Pensioner households with at least one disabled adult are slightly less likely to be in relative poverty than those where no-one is disabled. In 2006/07 (after housing costs were taken into account) **18 per cent of pensioners in families containing a disabled adult were in households with incomes below 60 per cent of median income**, compared to 20 per cent of pensioners in families with no disabled adults<sup>6</sup>.

19. There is evidence that **disability benefits are effective at reducing the risk of poverty for pensioners**. For example, the risk of poverty for pensioners in families containing disabled adults in receipt of disability benefits (including Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance) is around half that for pensioners in families which do not contain a disabled adult. In 2006/07, 9 per cent of pensioners in families containing one or more disabled adult in receipt of disability benefits were in relative poverty compared to 20 per cent of pensioners in families that do not contain a disabled adult.

20. However, around 80 per cent of pensioners living in low income households with disabled adults are in families not in receipt of any disability benefits. For these pensioners the risk of poverty is 24 per cent, which is higher than the 20 per cent risk of poverty for pensioners in families with no disabled adult present<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> 2006/07 Households Below Average Income data. Data is for the UK. Disabled people can face additional costs related to their health condition or disability, and so may be eligible for extra benefits raising their income above the 60 per cent median income threshold. As this threshold is the same for both disabled and non-disabled pensioners, it does not factor in the additional costs associated with disability, whilst the measure of income includes income provided to help meet these additional costs. Thus, the position in the income distribution of disabled individuals may be upwardly biased.

<sup>7</sup> 2006/07 Households Below Average Income data. Data is for the UK.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Better targeting of benefits

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service is working with Help the Aged and Local Authorities to **increase take-up of benefits**, including Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, by developing a local targeting regime using customer data. This will target those people who have not claimed all the benefits to which they may be entitled and will support general work on targeting such people. Information on the numbers in receipt of disability benefits is already included in the targeting regime which will **help to ensure that disabled people receive all the financial support to which they are entitled**.

## Chapter Five: Disability Equality

### Progress towards disability equality

21. The Department for Work and Pensions is the lead department for disability equality. The Minister for Disabled People and the Office for Disability Issues are based in the Department. The Office for Disability Issues works across government to deliver equality for disabled people by:

- promoting joined-up thinking to secure improvements in policy-making and service delivery which will benefit disabled people;
- involving disabled people and their expertise to shape what the Office does and encouraging others to do the same;
- being a source of evidence and expertise on disability within government;
- promoting human rights and ensuring effective disability equality legislation; and
- communicating the Government's programme on disability.

22. The Office for Disability Issues is consulting publicly and working with government departments and Local Authorities to give disabled people more control over the support they receive from the State.

23. The Department for Work and Pensions Green Paper 'No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility' explores how disabled people might achieve better outcomes by having more control of the funds used to meet their needs. This could be through a legal right to request control of certain types of state funding as an individual budget.

24. The Office for Disability Issues has worked with the Department of Health and Communities and Local Government to pilot individual budgets for social care customers. It will use lessons from these pilots to inform its thinking on how best to deliver a right to request control of an individual budget and to improve its understanding of the risks and benefits involved.

25. The Office for Disability Issues has also asked Baroness Campbell of Surbiton to chair a working group of government officials and other stakeholders with disability expertise to consider the best, most practical way of developing this proposal.

➤ **Proposal for further progress – delivering the right to request control of an individual budget**

- The Office for Disability Issues will support the working group in developing a practical approach to deliver this right to request control of an individual budget.
- As part of this, the Office for Disability Issues will analyse the results of the individual budgets pilots and apply lessons from them to the development of the proposed right.

## Chapter Six: Health And Safety

### Progress towards disability equality

26. The Health and Safety Executive worked jointly with the former Disability Rights Commission in 2007 to develop and publish principles and guidance on disability and risk management. This was given a high profile launch by the Chairs of both organisations and was warmly welcomed by disabled people. Available at the Health and Safety Executive website [www.hse.gov.uk/disability/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/disability/) or as an Easy Read version, it promotes good practice in disability equality at work and in health and safety risk assessment. It provides:

- an introduction to disability discrimination and health and safety law;
- advice for people doing health and safety risk assessments;
- advice for disabled people; and
- links to further sources of information, including grants.

27. The Health and Safety Executive currently collects no data on health and safety and disability issues in the workplace. However, in its 2008/09 Diversity Action Plan it agreed to build and make better use of the evidence base in this area in its policies and operations. A literature review of existing research of health and safety and disability issues in the workplace is underway and is due to report by March 2009.

➤ **Proposal for further progress – Health and Safety**

The findings of the literature review the Health and Safety Executive has in hand will potentially inform policy development and inform the design of interventions that take account of the needs of disabled workers. It may also signal where further research would have value.





## Introduction

1. The Department for Work and Pensions exists to:
  - contribute towards fair, safe and fulfilling lives, free from poverty – for children, people in work and retirement, disabled people and carers;
  - reduce welfare dependency and increase economic competitiveness by helping people to work wherever they can and employers to secure the skills and employees they need; and
  - provide greater choice and personalisation and higher quality of service for customers where it is in their interests and those of the taxpayer.
  
2. In doing this the Department aims to enable people to fulfil their potential over longer, more active lives. Its focus will remain firmly on its customers, providing them with the services they need and aiming, wherever possible, to join up and simplify its services, both internally and externally with its partners.
  
3. To meet these broad aims, the Department has developed seven strategic objectives, which drive all of its activities:
  - reduce the number of children living in poverty;
  - maximise employment opportunity for all;
  - improve health and safety outcomes;
  - promote independence and well-being in later life, continuing to tackle pensioner poverty and implementing pension reform;
  - promote equality of opportunity for disabled people;
  - pay our customers the right benefits at the right time; and
  - make the Department an exemplar of effective service delivery to individuals and employers.
  
4. The Department also has lead responsibility for two of the cross-departmental Public Service Agreements, which set out the key priority outcomes for the Government:
  - maximise **employment** opportunity for all; and
  - tackle poverty and promote greater independence and well-being in **later life**.

5. In addition to the two Public Service Agreements which the Department leads on, it also contributes to a number of others which are led by other government departments:

- halve the number of children in poverty by 2010/11, on the way to eradicating **child poverty** by 2020;
- **address the disadvantage** individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief;
- increase the number of **children and young people** on the path to success;
- increase the proportion of **socially excluded adults** in settled accommodation and employment, education or training;
- make **communities** safer;
- improve the **economic performance of all English regions** and reduce the gap in economic growth rates between regions;
- improve long-term **housing** supply and affordability;
- improve the **skills** of the population, on the way to ensuring a world-class skills base by 2020; and
- ensure controlled, fair **migration** that protects the public and contributes to economic growth.

6. These are cross-government outcomes which will be met both through the Department delivering against its Departmental Strategic Objectives and through the contributions of its partners, both in Whitehall and across the private and voluntary sectors.

## Disability Equality Duty

7. The Disability Equality Duty came into force in December 2006. It requires public bodies to carry out their functions with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. This means that public bodies must consider the needs of all sectors of the society they serve, and how they make sure they are delivering services, and carrying out functions, in a way that promotes greater equality for disabled people.

8. As the lead department for disability, the Department for Work and Pensions considers the Disability Equality Duty to be an important tool in achieving progress against its strategic objective to 'promote equality of opportunity for disabled people'.

## Secretary of State Reports

9. Regulations also place a specific duty on key Secretaries of State, to publish a report that:
  - a. gives an overview of progress made by the public authorities operating in the relevant policy sector towards equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people; and
  - b. sets out the proposals for the coordination of action by public authorities operating in that sector so as to bring about further progress towards equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.
10. The first report is to be published by 1 December 2008, and subsequent reports published at three yearly intervals.
11. The purpose of these reports is to prompt strategic leadership on disability equality across key elements of the broad public sector. They involve consideration of the progress of a broad range of public authorities, including other government departments where responsibilities are shared. Also important are the identification of gaps in provision or particular trends or barriers and opportunities for public authorities to work together more effectively to deliver services.

## Report by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

12. This report is produced by James Purnell, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. It examines the policy sectors covered in the two Public Service Agreements on which the Department for Work and Pensions leads: to maximise employment opportunity for all; and to tackle poverty and promote greater independence and well-being in later life. It also covers policy sectors in the Department's Strategic Objectives on child poverty, paying benefits, disability equality, and health and safety.
13. The report shows that good progress has been made in a number of areas, particularly in the policy sector of disability employment. However, clearly there is much more to do. Each chapter outlines what steps public authorities in the various policy sectors will take to make further progress towards disability equality.
14. Disabled people have been consulted as part of producing this report, in particular through Equality 2025, an advisory body which gives disabled people a direct voice into the Government.

## Note on definitions and numbers of disabled people

15. The definitions of disability used throughout this report are dependent upon the available data and therefore vary. Some estimates such as those taken from the Family Resources Survey and the Labour Force Survey are more in line with the definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995 as amended), whereas others adopt a measure of disability based on specific eligibility criteria for benefit receipt. In each instance, this report provides clear reference to which source is being referred to.

16. The Office for Disability Issues is currently working with the Office for National Statistics, other government departments and key external stakeholders to develop a consistent definition of disability which can be used across all governmental surveys. This work involves developing a suite of questions which can identify people who are likely to have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act and will include a breakdown by impairment type. There will also be an optional question on barriers which will provide more information on the barriers faced by people with impairments and may be used to improve the provision of public services.

## Demographics

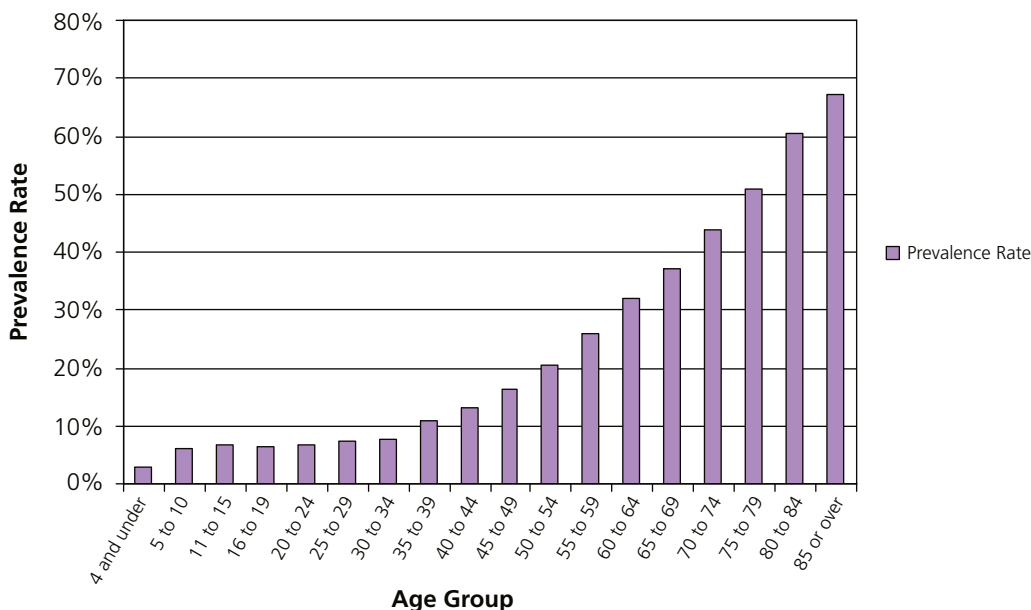
17. There are over 10 million<sup>8</sup> disabled people with rights under the Disability Discrimination Act. The prevalence of disability rises with age. Whilst this is intuitive it is important to recognise that almost half of disabled people are over State Pension age. Pension income will have an important role to play in reducing the disability poverty gap. This reinforces the need to ensure that policies aimed at pensioners are complementary with those for disabled people because they will target many of the same people.

18. Fewer than one in ten 20-year-olds are disabled, compared to around one in three people aged 60-64 years and one in two people aged 75-79 years.

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<sup>8</sup> 2006/07 Family Resources Survey. Data is for the UK.

## Disability prevalence rates by age group

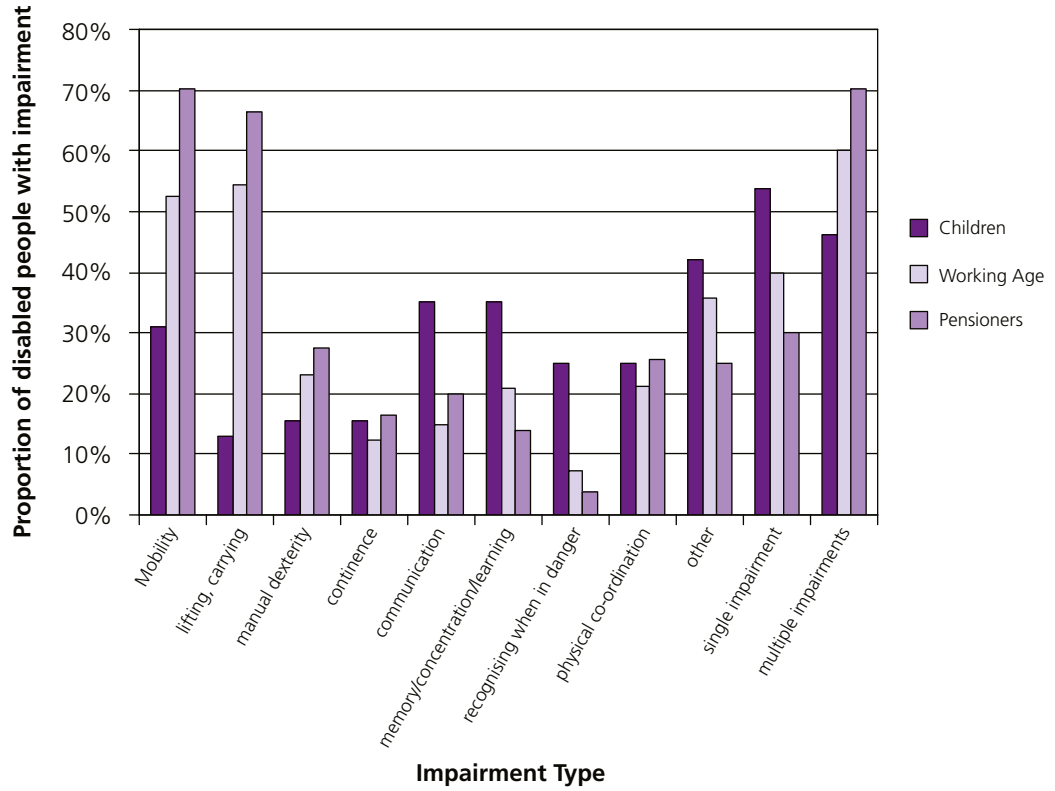


19. Highlighting the variety of impairments that disabled people have helps us to acknowledge the range of barriers they face and emphasises the fact that disabled people are not a homogenous group. Around two thirds of disabled people have multiple impairments, which may mean they experience different types of barriers in their daily lives.

20. In Britain the most common types of impairment are those associated with a difficulty in mobility or lifting and carrying<sup>9</sup>. This is not surprising as we have already seen that disabled people are more likely to be elderly. Disabled children, on the other hand, are more likely to have a mental rather than a physical impairment such as learning or communication difficulties.

<sup>9</sup> This is determined by the categories of impairment that there is information on in the Family Resources Survey 2006/07. This is a UK wide survey, but in this instance the GB data has been disaggregated.

## GB population, by age group and impairment type



Source: Family Resources Survey 2006/07.





## Chapter One: Employment

1. One of the Department's strategic objectives, also captured in a cross-government Public Service Agreement, is to **maximise employment opportunity for all**.
2. A fundamental part of achieving this objective is to increase the employment rate of groups disadvantaged in the labour market, including disabled people. Increasing the employment rate of disabled people is vital to progress on the Government's long-term aim of an employment rate equivalent to 80 per cent of the working-age population.
3. The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' (2005) highlighted employment as one of four key areas to focus on in order to deliver improved outcomes for disabled people, their families and wider society in the short, medium and long-term.

### Key Public Authorities: Employment

- Department for Work and Pensions;
- HM Treasury;
- Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills;
- Remploy;
- Disability Employment Advisory Committee;
- Learning and Skills Council; and
- Department of Health.

4. Material on labour market flexibility and awareness and enforcement of employment rights can be found in the report by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

### Advantages of employment

5. The Office for Disability Issues undertook research on disabled people's views on the advantages of employment<sup>10</sup>. The research findings showed that the vast majority of disabled people felt that work:
  - helps to keep them active (96 per cent);
  - provides financial independence (95 per cent);
  - enables them to meet other people (92 per cent); and
  - makes them feel they are contributing to society (90 per cent).

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<sup>10</sup> Williams, B. et al (2008), 'Experiences and Expectations of Disabled People. A research report for the Office for Disability Issues'. [www.officefordisability.gov.uk/research/eedp.asp](http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/research/eedp.asp)

6. Non-working disabled people also recognised these benefits of work, although levels of agreement were lower than those expressed by working disabled people. Of non-working disabled people, excluding those aged above 65 and retired:

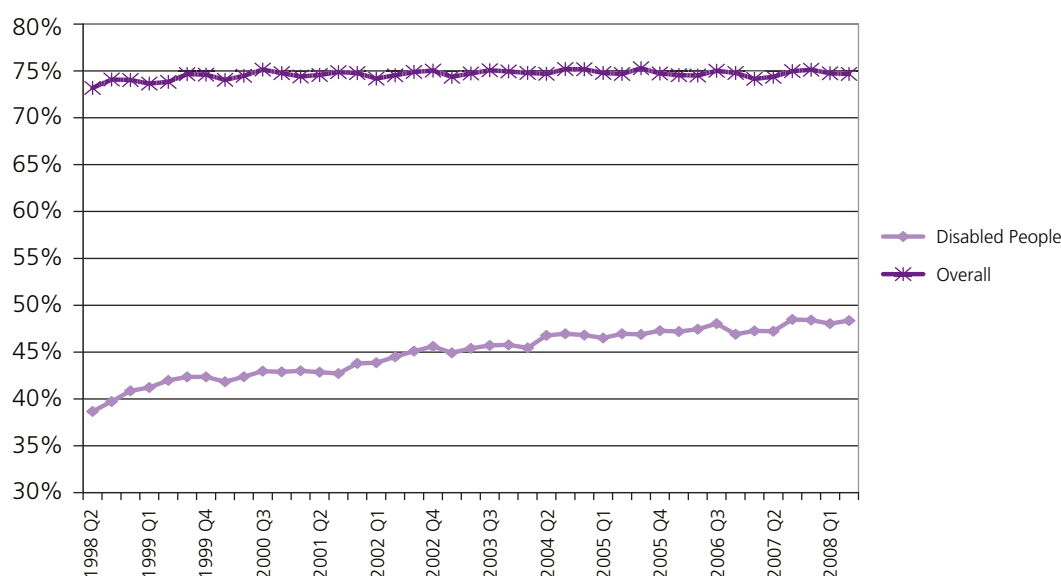
- 74 per cent agreed that work would enable them to meet other people;
- 70 per cent agreed that work would keep them active;
- 69 per cent agreed that work would give them financial independence; and
- 65 per cent agreed work would make them feel they were contributing to society.

## Progress towards disability equality

### Employment rate

7. Significant progress towards disability equality has been made in the employment sector. The employment rate of disabled people has increased by nine percentage points since 1998 **from 39 per cent in 1998 to 48 per cent in 2008**<sup>11</sup> and the gap between that and the overall Great Britain rate has narrowed from 35 per cent to 26 per cent over that period.

### Employment rate of disabled people in comparison to the overall rate



Source: Labour Force Survey 2008, Quarter 2. Data is for GB.

<sup>11</sup> Labour Force Survey 2008, Quarter 2; values have a statistical sampling error of +/- one percentage point.

## ➤ Proposals for further progress – employment rate of disabled people

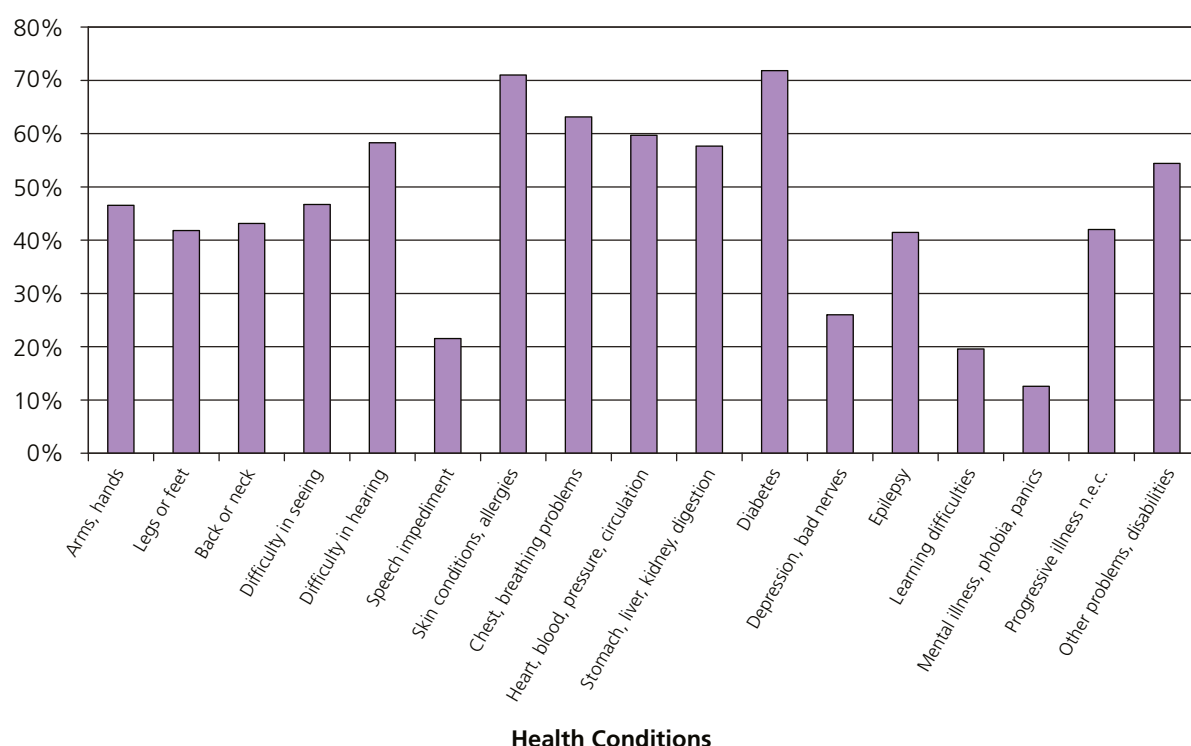
- For new customers, the Department has replaced incapacity benefits with the new Employment and Support Allowance. A new medical assessment – the Work Capability Assessment – has been introduced alongside the Employment and Support Allowance which **focuses on what people can do**, rather than what they can't. Most people receiving the new benefit will be required to prepare for work, unless they are assessed as being amongst the most severely disabled. The new benefit is supported by the help available through the national roll-out of Pathways to Work.
- An enhanced Jobseeker's Allowance regime will be the main source of work-focused support for people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. This will be delivered by Jobcentre Plus (from April 2009 in Phase 1 areas) and the Flexible New Deal (from October 2009 in Phase 1 areas), with specialists from the private, public and voluntary sectors. Key features include:
  - early support for customers with a history of claiming benefit and vulnerable groups (including disabled people);
  - Back to Work Sessions to explain rights and responsibilities and deliver information on jobsearch, training opportunities and the local labour market;
  - additional interviews targeted at customers who need extra support;
  - basic skills screening and routes to further advice, guidance and training;
  - one-on-one support from a personal adviser, including helping each customer develop a back to work action plan;
  - access to additional support from a range of partner organisations and Department for Work and Pensions contracted suppliers; and
  - after 12 months (or 6 months for those receiving early support) Flexible New Deal suppliers will deliver innovative work-focused support tailored to the needs of each customer (for a further 12 months). Suppliers will be paid by results, for helping people into sustained jobs.
- The Flexible New Deal will deliver a step change in performance, reflected both in the number of customers moving into sustained jobs and the way that every customer, no matter how great their need, will receive the appropriate level of high quality support.

- The impact assessment carried out on the Flexible New Deal suggests that it will not have a negative effect on disabled people. Indeed, the focus on individuals' barriers to employment and a range of provisions that can be tailored to address these should ensure **better outcomes for disabled people than under the current New Deal**. The effectiveness of this new approach will be thoroughly evaluated and part of the overall evaluation will look at the experiences of disabled people.

## Employment rate by impairment type

8. Although there has been an overall improvement in the employment rate of disabled people, there remains a wide variation in employment rates for different impairment types. In particular, the employment rate of people with learning difficulties remains low at **15 to 25 per cent** as does the employment rate of people with mental health problems (**10 to 16 per cent**). In contrast the number of people with diabetes who are in employment is high at **69 to 75 per cent**.

## Estimated disabled person employment rate by main health condition



Source: Labour Force Survey 2008, Quarter 2. Data is for GB.

Note: Owing to statistical sampling error, range values are given. The values represented in the chart are mid-point values of their respective ranges and should not be taken as precise estimates. Most health conditions have a sampling error of around plus or minus 5 percentage points but where sample numbers are low the sampling error can be much higher; the sampling error for speech impediments is greater than plus or minus 20 percentage points.

### ➤ **Proposals for further progress – improving the employment rate of people with mental health conditions**

- The Department will ensure that, wherever possible, the **Pathways to Work** and **Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programmes are linked up**, allowing customers to take up the full range of support available and experience their back to work and healthcare support as part of a seamless package.
- The Department is working with the Department of Health to fund an additional **employment support element** to sit within the **Improving Access to Psychological Therapies** programme. This pilot will ensure that people who access this programme have early and easy access to employment advice that reduces their risk of falling out of work and onto ill-health benefits.
- The Department knows that it is essential that people who develop a mental health condition have the help to manage it so that they are able to remain in work. To help them, the Department is developing **a National Strategy for Mental Health and Employment**. This will ensure a coordinated response across government to the challenges faced by people of working age with mental health conditions and improve their employment chances. It will focus on **bringing employment and health services closer together**, supporting employers and healthcare professionals and tackling issues such as stigma and discrimination.
- To help employers to manage and better support employees with mental health conditions to remain in or return to work, the Department intends to pilot an occupational health advice helpline targeted at smaller businesses. The Department will test take up, impact and different models of gateway to the service.
- To help improve communications between GPs and employers, the Department is currently reviewing the process for GPs issuing medical certificates ('sicknotes'). The Department wants the revised process to be more positive – moving to a 'fitnote' not 'sicknote' culture – and make it easier for GPs to provide more helpful advice to patients and their employers about fitness for work, especially for those with mental health conditions.
- The Government has committed to piloting a Fit for Work Service, as recommended in Dame Carol Black's review of the health of Britain's working age population, 'Working for a healthier tomorrow' (March 2008). The Fit for Work Service pilots will be based on case-managed, multidisciplinary support for patients in the early stages of sickness absence, with the aim of making access to work-related health support available to all.

## ➤ Proposals for further progress – improving the employment rate of people with mental health conditions (*continued*)

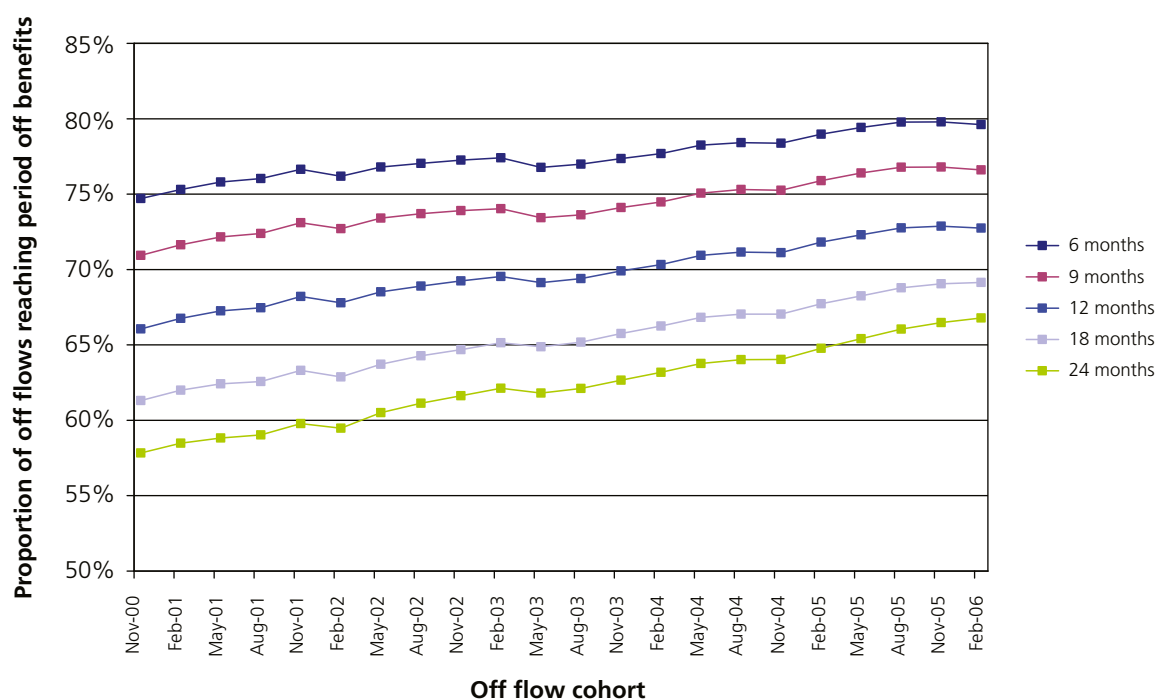
- Further announcements to help people, including those with mental health conditions, enter into or remain in work are contained in the Government's response to Dame Carol's review.

### Sustained employment

9. The proportion of disabled people achieving sustained employment has increased in recent years. Upon leaving benefit, **the proportion of disabled people who reach a full 6 months off out-of-work benefits has increased from 75 per cent in 2000 to 80 per cent in 2006.**

Although lower, the proportion of disabled people who reach a full 9, 12, 18 or 24 months off out-of-work benefits has also increased over this period: from 71 per cent to 77 per cent (9 months); from 66 per cent to 73 per cent (12 months); from 61 per cent to 69 per cent (18 months); and from 58 per cent to 67 per cent (24 months).

### Proportion of disabled people reaching 6-24 months off out-of-work benefits



Source: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study. Data is for GB.

## Education and Employment

10. There is a wide variation in the employment rates of disabled people depending on their qualification level. For those with degrees or higher the employment rate is over 70 per cent compared to around 50 per cent for people with GCSE grades A-C or equivalent and below 20 per cent for disabled people with no qualifications<sup>12</sup>.

### ➤ Proposals for further progress – integrating employment and skills

- In 'Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work' (November 2007) it was announced that Employment and Support Allowance claimants would be subject to a similar 'skills screen' regime to Jobseeker's Allowance claimants. The 'skills screen' will identify any basic literacy, numeracy or language needs. Claimants will be screened soon after their claim and, where appropriate, receive a mandatory 'skills health check' (to fully assess the skills and learning requirements needed to support a return to work) at a later point in their claim.
- However, the Department recognises that their skills needs will have to be addressed in a way that supports measures taken to overcome health problems. In many cases, these may be the critical barrier preventing claimants from returning to work.
- The Department will work alongside the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills to deliver a truly integrated employment and skills system in 2010/11. The **adult advancement and careers service will provide a range of information, advice and guidance on skills development**. It will also cover issues such as housing, debt management and childcare to help people engage with their own learning regardless of their circumstances. Access to information, advice and guidance will be through several media including online and via the telephone to support delivery of a flexible and responsive service.
- The Department is also progressing legislation to allow for the sharing and linking of skills data with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. This will lead to improvements in the measurement of sustainable employment and progression in work. As part of this work the need to disaggregate by disability is likely to be taken into account.

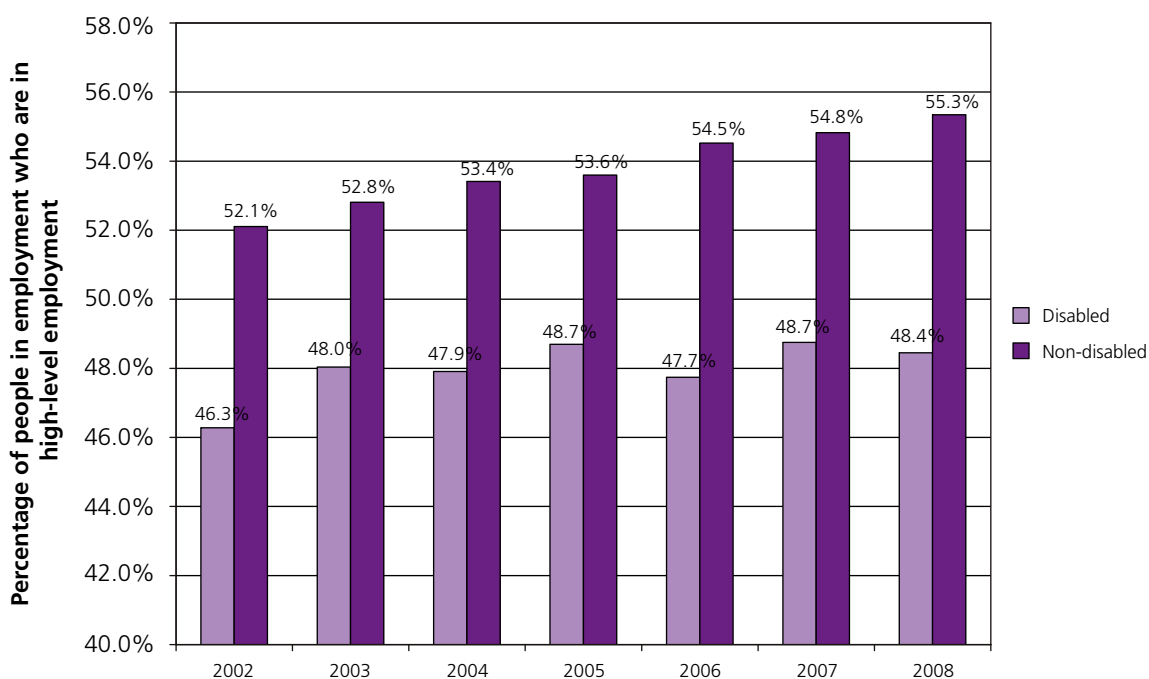
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<sup>12</sup> Labour Force Survey 2008, Quarter 2. Data is for GB.

## Employment by occupation

11. The percentage of disabled people in employment who are in high-level employment has increased slightly from 46 per cent in 2002 to 48 per cent in 2008. However, it still remains lower than the percentage of non-disabled people in high level employment which has increased from 52 per cent in 2002 to 55 per cent in 2008.

### Employment rates for those in high-level occupations



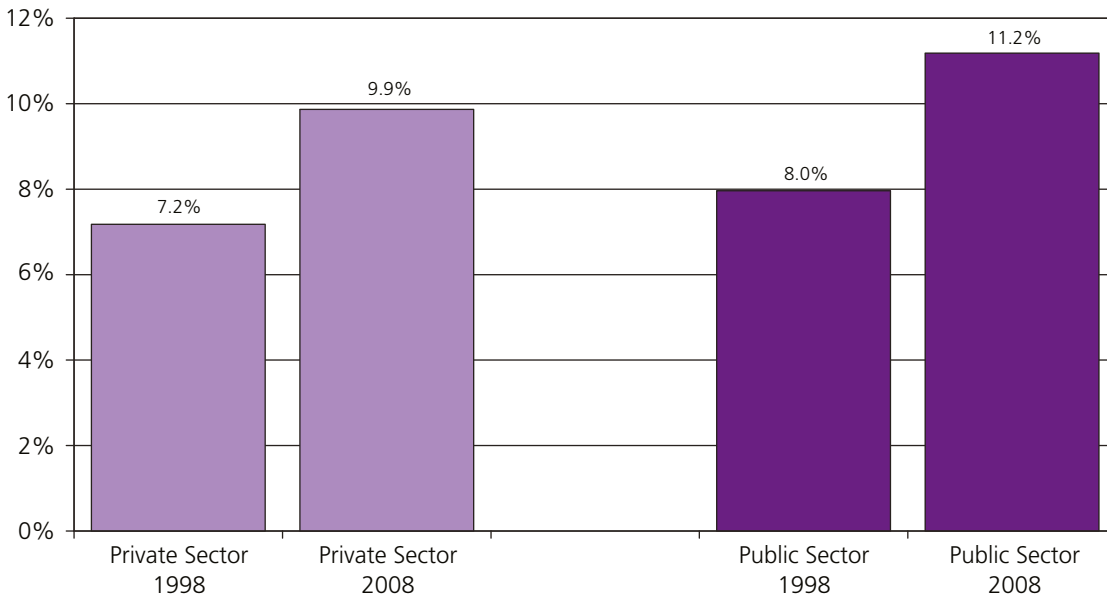
Source: Labour Force Survey. Data is for GB.

Note: High-level employment is considered to include those who report to be managers or senior officials, in professional occupations, are associate professionals or technical professionals, or work in skilled trade occupations. Respondents who report a current disability consistent with the Disability Discrimination Act are defined as disabled.

### Split by sector

12. Disabled people make up a slightly higher proportion of employees in the public sector (11 per cent) compared with the private sector (10 per cent). Employment in both sectors has increased over the past 10 years: in 1998, 8 per cent of public sector employees were disabled compared with 7 per cent of private sector employees.

## Public/private sector split of disabled people in employment



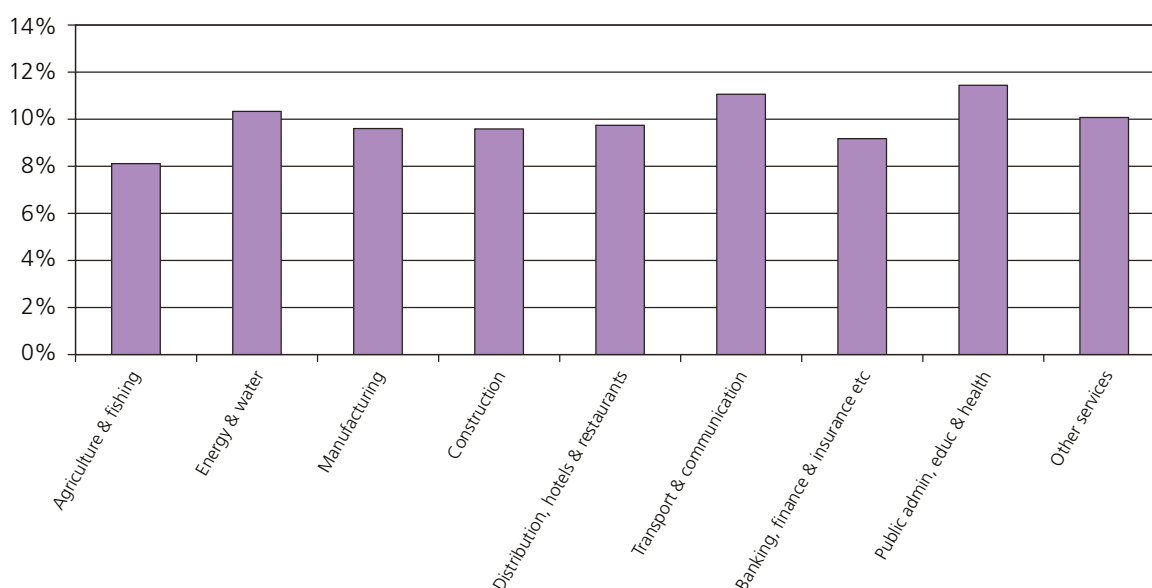
Source: Labour Force Survey 2008, Quarter 2. Data is for GB.

## Split by industry sector

13. Disabled people make up approximately 10.2 per cent of people in employment. There is relatively little variation across the main industrial sectors with the lowest being Agriculture and Fishing at 8.1 per cent and the highest being Public Administration, Education and Health at 11.4 per cent<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Approximate values quoted due to statistical sampling error. Sampling errors range from 0.6 to 2.5 percentage points.

## Disabled people as a proportion of all people in employment – by industrial sector



Source: Labour Force Survey 2008, Quarter 2. Data is for GB.

## Barriers and bridges to employment

14. Research undertaken by the Department has identified a number of barriers and bridges to work for disabled people. An evaluation of the Pathways to Work pilots involved a survey of 3,507 customers on incapacity benefits and their journey into paid work<sup>14</sup>.

15. *Barriers:* 71 per cent of customers said health was a big reason for them not being in paid work, although it was less often mentioned by those looking for work (46 per cent compared to 82 per cent). Other barriers included: a lack of confidence; others' attitude to health; caring for an adult/child; lacking skills/experience; few jobs in the area; being able to work only a limited number of hours; a belief they may not be better off financially; and difficulties with a journey to work. Barriers to staying in work were in a similar vein, including: not doing the job they wanted; work being too tiring/stressful; and needing more health support.

16. *Bridges:* The changes customers most often mentioned that made work possible were an improvement in their health conditions (those initially close to work) and in their ability to manage them (those initially far from work). Other bridges included: increased confidence; influence/

<sup>14</sup> DWP Research Report No. 456: Bailey et al (2007), 'Pathways to Work: customer experience and outcomes; Findings from a survey of new and repeat incapacity benefits customers in the first seven pilot areas'.

pressure from Jobcentre Plus; having to find work for financial reasons; finding/being recommended a suitable job; an improved availability of work; moving into a job from casual work; being able to work reduced hours/flexible working; finding supported work; and being advised to or deciding to work for their health.

## Role and performance of Jobcentre Plus

17. The role of Jobcentre Plus is important in getting disabled people back into work and achieving the increase in the employment rate of disabled people outlined above. Jobcentre Plus is committed to offering all disabled jobseekers tailored help and advice in finding and retaining work or appropriate training. It also helps and encourages employers to make such opportunities available to them.

## Employment programmes

18. Employment programmes provide job support to disabled people who face more complex barriers to getting and keeping a job, but who can work effectively with the right support. Where they meet the eligibility criteria, disabled people can access a full range of Government employment programmes.

### Employment Programmes

➤ **Pathways to Work** is aimed at improving employment outcomes for people on incapacity benefits. It does this through a series of Work Focused Interviews and a package of support including financial incentives and training programmes to increase skills, increase confidence or help to manage a health condition. The Pathways to Work pilots were introduced in October 2003 and April 2004 in seven Jobcentre Plus Districts and gradually expanded to cover 40 per cent of the country. From April 2008 Pathways became available nationwide with private and voluntary sector providers delivering the programme in 60 per cent of the country. Since 2003, Pathways to Work has helped more than 94,000 people into work. Independent evaluation has shown that Pathways increases the probability of being employed about a year and half after the initial incapacity benefits enquiry by 7.4 percentage points. The effect of Pathways was to raise the probability of employment in month 18 from roughly 28 to 35 per cent. A comprehensive evaluation is planned for Provider-led Pathways, similar to that being carried out on Jobcentre Plus Pathways.

## Employment Programmes (*continued*)

- **New Deal for Disabled People** is a voluntary programme available to people in Jobcentre Plus Pathways to Work districts on disability or health-related benefits who want to work, but need some help and support along the way. Introduced in July 2001, it was the first employment programme specifically designed to support people on disability and health-related benefits into employment and has helped over 150,000 people into work. Independent evaluation has shown that New Deal for Disabled People has a positive impact on helping people move off incapacity benefits – two years after registration, there was a reduction in benefit receipt of 16 percentage points for longer-term claimants and 13 percentage points for more recent claimants.
- **Work Preparation** helps disabled people to address employment-related issues associated with their disability and preparation to enter work. This might include confidence-building, identification of suitable types of work and work experience.
- **WORKSTEP** provides job support at any one time to around 14,000 disabled people who face more complex issues in getting or keeping a paid job, but who can work effectively with the right support. It enables eligible disabled people to realise their full potential to work within a commercial environment, giving them wherever possible an opportunity to progress into open employment.
- **Access to Work** provides flexible, individually tailored support to enable disabled people and their employers to overcome work-related issues.
- **Residential Training Colleges** provide specific work-focused training and development programmes to unemployed disabled adults whose needs are not met through other government work-related programmes.
- The **Job Introduction Scheme** provides a weekly grant of £75 to an employer towards the employment costs incurred during the first few weeks that they employ a disabled person. This is usually for 6 weeks, but it may be extended to a total of 13 weeks.

## Development of employment programmes

19. Over the last few years, there have been several public reports that have identified the need for improvements to specialist disability employment provision. These have included reports from the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, the National Audit Office and the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. Main areas identified for improvement have included the need to:

- **rationalise** our specialist disability employment programmes to provide a more flexible modular approach;
- **drive up** quality standards; and
- **focus** more on progression to unsupported employment.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – new specialist disability employment provision and Access to Work

The Department received a very positive response to its consultation exercise on proposals on Access to Work and improving specialist disability provision. Following this, last July it announced a doubling of the Access to Work budget, as well as a new supported employment service (with some additional funding) for those with specific and high support needs<sup>15</sup>. Arrangements for the new service (to begin in 2010) include:

- disabled customers who could be effectively helped through more mainstream employment programmes (such as the New Deals) should use this support rather than specialist provision wherever possible;
- enhancing the role of Disability Employment Advisers in Jobcentre Plus to help ensure that disabled people get the right support package to help them achieve their employment goals;
- moving away from the current separate programmes (Job Introduction Scheme, Work Preparation and WORKSTEP) to a new, more integrated programme that can be more easily tailored to the individual needs of disabled customers; and
- the new programme would be delivered in partnership with organisations from the public, private and third sectors and cover pre-employment support right through to job retention and longer-term supported employment.

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<sup>15</sup> DWP Green Paper (July 2008), 'No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility'.

## Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers

20. **Disability Employment Advisers** work with customers who need more extensive support because of their health condition, including those in employment who may need support to keep their jobs. They can offer help with finding work and advise customers about a range of specialised support available for disabled people such as WORKSTEP, Work Preparation, Residential Training Colleges and Access to Work.

### Awareness campaigns

21. As part of its wider Disability Employer Engagement Strategy, the Department has launched the **Employ Ability** campaign, operated by Jobcentre Plus. Its aims include challenging negative assumptions about the skills and talent that disabled workers and those with long-term health conditions have – building the confidence of employers in recruiting and retaining disabled workers.

### Other initiatives

22. **Local Employment Partnerships** help employers to increase their ability to employ people who are often overlooked in the labour market, including disabled people:

- the Government, through Jobcentre Plus and its partners, takes steps to understand employers' recruitment requirements and gets people ready for work; and
- employers with vacancies give people a fair shot at the job. This can be through a range of measures which might include adjusting recruitment processes, offering work trials or guaranteed interviews, work placements and mentoring.

23. The **Pathways Advisory Service** is a pilot project where a Jobcentre Plus adviser is placed within a GP surgery. The adviser's role is to offer return to work advice to patients and act as a gateway to further provision through the Pathways to Work programme.

24. Evaluation of the initial pilots confirmed that the gateway model, where an adviser is sited in the surgery, is effective. In November 2007 the Department announced plans to extend and expand the pilots to learn more about this innovative way of working. This is now being taken forward.

## Case study – working with other public bodies

Jobcentre Plus Lanarkshire and East Dumbartonshire joined forces with NHS Lanarkshire following the launch of Pathways to Work in the district. As part of this initiative, GPs and other health professionals advise patients about the services available and may refer them for help to Jobcentre Plus specialists. There has been a dramatic improvement in helping more people move from Incapacity Benefit into work. For example, **over 3 years the number of customers on Incapacity Benefit has reduced by 12.5 per cent.**

## ➤ Proposals for further progress – Jobcentre Plus initiatives

Jobcentre Plus is also proposing a number of other initiatives which will make further progress towards disability equality:

### *Getting A Life*

- Jobcentre Plus is one of the stakeholders for the Getting A Life pilots. This is a cross-government partnership led by the Department of Health that aims to help young people with learning difficulties make the transition from education to work.

### *'Marks & Start'*

- The Jobcentre Plus-led Pathways to Work Districts of Derbyshire, Essex, Northumbria and South Yorkshire work in partnership with 'Disabled Go' to help Incapacity Benefit customers take up places where available on 'Marks & Start' provision, the UK's biggest company-led employment scheme helping disadvantaged groups, including disabled people, to move towards employment.

## Case study

A Lancashire GP participating in the Pathways Advisory Service pilot referred a 35 year old patient with epilepsy to Pauline, the Pathways Support Adviser based in his surgery. Pauline worked with the customer and referred him for further ongoing support through the Jobcentre Plus Pathways to Work Programme. With advice and support from his adviser he enrolled for courses at college and started full time work in October 2007. He was awarded return to work credit of £40.00 per week for one year and also qualified for tax credits.

## Measuring Jobcentre Plus performance: Job outcomes

25. One of the main measures of Jobcentre Plus' performance is the number of job outcomes it achieves. For customers participating in New Deal for Disabled People or in receipt of an inactive benefit due to a health condition or disability, **169,025** job outcomes were achieved in 2007/08. For all other disabled customers, **79,039** job outcomes were achieved in the same period, giving a total of **248,064** for all disabled customers in 2007/08<sup>16</sup>.

## European Social Fund

26. Disabled people are one of the key target groups for £2 billion of European Social Fund investment in England in 2007-2013. The European Social Fund, which is delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council and other agencies, supports additional provision to help disabled people improve their skills and job prospects. This includes activities to help disabled people tackle their barriers to work and enter sustainable employment, as well as activities to retain in jobs workers who become disabled or develop health conditions. In addition, all European Social Fund projects must promote access for disabled participants.

## Employment of carers

27. The National Carers' Strategy 'Carers at the heart of 21st century families and communities' was published on 10 June 2008<sup>17</sup>. The Strategy recognises that carers want the opportunity to be able to combine paid employment with their caring role, and to improve the financial position they are in and increase their opportunities to have a life outside caring. The Strategy also recognises the skills that carers already have and the growing importance to the economy that they continue to combine their caring roles with paid employment.

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<sup>16</sup> Data is for GB.

<sup>17</sup> [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_085345](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_085345)

### ➤ **Proposals for further progress – Carer’s employment**

An Employment Task Force comprising of key departmental and social partners was formed and made a number of proposals that could potentially help carers obtain or remain in paid work. The proposals are to:

- introduce a flexible ‘job marker’ for vacancies held on Jobcentre Plus job banks;
- introduce Care Partnership Managers in Jobcentre Plus to oversee strategic issues related to carers and the services carers and users need across each Jobcentre Plus district;
- introduce specialist training for Jobcentre Plus advisers who work with carers;
- introduce measures, such as flexible/home-based learning, to ensure that carers – particularly those aged 16-24 – can access the education/training they need;
- fund replacement care for those who are participating in approved training;
- ensure all carers have access to appropriate employment programmes and consider the feasibility of using the voluntary sector as delivery partners;
- extend the definition of carers to ensure that all carers are covered by the right to request flexible working; and
- promote the business case for supporting carers in the workplace.

## **Employment of disabled people within the Department**

28. The Department has been increasing the total proportion of disabled people who are employed in the Department. However, more work needs to be done to meet targets, particularly at Senior Civil Service level.

## Disabled staff in post (March 2008)

Grade	March 2006	March 2007	March 2008	Target (March 2008)
Senior Civil Service	3.3 per cent	2.4 per cent	2.8 per cent	6.0 per cent
Grades 6, 7 and SEO/Bands G, F and E	4.2 per cent	3.9 per cent	4.0 per cent	4.0 per cent
HEO and EO/Bands D and C	6.5 per cent	6.5 per cent	6.4 per cent	7.0 per cent
AO and AA/Bands B and C	4.6 per cent	4.7 per cent	4.9 per cent	6.0 per cent
All	5.3 per cent	5.4 per cent	5.5 per cent	None

NB: Staff without declared disability status excluded.

## Performance of other public bodies

### Remploy

29. Remploy is a leading provider of employment services for disabled people and those with health conditions. They are the largest provider of the WORKSTEP programme.

30. Since 1 April 2008, Remploy has supported disabled people through their businesses (based in a network of 54 factories across Great Britain), in managed services working on employer premises, and through their Employment Services business, which supports disabled people in mainstream work. **Remploy currently supports over 12,300 disabled people.**

31. Remploy's purpose is to increase significantly the employment opportunities of disabled people and those who experience multiple barriers to work. They intend to be finding more than **20,000 jobs in mainstream employment every year for disabled people and those with health conditions by 2012.**

32. 75 per cent of the people Remploy employ have a declared disability, as do 74 per cent of its team leaders and 14 per cent of its managers.

## Disability Employment Advisory Committee

33. The Disability Employment Advisory Committee is a Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions. It gives **independent, informed strategic advice to the Department about helping disabled people find and keep work.** The Committee also seeks to make the relevant policy links with other government policy areas which facilitate employment for disabled people, for example the Government's current work on skills.

34. Disability Employment Advisory Committee members are appointed on the basis of their experience and knowledge of disability and employment policies, in order that they can contribute to the Government's work to improve employment opportunities for disabled people. While the Disability Employment Advisory Committee does not employ people as such and does not require a Disability Equality Scheme, the majority of its members are disabled.



## Chapter Two: Child Poverty

1. Poverty blights the daily lives of many children, families and communities, and touches everyone in society. Children who grow up in poverty lack many of the experiences and opportunities that others take for granted, and can be exposed to severe hardship and become socially excluded. Their childhood suffers as a result.
2. Child poverty doubled in the 20 years from the late 1970s to the mid 1990s, but this rise has been reversed: **600,000 children have been lifted out of relative poverty in the UK since 1998/99, including 200,000 from families with at least one disabled member.** Although child poverty rose by 100,000 between 2005/06 and 2006/07 there was no increase in the number of children in poverty in families with at least one disabled member.
3. The Government has committed to eradicating child poverty by 2020. The Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Treasury have joint responsibility for tackling child poverty, and HM Treasury leads on a Public Service Agreement to 'Halve the number of children in poverty by 2010/11, on the way to eradicating child poverty by 2020'. The headline indicator for the halving target is the number of children living in households with incomes below 60 per cent of contemporary median income, compared to a 1998/99 baseline.
4. The Government cannot achieve these objectives alone. 'Ending child poverty: everybody's business'<sup>18</sup>, argues that tackling child poverty is in everybody's interests and it needs to be everybody's business. Ending child poverty requires a sustained national, regional and local effort, involving devolved administrations, across all agencies, service providers and professionals and including communities, business and the third sector. Families need to be active participants in this process.

#### Key Public Authorities: Child Poverty

- Department for Work and Pensions;
- Department for Children, Schools and Families;
- HM Treasury; and
- Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission.

#### Progress towards disability equality

5. Considerable progress has been made towards tackling child poverty. To date, 600,000 children have been lifted out of poverty in the UK and the

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<sup>18</sup> HM Treasury (2008), 'Ending child poverty: everybody's business'.

number of children living in poverty stands at 2.9 million<sup>19</sup>. The 2010/11 target requires further reducing the number of children in poverty to 1.7 million. Measures announced in Budget 2008, Budget 2007 and the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review will lift around **a further 500,000 children out of poverty** than would otherwise have been the case. In July 2008 the Government announced that, for the first time, parents with care in receipt of income-related benefits will be able to keep all their maintenance payments. This full child maintenance disregard, combined with existing reforms to the child maintenance system that support lone parents with older children into work, will **lift up to 200,000 children out of poverty in the UK**.

6. Reforms to the tax and benefits system have been crucial: had the Government done nothing other than simply uprate the 1997 tax and benefits system by inflation, there might have been 1.9 million more children in poverty than there are today. Families in poverty have also benefited from a substantial increase in Government spending on services such as education, healthcare and housing in recent years. As families' incomes have risen, their well-being has improved and more children are enjoying their childhood and achieving at school. Key achievements include:

- more parents being supported to move into work. The number of children in workless households in Great Britain has fallen by around 445,000 and the percentage by 3.3 percentage points since 1997;
- a significant improvement in the quality, availability and affordability of childcare. Since 1997 the number of registered childcare places in England has more than doubled, so that there is now a registered childcare place for one in every four children under eight; and
- the reform of the tax and benefit system. As a result of personal tax and benefit reforms since 1997, by April 2010 families with children in the poorest fifth of the UK population will be on average £4,700 a year better off in real terms.

7. The Every Child Matters agenda is driving system-wide integration across children's services, **bringing together universal and targeted services to improve outcomes for children and young people**. As described in the 'Children's Plan'<sup>20</sup>, the Government is setting out a far-reaching agenda to improve the lives of children and young people.

<sup>19</sup> 2006/07 Households Below Average Income data. Data is for UK.

<sup>20</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families (December 2007), 'The Children's Plan'.

8. However, despite the progress made towards tackling child poverty, a number of groups still face a high risk of poverty or contain relatively high numbers of children living in poverty.

9. **Worklessness** is one of the strongest risk factors: the risk of poverty for children living in workless families is 61 per cent compared to 14 per cent for those living in families with one or more parents in work. For many workless families in poverty, difficulties due to ill-health or disability are an important factor and can make a move into work more difficult. Of children in poverty in workless couple families, the majority have at least one disabled member in the family.

10. **Caring** responsibilities are also factors in parental worklessness and low pay. Parents of disabled children face particular constraints, often due to problems finding childcare to meet their child's particular needs. Research suggests that around **six in ten mothers with disabled children are in work, compared with around seven in ten mothers with non-disabled children**<sup>21</sup>. A higher proportion of children in families with a disabled child are in lone parent families, which increases their risk of poverty and worklessness.

11. Families that receive Disability Living Allowance have a relatively low risk of relative income poverty (although families with disabled children still have higher costs which may affect living standards). Ensuring that all families receive the support to which they are entitled could play an important part in securing a route out of poverty.

12. As the table overleaf shows, disabled children, and children in families with one or more disabled adults, still face a higher risk of poverty than other children.

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<sup>21</sup> HM Treasury (2008), 'Ending child poverty: everybody's business'.

## The risk of living in relative low income before housing costs (per cent)

Prevalence of disability	1998/99 GB	2006/07 UK	Direction since 1998/99
No disabled adult, no disabled child	23	20	↓
No disabled adult, at least one disabled child	29	25	↓
At least one disabled adult, no disabled child	34	33	↓
Disabled adult and disabled child	42	31	↓
<b>All children</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	↓

Source: Households Below Average Income

13. Although children are more likely to be in relative income poverty if they live in a family with a disabled person, it is unclear as to why this is the case. Research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies<sup>22</sup> shows that other characteristics, such as being in a lone parent or workless household, are risk factors of relative income poverty for children whereas the presence of a disabled family member is not. This suggests that it is these that explain the higher risk of income poverty, rather than disability itself.

<sup>22</sup> [www.ifs.org.uk/comms/comm105.pdf](http://www.ifs.org.uk/comms/comm105.pdf)

## ➤ **Proposals for further progress – Child Poverty**

- Recognising the multiple factors that cause child poverty, the Government's strategy is broad-ranging, aiming to eradicate all the causes of child poverty now and in the future. 'Ending child poverty: everybody's business' set out a renewed drive on child poverty for the next decade, following four strands of the Government's strategy:
  - increasing employment and raising incomes;
  - financial and material support;
  - tackling deprivation in communities; and
  - improving poor children's life chances.
- Key to the Government's approach to tackling child poverty is the principle of progressive universalism: delivering help for all families and more help for those who need it most, when they need it most. This includes help particularly aimed at disabled children in poverty, and/or children in poverty with a disabled parent.
- For example, parents of disabled children may find it particularly difficult to access childcare that meets their families' needs. £35m funding for a childcare accessibility pilot will test ways in which Local Authorities can meet their duty to provide childcare for disabled children, with best practice rolled out more widely. This funding complements that available through the General Sure Start Grant to assist with childcare providers' capital costs associated with the sufficiency duty.
- Disability Living Allowance helps meet the additional costs of disability, with up to £113.75 per week from April 2008 for the most severely disabled people (£5,915 a year). The disabled child and the severely disabled child elements in Child Tax Credit also recognise the higher costs that the families of disabled children face.
- The Government wants disabled young people to be able to make the same seamless transition from school to continuing education, training and employment as their non-disabled peers. In October 2007, the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health issued joint guidance, 'A transition guide for all services', which provides key information for professionals about the transition process for disabled young people.
- Aiming High for Disabled Children committed £19m to develop a coordinated Transition Support Programme. It will provide disabled young people with support and guidance to enable them to access education, training and employment and to realise their aspirations and ambitions.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Child Poverty (*continued*)

- Going forwards, the Government will seek to **introduce legislation to enable it to achieve its commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020**. This is ground-breaking, and will ensure there is a real focus on ending child poverty for the long-term. To support this, the Government will be working with stakeholders to develop a strategy for the next decade. In preparation, the Government will undertake further research and establish new pilots and approaches that will inform and shape future policy. The Government is investing £125m over 2008-2011 in a series of child poverty pilots to develop innovative solutions to tackle child poverty. A number of these – for example, the Local Authority Innovation Fund – should help to identify approaches that are effective in lifting disabled children, or those with disabled parents, out of poverty.

## Child Maintenance

14. There are around 2.5 million parents with care<sup>23</sup> in the UK who are entitled to child maintenance. The 2008 'Relationship separation and child support' study found that 18 per cent of all those eligible for maintenance report having a 'long-standing disability or illness'<sup>24</sup>. Within this total, those parents with care who use the statutory maintenance service provided by the Child Support Agency were more likely to report having a 'long-standing disability or illness' (20 per cent) than those who did not (16 per cent)<sup>25</sup>.

15. The newly established Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission will provide information and support on the different child maintenance options available to all parents, whether they use the statutory

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<sup>23</sup> The parent with care is the parent with whom a child normally lives and so pays for most of the child's everyday living costs. The parent with whom a child does not normally live is known as the non-resident parent.

<sup>24</sup> DWP Research Report No. 503: Wikeley et al (2008), 'Relationship separation and child support study'.

<sup>25</sup> Due to the repeal of Section 6 of the Child Support Act 1991 – the removal of compulsion for certain benefit claimants to use the Child Support Agency for maintenance collection – this picture is subject to change as the composition of the caseload changes.

maintenance service or not. Thus its remit extends to all parents with care (18 per cent of whom have a long-standing illness or disability as stated above) and non-resident parents, a quarter of whom have been troubled by a 'long-standing disability or illness' for at least a year<sup>26</sup>.

## Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission

16. The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission was established as a Crown Non-Departmental Public Body in July 2008 under the provisions of the Child Maintenance and Other Payments Act 2008. The Secretary of State functions under the Child Support Act 1991 were transferred to the Commission on 1 November 2008.

17. The Commission has three core functions:

- promoting the financial responsibility that parents have to their children;
- providing information and support about the different child maintenance options available to parents; and
- providing an efficient statutory maintenance service with effective enforcement.

18. The Commission contributes towards the Department's Child Poverty Departmental Strategic Objective and the Government's Public Service Agreement. It does this by ensuring that more parents take responsibility for paying maintenance for their children and that more children benefit from maintenance. For parents with care on benefit, this effect is increased by the Government's introduction of significantly higher maintenance disregards in October 2008 and April 2010<sup>27</sup>.

19. The 2008 Act removed the compulsion for parents with care in receipt of income-related benefits to use the statutory maintenance service, allowing parents to choose how they make maintenance arrangements. Together with other reforms to the child maintenance system, including the introduction of the full child maintenance disregard in April 2010, this **will lift over 100,000 children out of poverty.**

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<sup>26</sup> DWP Research Report No. 503: Wikeley et al (2008), 'Relationship separation and child support study'.

<sup>27</sup> In October 2008 the Government implemented a £20 disregard for parents with care in receipt of child maintenance. This will increase to a full disregard from April 2010. In addition a full maintenance disregard for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit recipients was introduced in October 2008.

## Child Maintenance Options

20. Child Maintenance Options is a new service to help parents, including disabled parents, understand the importance of having a child maintenance arrangement. It also provides impartial information and support on the options available so that they can make the best arrangement for their families – whether that is a private agreement or a statutory maintenance assessment. The service was introduced for all parents from October 2008.

21. Throughout the development of each element of this service, the Commission has sought to ensure that it meets the needs of disabled parents. For example, as well as a telephone helpline for parents, there is also a textphone number.

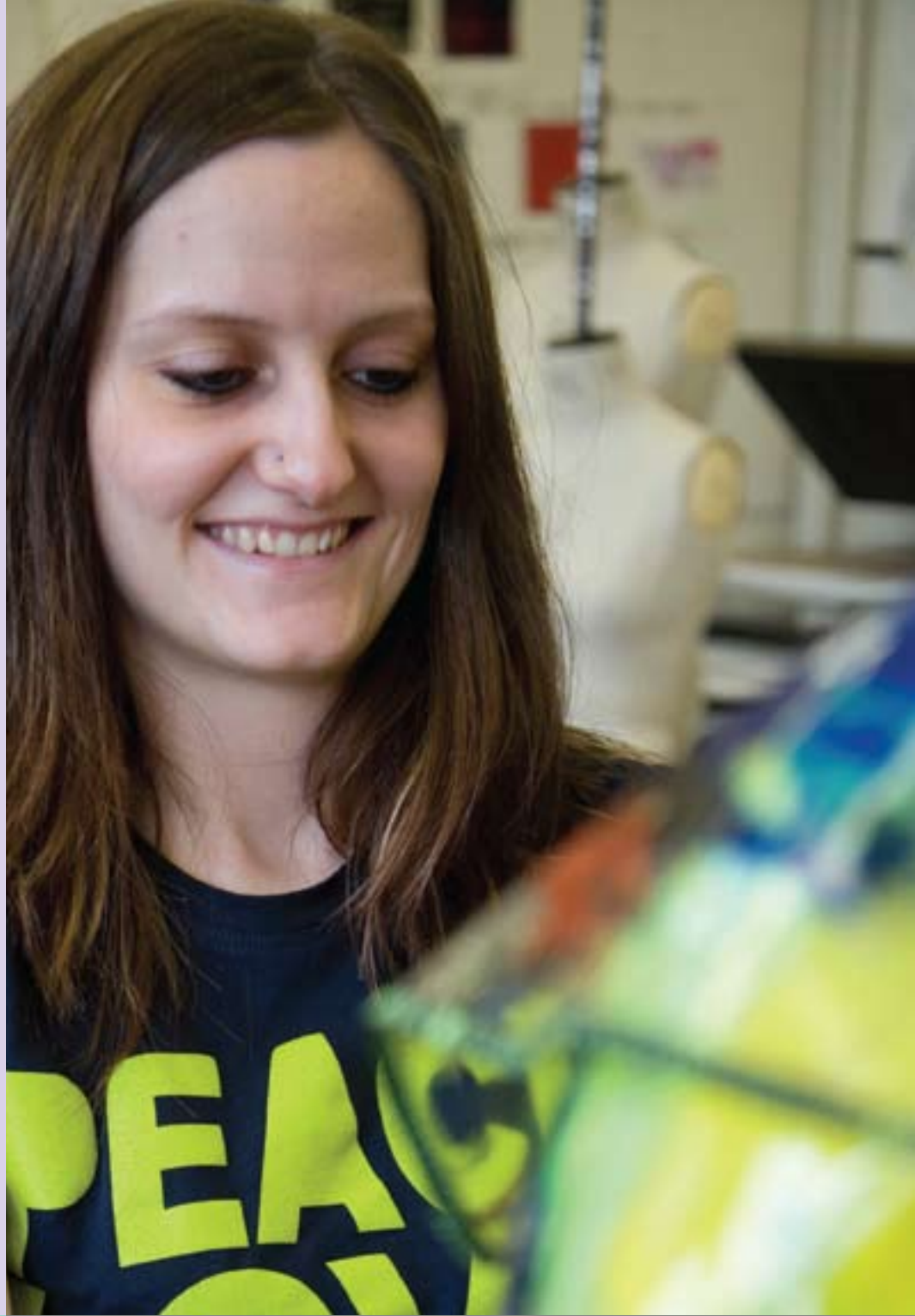
22. Child Maintenance Options also has a face-to-face service for parents that require additional support to understand their options for putting in place a maintenance arrangement. This service provides visits to parents' homes and talks them through all of the maintenance choices available to them. It is available to both the parent with care and the non-resident parent.

23. Child Maintenance Options agents also signpost parents to organisations and specialists that are expert in wider separation issues, including organisations that specifically aim to provide support to parents with disabled children and those that are accessible to disabled parents.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Child Maintenance

The Department remains committed to monitoring its ability to meet its overall objectives. It aims to continue to collect demographic data and information on disability via surveys such as the Family Resources Survey to better understand how the Commission's services can and are impacting on those with a disability. Where possible, the Commission will also collect information to inform how service provision can and is meeting the needs of disabled people.





## Chapter Three: Paying Benefits

1. One of the functions of the Department for Work and Pensions is to pay benefits to people. This is reflected in its Departmental Strategic Objective, to 'pay the right benefits to the right people at the right time'. The Department's delivery agencies process just under **40,000 benefit claims every working day**.

### Key Public Authorities: Paying Benefits

- Department for Work and Pensions;
- Local Authorities;
- Social Security Advisory Committee;
- Independent Living Fund; and
- Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board.

## Progress towards disability equality

### Disability Living Allowance/Attendance Allowance/Carer's Allowance

2. The Department pays a number of benefits to disabled people in Great Britain, either to contribute towards extra costs or to replace lost income:

- **Disability Living Allowance** is a tax-free, non-contributory benefit. It is paid to children and adults who claim before the age of 65 and need help with personal care or have walking difficulties because they have a physical or mental disability.
- **Attendance Allowance** is a tax-free, non-contributory benefit. It is paid to people who claim after the age of 65 who need help with personal care because they have a physical or mental disability.
- **Carer's Allowance** is a taxable benefit paid to people not in full-time work who provide at least 35 hours care a week for someone receiving a qualifying benefit. This is usually the highest or middle rate of Disability Living Allowance for personal care or Attendance Allowance.

Carer's Allowance is effectively part of the package of measures which help disabled people meet their disability-related needs and which can help maximise their participation in society. Although the 35 hour rule may make it more difficult for disabled people to receive Carer's Allowance themselves, the benefit is available equally to able-bodied and disabled carers. Some disabled people do provide substantial levels of care for each other and receive Carer's Allowance, particularly where their disabilities are different in nature.

The Government is committed to tailoring future support for carers to meet individuals' needs, and this will afford an opportunity to consider the particular needs of disabled carers in more detail.

3. The amount of financial support provided by the Department in Great Britain through these benefits has significantly increased in recent years and is forecast to continue to do so. This is true of both expenditure<sup>28</sup> and caseload:

- Since Disability Living Allowance was introduced in 1992<sup>29</sup> expenditure has increased from £3.0 billion in 1992/93 to £10.2 billion in 2007/08. Similarly, caseloads have increased from 1.0 million people in 1992/93 to 2.9 million people in 2007/08.
- Attendance Allowance expenditure has increased from £2.5 billion in 1992/93 to £4.6 billion in 2007/08. The caseload has increased from 900,000 people in 1992/93 to 1.5 million people in 2007/08.
- Carer's Allowance expenditure has increased from £500 million in 1992/93 to £1.3 billion in 2007/08. The caseload has increased from 180,000 people in 1992/93 to 475,000 people in 2007/08. In addition, some 463,000 carers get a higher rate of income-related benefits because of their entitlement to the allowance.

4. The Disability and Carers Service's performance in delivering these benefits has been good. The Year To Date Actual Average Clearance Times (the average number of working days taken to process claims for benefit) for year ending March 2008 shows performance for all three benefits has consistently met targets throughout the year.

- Performance at year-end was 36.0 days, 15.2 days and 12.4 days for Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Carer's Allowance respectively (against targets of 38 days, 18 days and 13.5 days).
- Clearance times for claims to Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance under the special rules for people who are terminally ill have fallen back slightly to 6 days and 4.5 days respectively, but remain well within their challenging target of 8 days.

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<sup>28</sup> All expenditure figures are in 2008/09 prices. Expenditure and caseload figures are for Great Britain.

<sup>29</sup> Disability Living Allowance was formed by bringing together the pre-existing Mobility Allowance and the element of Attendance Allowance which was until then paid to people who claimed before State Pension age and adding the two lower rates.

- Targets for the 2008/09 reporting period remain the same for Disability Living Allowance and Carer's Allowance whilst the target for Attendance Allowance has been reduced by 2 days to 16 days.

## Incapacity Benefit

5. Incapacity Benefit is paid to people who are incapable of work and who either have paid or been credited with sufficient national insurance contributions, or became incapable of work in youth. The number of people claiming incapacity benefits rose significantly in the 1980s and early 1990s, though it has been falling consistently since 2003.

6. The Department believes that work is good for people: good for individuals of all ages, for families and for society as a whole. That is why the Department is aiming to reduce the numbers on incapacity benefits by 1 million people. In October 2008 incapacity benefits were replaced for new customers by the **Employment and Support Allowance** with a revised medical assessment and an additional payment to the most severely disabled customers.

7. It is right that support is provided for those who are unable to work and the Employment and Support Allowance **focuses additional resources on the most severely disabled, with a higher rate of benefit for those in the Support Group**. Nearly £400m more in benefits will be paid out over the first 5 years of the Employment and Support Allowance, compared to keeping incapacity benefits.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Employment and Support Allowance

- The new Employment and Support Allowance includes the robust new Work Capability Assessment, and **focuses on what people can do, not what they can't**. It is the longer term intention to move all existing recipients of incapacity benefits to the Employment and Support Allowance by 2013. As part of this process these customers will have the new Work Capability Assessment applied to them.
- Most people receiving Employment and Support Allowance are required to prepare for work and should expect to be on the benefit only for a temporary period. In support of this **the Pathways to Work Programme is available to everyone receiving incapacity benefits in Great Britain**. The most severely disabled are not required to undertake any work-related activity, but can volunteer to do so if they wish.
- The poorest and most severely disabled are **nearly £16 a week better off** on the Employment and Support Allowance than on incapacity benefits. They have a guaranteed minimum income of £102.10 compared to £86.35 under the previous system.

### Independent Living Fund

8. The Independent Living Fund is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body which works with Local Authorities across the UK to help disabled people to live in the community rather than in residential care. Approximately 21,000 current users benefit from the Independent Living Fund, which in the current financial year has £343 million (Great Britain) and £10.5 million (Northern Ireland) of funding available to aid severely disabled people in the purchase of personal care or help with domestic duties, through direct cash payments. Since 1988 over £2.6 billion has been paid to over 45,000 recipients, with an average weekly award of £296 across the whole of the UK.

## Housing Benefit

9. Housing Benefit is paid to people with a low income who pay rent and is administered by Local Authorities. Disabled people are over-represented amongst Housing Benefit recipients compared to their proportion within the population as a whole, with **25 per cent of Housing Benefit claimants being defined as disabled**<sup>30</sup>. This has increased from 13 per cent in 1994/95.

10. However, there is no difference between the percentage of disabled people claiming Housing Benefit who live in the social sector and those who live in the non-social sector (both approximately 25 per cent in 2006/07).

11. Council Tax Benefit is paid to people with a low income who pay council tax. Disabled people are also over-represented amongst Council Tax Benefit recipients compared to their proportion within the population as a whole, with **20 per cent of Council Tax Benefit claimants being defined as disabled**<sup>31</sup>. This has increased from 11 per cent in 1994/95.

12. The Department for Work and Pensions' 'Performance and Good Practice Guide' is available to all Local Authorities. It helps them to address the needs of the communities and customers they serve so that they are a central part of benefit administration. The guide supports Local Authorities in assessing how well they are meeting those needs and there is specific guidance available to help them focus on different groups of customers, including disabled people, in order to **consider issues such as accessibility of service, diversity and take-up of benefits**. This includes best practice guidance.

13. The Department has provided considerable investment (over £2m) in **Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit take-up campaigns for vulnerable and hard to reach groups**. Also, through departmental funding, a number of Local Authorities have employed welfare or visiting officers. These provide independent welfare rights advice or referral to welfare rights organisations, particularly if customers experience difficulties accessing benefits.

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<sup>30</sup> DWP administration data 2006/07. Data is for GB.

<sup>31</sup> DWP administration data 2006/07. Data is for GB.

### Case study

A number of local authorities have used departmental funding to improve their services to vulnerable people and increase benefit take-up:

- **Colchester** provided holistic welfare benefit checks to try to increase take-up of Council Tax Benefit, recognising that entitlement to other welfare benefits such as Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and/or Carer's Allowance substantially increases a person's chances of being entitled to means-tested benefits such as Council Tax Benefit.
- **Blackburn** undertook home visits and provided benefit drop-in surgeries at disability centres within Blackburn and Darwen.
- The **Greater Manchester authorities, Blackpool, St Helens and Warrington** have a fully accessible Mobile Advice Centre to promote take-up of benefits, including Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

### Customer Service

14. The Department's delivery agencies are committed to delivering a good service to all their customers, including making adjustments for those who face particular barriers in accessing services.

### Jobcentre Plus

15. Jobcentre Plus runs diversity and equality training for its staff covering disability issues. Adviser training focuses on health in relation to working and specific approaches to helping jobsearches. This can not only produce effective job outcomes, but can also lead to improvements in customer well-being.

### Making the benefit claiming process easier and more flexible

16. Jobcentre Plus has undertaken a number of initiatives to make the benefit claiming process easier and more flexible for customers, to help ensure they have all the support they are entitled to:

- For disabled people who find it difficult to use the telephone, other options are available, such as textphones.

- Clear guidance has been issued on the need to offer **alternative forms of access for customers** who are unable to use the telephone. This includes claims by post, face-to-face interview, arranging a third party/advocate or, exceptionally, a visit. There is also a departmental initiative to increase access to benefit information and make claims through e-channels.
- Personal advisers in Jobcentre Plus work with disabled people and advise on benefits or credits that can be received and/or retained on return to work. The new Employment and Support Allowance regime will **enhance the frequency and extent of support offered**.

#### ➤ Proposal for further progress – retrieving the requirements of customers

The Department is proposing the development of a strategic IT solution which is capable of capturing an individual's requirements, and which can then routinely be retrieved and action taken as appropriate.

### Responding to the views of customers

17. One of the findings of Jobcentre Plus' involvement with Customer Representative Groups (including those representing disabled customers) in 2007 was that although Jobcentre Plus often stated that they have hearing loops and text phones, they do not always work. Ensuring hearing loops are functioning has been included as part of the Jobcentre Plus regular office environmental check schedule and where possible, textphone services have been centralised to ensure consistent quality levels of customer service.

18. Mental health organisations have given feedback about the process used for fraud investigations and the impact on those with mental health conditions. Following this, the Fraud Investigation Service is considering how to improve the service for those with mental health issues.

19. Jobcentre Plus commissioned research exploring potential problems of using contact centres as a means of accessing Jobcentre Plus. It also investigated face-to-face first contact services. The research involved interviews with disability organisations, Jobcentre Plus customers with disabilities and groups representing specific customer groups for whom accessing Jobcentre Plus by telephone causes problems. Jobcentre Plus has acted on the findings from that research, and continues to make improvements, as outlined above.

### Case study

Jobcentre Plus has arranged for an organisation to assess its provision of service to customers with hearing difficulties. The Royal National Institute for the Deaf's best practice charter, 'Louder Than Words', undertook an audit of services in Plymouth for customers with hearing difficulties, which enabled Jobcentre Plus to develop an action plan to understand further the issues and improve services offered. This will now be shared as best practice across the Jobcentre Plus network.

## Pension, Disability and Carers Service

### Merging The Pension Service and the Disability and Carers Service

20. The merger of The Pension Service and the Disability and Carers Service will allow the new agency to **deliver products and services designed around its customers' needs**. Over fifty per cent of the Disability and Carers Service's customers are over pension age and predictions suggest that this figure will increase over time. The merger of The Pension Service and Disability and Carer's Service will, therefore, create a more cohesive service for all customers, including children and those of working age, allowing the agency to build on its working relationship with Jobcentre Plus.

### Making the benefit claiming process easier and more flexible

21. The Pension, Disability and Carers Service adjusts its processes according to the **different needs of its customers, including disabled people:**

- It is able to handle claims and changes of circumstances over the phone. Where a telephone call is not the best or most appropriate way to contact them, its Local Service provides face-to-face help and advice to customers in their homes or by appointment in designated community locations. **Over 753,000 visits were made between April 2007 and March 2008.**

#### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Local Service

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service plans to **continue expanding the reach of Local Service through extending local partnership-working, in particular with Local Authorities, health services and key local voluntary agencies**. This is to improve customer choice of access to a wider range of services and thereby increase the independence and well-being of disabled people and other vulnerable members of society.

- It operates a text phone service which is regularly monitored through Mystery Shopping. Results for The Pension Service show that although access to the text phone has increased to 81 per cent (April 2007 to January 2008), more needs to be done to ensure that all calls are answered by a member of staff and not an auto-message. Results for the Disability and Carers Service show that access to the text phone is at 100 per cent.

#### ➤ Proposal for further progress – textphones

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service has centralised the text phone service in two pension centres (for new claims to Pension Credit and State Pension) and the Disability and Carers Service (with the exception of Wales Disability Benefit Centre who use text phone for Welsh calls only). It is now making plans to extend this to all areas of business after evaluation.

- The Disability Living Allowance/Attendance Allowance helpline answered over 3.8 million calls between 1st November 2007 and 31st October 2008. The helpline uses both textphones and Tynetalk as media through which to communicate with deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired customers.
- All 11 transformed Pension Centres have achieved Royal National Institute for the Deaf accreditation. Customers with additional needs such as large print, Braille, text phones or British Sign Language are noted on the computer system and records are retained so they do not have to repeat the same information each time they contact the agency.
- A new Attendance Allowance claim pack and an improved Disability Living Allowance adult claim pack have been introduced. These claim packs are easier to complete and allow the customer to easily provide more relevant information from the outset of their claim.

### Joint Working Partnerships

22. Joint Working Partnerships are dedicated to developing processes that reduce duplication and focus on improving service to customers. These partnerships are created through integrated partnership between the Pension, Disability and Carers Service Local Service, Local Authorities and the voluntary sector. **These teams increase the effectiveness of contact and support for disabled people and other vulnerable members of society.**

23. Joint Working Partnerships offer a holistic financial assessment and benefit service, including:

- Fairer Charging (the process by which a customer's financial contribution towards the cost of their home care is assessed);
- Supporting People (a programme committed to providing a better quality of life for vulnerable people to live more independently and maintain their tenancies); and
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

24. Joint Working Partnerships accept referrals from a wide range of partners, including social care workers, health professionals, carers, the voluntary sector and the Pension, Disability and Carers Service centres. This process gives customers greater autonomy through take-up of entitlements and a new level of income that can be used to help **maintain their independence in their own homes**.

#### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Alternative Office

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service is currently reviewing the existing Alternative Office service. Alternative Offices are offices authorised by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to receive and verify social security claims made by older people. They are either local offices of a voluntary organisation or a Local Authority. The agency is proceeding with a pilot design to test an improved and extended Alternative Office service to include groups that represent children, customers with mental health difficulties and customers from ethnic minority communities.

#### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Customer Insight

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service Customer Insight Team explores the customer journey. In particular, it has examined customers with mental health problems to identify the issues they face. This work has produced a series of recommendations, including to:

- introduce checking regimes to ensure all aspects of cases with mental health problems are dealt with correctly and good practice can be shared;
- supply Mental Health Teams (who help customers complete claim forms) with blank Community Psychiatric Nurse reports along with claim packs, enabling them to seek completion of these forms at an early stage; and
- publicise the fact that the majority of customers prefer contact by phone (including those with mental health problems) as well as encouraging Decision Makers to use the phone.

## The Change Programme

25. The Department has involved customers and staff in discussions about how the service it delivers can be improved. Its refreshed business strategy reflects the priorities identified through these discussions and the Change Programme established as a result of this strategy involves putting customers at the centre of everything the Department does. Each Change Programme Implementation Project is bound to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment and an extensive programme of engagement with external stakeholders has been part of the development of initiatives.

26. The activities in the programme reflect and build on the priorities the Department's customers have identified. This includes, for example, the need to be customer-focused and to consider how customers access services. There are five implementation strands:

- **Transforming customer contact** – building on existing work to make better use of the Department's contact centres and to make it easier to navigate its advisory services;
- **Customer transitions** – building on the 'In-and-Out of Work' pilots that the Department has been running with HM Revenue and Customs and Local Authorities. This aims to ensure that customers who move between the departments' various services can do so smoothly;
- **Information management** – providing information management structures and solutions that will allow the Department to make the most effective use of the information it holds. Examples include not recording the same information many times and not requesting the same information more than once;
- **Self-service** – using the work the Department has already done to deliver 'My DWP', the first step towards creating a secure customer account on the internet. This strand will also develop options for self-service telephony and look at other options for accessing the Department's services; and
- **Continuous improvement using Lean techniques** – improving the customer focus and efficiency of many of the Department's major processes. This will be done using the results of its initial work and Lean techniques that put the customer at the centre of design and delivery.

27. The Department anticipates that, as a result of changes made by 2011, customers will:

- increasingly be more satisfied with the service they receive;
- only have to tell the Department once about key changes;
- have an online account with the Department;
- be able to submit claims online and track progress;
- feel that the Department understands all their requirements and be able to answer a range of queries;
- have a wider choice of fast, secure methods for communicating with the Department; and
- have a wide choice of intermediaries who can initiate business with the Department.

### Joint-working: Department for Work and Pensions/HM Revenue and Customs

28. The Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs have established a ground-breaking programme of joint work to review all areas where there is scope for the two departments to work more effectively together.

29. One area the departments intend to take forward over the next three years is **customer insight and disability**. The two departments' customer insight functions are seeking to draw on best practice to deliver improvements to the experience of customers who need information about the services provided by both. Initial findings suggest that:

- awareness of specific support mechanisms and benefits is generally established indirectly (through family, friends, therapists etc), rather than through communications from official or government sources;
- the process of accessing benefits is characterised as a patchy, disjointed and serendipitous journey; and
- the transition of disabled children from education to work is non-existent.

The Department is currently examining how it will respond to these findings.

## Estates Strategy

30. A number of major estate projects were completed during 2005/06. All of these met or exceeded the Achieving Excellence in Construction targets, significantly helping the Department to carry out its duties to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people under the Disability Discrimination Act through public access work programmes. These were fully funded by Land Securities Trillium through the PRIME Private Finance Initiative contract and have been completed at some 1,032 sites across the Department's estate at a cost of around £4 million.

## Communications

31. The Department is committed to the highest standard of communication with all customers both internal and external. It serves a diverse population with diverse needs and ensures that all its information is as accessible as possible. All of the Department's written communications meet certain requirements in order to be accessible.

32. Some people may need information in alternative formats, such as people with low levels of literacy, disabled people and people with long-term health conditions, older people and people with language needs. They are offered publications in alternative formats free of charge, including Braille, large print format and audio cassette. The Department also considers additional requests for other alternative formats which may be required in specific instances.

## Performance of other public bodies

### Social Security Advisory Committee

33. The Social Security Advisory Committee is the main UK advisory body on social security matters. The Committee gives impartial advice as it is independent of both Government and sectional interests.

34. The Committee's guidance states its requirement for all legislation proposals coming to it for scrutiny to have been subject to the appropriate equality impact assessment procedures. It requires a screening exercise of equality impacts as a minimum and directs officials to the guidance on the Department's intranet site.

35. This provides an additional level of scrutiny which ensures that social security legislation has been properly assessed for its impact on equality. However, the Committee has no powers of enforcement, and can only proceed through the exercise of its advisory functions. It is open to the Committee to comment adversely if it is not satisfied that the Department has taken the necessary action, or completed the appropriate processes.

### **Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board**

36. The Disability Living Allowance Advisory Board is a Non-Departmental Public Body. It provides advice to the Secretary of State on matters he may refer to them for consideration in respect of Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance.

37. The Board must include members with professional knowledge or experience of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, nursing disabled people and medical practice. At least six members must be disabled themselves and there must be at least one carer. This broad depth of experience enables the Board to provide practical and considered advice to the Secretary of State on the effects upon disabled people of all aspects of Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance.





## Chapter Four: Later Life

1. The Department has the cross-government lead on policy for older people and in particular the Public Service Agreement to 'Tackle poverty and promote independence and well-being in later life'.

### **Key Public Authorities: Later Life**

- Department for Work and Pensions;
- Communities and Local Government;
- Department of Health;
- National Health Service;
- Local Authorities;
- Personal Accounts Delivery Authority;
- The Pensions Ombudsman;
- The Pension Protection Fund;
- The Pensions Regulator; and
- The Pensions Advisory Service.

## **Progress towards disability equality**

### **Pensioner Poverty**

2. Poverty is a complex, multi-dimensional issue that affects many aspects of older people's lives, although it is generally accepted that low income is central to any measurement of poverty. As no single measure captures all aspects of poverty, the Public Service Agreement to 'Tackle poverty and promote greater independence and well-being in later life' includes three indicators related to low income for pensioners. These are the percentage of pensioners in relative low income (below 50 and below 60 per cent of contemporary median household income) and absolute low income (below 60 per cent of 1998/99 median income uprated in line with prices), measured after housing costs.

3. Considerable progress has been made in tackling pensioner poverty. Since 1998/99, 900,000 pensioners have been lifted out of relative poverty (measured against the threshold of 60 per cent of contemporary median income, after housing costs)<sup>32</sup>. In 2006/07 there were 2.1 million pensioners living in relative poverty, compared to 2.9 million in 1998/99<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> 2006/07 Households Below Average Income data. Data is for the UK.

<sup>33</sup> 2006/07 Households Below Average Income data. Data is for the UK.

4. The table below shows the number and percentage of pensioners in low income measured by each of the Public Service Agreement indicators since 1998/99.

	Below 60 per cent of contemporary median household income (after housing costs)		Below 50 per cent of contemporary median household income (after housing costs)		Below 60 per cent of 1998-99 median household income (after housing costs)	
	Per-centage	Number (millions)	Per-centage	Number (millions)	Per-centage	Number (millions)
1998/99	29	2.9	13	1.4	29	2.9
1999/00	28	2.8	13	1.3	25	2.5
2000/01	26	2.7	11	1.2	20	2.0
2001/02	26	2.7	11	1.2	14	1.5
2002/03	24	2.5	11	1.1	12	1.2
2003/04	21	2.2	10	1.0	10	1.1
2004/05	18	1.9	8	0.9	8	0.9
2005/06	17	1.8	8	0.9	8	0.8
2006/07	19	2.1	10	1.1	10	1.1

5. Reforms to the personal tax and benefits systems have been crucial in tackling poverty. In 1997 the Government inherited a situation where pensioner poverty was rising. If it had taken no action other than to uprate the 1997 personal tax and benefit system, pensioner poverty would have continued to rise. Today, pensioners are less likely to be in poverty than the population as a whole, after housing costs are accounted for.

6. As a result of the tax and benefit changes that the Government has introduced, pensioner households will be £1,500 a year better off in 2008/09 than they would have been had the 1997 system continued. The poorest third of pensioner households will be around £2,100 a year better off.

7. The Government wants all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement. Recent figures show that **pensioner households with at least one disabled adult are slightly less likely to be in relative poverty than those where no-one is disabled.** In 2006/07, after housing costs were taken into account, 18 per cent of pensioners in families containing a disabled adult were in households with incomes below 60 per cent of median income, compared to 20 per cent of pensioners

in families with no disabled adults<sup>34</sup>. Additionally, the risk of pensioner households with at least one disabled adult being in relative poverty has reduced from 22 per cent in 2002/03 to 18 per cent in 2006/07.

8. Evidence suggests that disability benefits are effective at reducing the risk of poverty for pensioners. In 2006/07, 9 per cent of pensioners in families that contained one or more disabled adult in receipt of disability benefits were likely to be in poverty, compared to 20 per cent of pensioners in families that did not contain a disabled adult<sup>35</sup>.

9. However, around 80 per cent of pensioners living in low income households with disabled adults were in families that do not receive any disability benefits. For these pensioners the risk of poverty was 24 per cent, which is higher than the 20 per cent risk of poverty for pensioners in families with no disabled adult present<sup>36</sup>.

#### ➤ **Proposal for further progress – Better targeting of benefits**

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service is working with Help the Aged and Local Authorities to **increase take-up of benefits**, including Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, by developing a local targeting regime using customer data supplied by The Pension Service. This will target those people who have not claimed all the benefits to which they may be entitled and will support general work on targeting such people. Information on the numbers in receipt of disability benefits is already included in the targeting regime which will **help to ensure that disabled people receive all the financial support to which they are entitled**.

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<sup>34</sup> 2006/07 Households Below Average Income data. Data is for the UK. Disabled people can face additional costs related to their health condition or disability, and so may be eligible for extra benefits raising their income above the 60 per cent median income threshold. As this threshold is the same for both disabled and non-disabled pensioners, it does not factor in the additional costs associated with disability, whilst the measure of income includes income provided to help meet these additional costs. Thus, the position in the income distribution of disabled individuals may be upwardly biased.

<sup>35</sup> 2006/07 Households Below Average Income data. Data is for the UK.

<sup>36</sup> 2006/07 Households Below Average Income data. Data is for the UK.

## State Pension entitlement

10. The UK State Pension system is contributory based. Entitlement to State Pension is built up over time, predominantly by people in employment making National Insurance contributions. While disability may impact on labour market participation, the benefit system is structured to take account of this and help protect State Pension entitlement. People claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and Incapacity Benefits receive Class 1 National Insurance credits that count towards their State Pension entitlement. From April 2010, pension reform will mean that the system is simplified and fairer, with the value of credits given to those on disability-related benefits increasing in generosity through State Second Pension accruals.

11. People caring for a recipient of Disability Living Allowance (at the higher or middle personal care rate) or a recipient of Attendance Allowance for at least 35 hours a week may get Carer's Allowance (which carries a Class 1 credit for those under pension age) or Home Responsibilities Protection. The latter protects Basic State Pension by reducing the number of years for which a carer has to pay or be credited with contributions to get a full Basic State Pension. From April 2010, Home Responsibilities Protection will be replaced by weekly (Class 3) credits which will count toward the Basic State Pension and State Second Pension for those under pension age, and will enable carers who care for 20 hours a week or more to get a credit.

## Pension Credit

12. Since its introduction in 2003, Pension Credit has been a key element of the Government's strategy to tackle pensioner poverty. Pension Credit targets additional help to poorer pensioners and since its introduction, the number of pensioners in relative poverty had fallen by around **500,000 by 2006/07** (based on measure of 60 per cent of contemporary median income after housing costs).

13. Pension Credit provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for all people over 60<sup>37</sup>, providing a safety net for those who fail to build up an adequate retirement income during working life. Additional amounts are included so that severely disabled people and those with caring responsibilities for a severely disabled person can have **a higher guaranteed income level where certain qualifying conditions are met.**

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<sup>37</sup> The qualifying income for Pension Credit will gradually increase between 2010 and 2020 in line with the increase in women's State Pension age from 60 to 65.

14. The additional amount for severe disability is intended for those severely disabled people with the highest care needs, where they do not live with an able-bodied adult and are therefore likely to incur expenses in meeting those needs. It is not paid for those with a carer who receives Carer's Allowance, because in these cases the carer is seen to provide the support that the disabled person would otherwise have to find through other means. As at February 2008, a total of **683,200 Pension Credit recipients also receive the Severe Disability Premium**<sup>38</sup>.

15. The additional amount for carers is available to Carer's Allowance recipients. Some carers establish entitlement to Carer's Allowance but do not receive payments because they get another income maintenance benefit of at least the same amount. They too may qualify for the additional amount for carers in Pension Credit, and the person they look after can qualify for the additional amount for severe disability. Carer's Allowance was introduced as a working age benefit, but the change from 2002, which enabled carers aged 65 or over to claim, means that some 238,000 older carers now qualify for the additional amount.

16. Of the 2.7 million people claiming Pension Credit as at February 2008, 51 per cent of them are also claiming Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Carer's Allowance. This demonstrates the crossover between the client groups.

## Savings behaviour

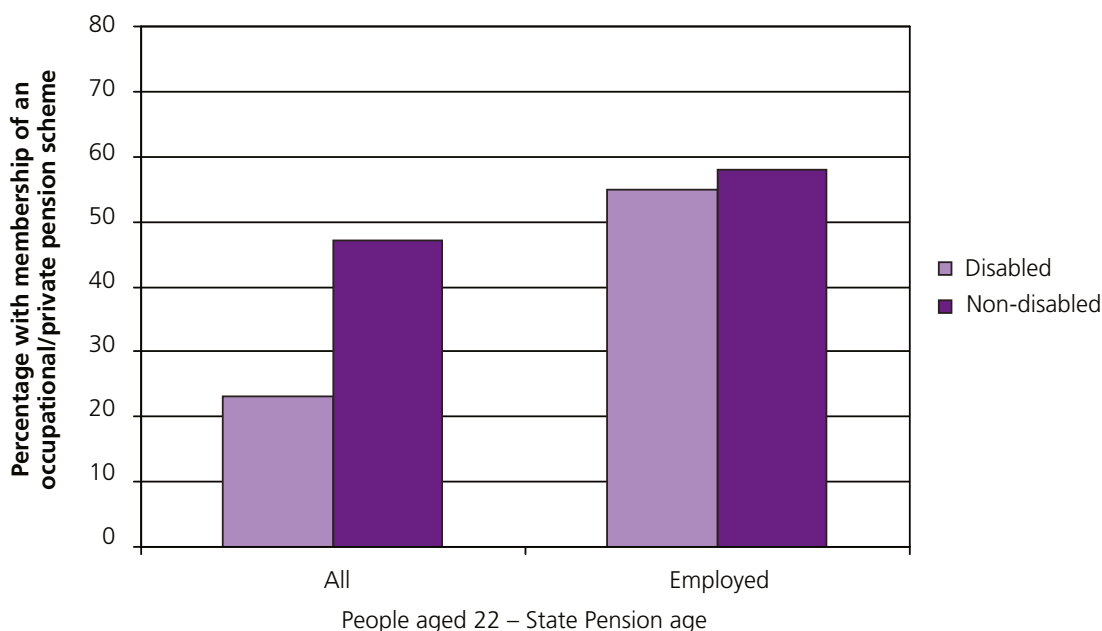
17. Departmental estimates suggest that approximately 7 million people are currently not saving enough to meet their retirement aspirations. Membership of occupational and private pension schemes has been declining in recent years.

18. The graph below shows that, overall, **a lower proportion of disabled people are members of an occupational or private pension scheme (23 per cent to 47 per cent)**. However, this is likely to be related to the lower employment rate of disabled people. **For those who are employed, the percentage who are members of an occupational or private pension scheme is similar (55 per cent to 58 per cent)**.

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<sup>38</sup> Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study. Data is for GB.

## Membership of an occupational or private pension scheme by disability



Source: Family Resources Survey 2005/06. Data is for the UK.

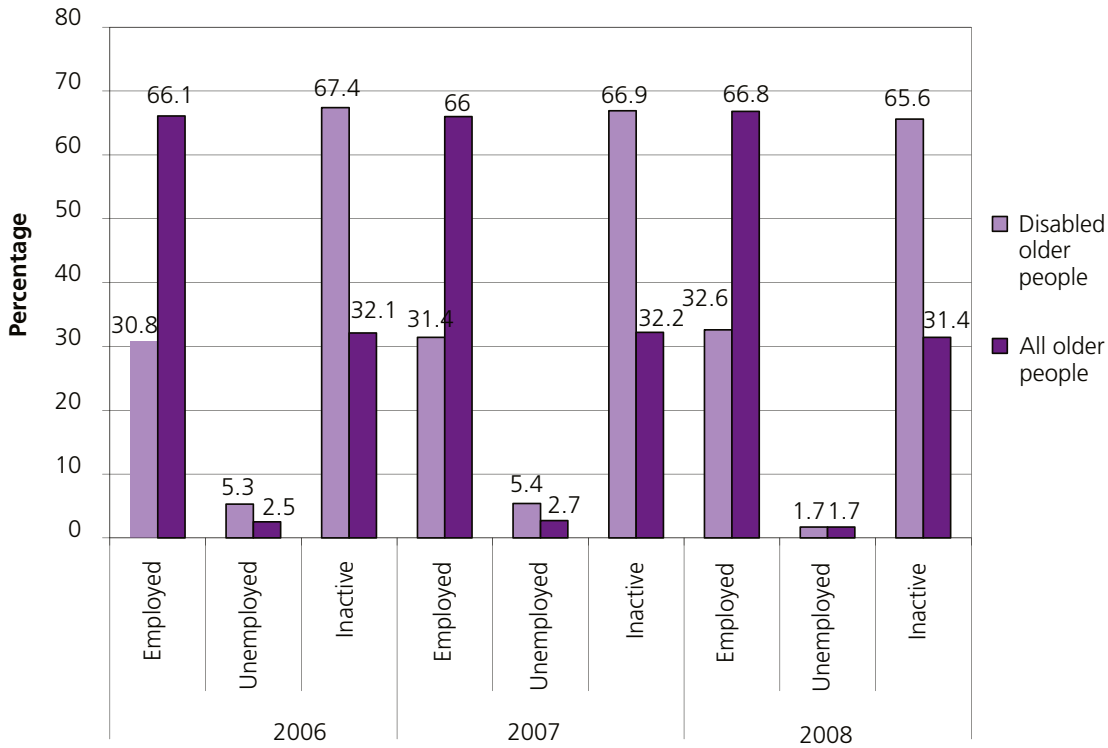
### ➤ Proposal for further progress – personal accounts delivery authority

- The personal accounts delivery authority is a Non-Departmental Public Body, set up by the Pensions Act 2007 to establish a national trust-based pension scheme called 'personal accounts'. As well as designing and building personal accounts, it will set up a trustee body to oversee the running of the scheme, after it has been rolled out.
- The new personal accounts delivery authority will have regard to a number of principles, including that 'diversity among members and future members of such a scheme should be respected.' This will ensure that the needs of diverse groups, including disabled people, will be considered as the scheme is developed.
- The personal accounts delivery authority is a new organisation and will be developing a disability equality scheme in line with legislative requirements. This scheme should be published by December 2008.

## Older people employment

19. As the graph below shows, in 2008 the percentage of older disabled people in employment (32.6 per cent) was **less than half** of all older people (66.8 per cent). This is a sizeable gap and one which has not improved significantly over recent years.

## Economic activity of people aged 50-69



Source: Labour Force Survey 2006-08, Quarter 1. Unemployment measure is International Labour Organisation rate. Data is for GB.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Older people employment

#### Encouraging longer working

- The Department will be reviewing the guidance and legislation on age and occupational pensions better to support HR practices on flexible retirement and working longer.
- The Department is working to ensure it provides information and guidance on working longer by 2010. This will need to include embedding good practice identified by the pilots of face-to-face guidance for over-50s on their options for working longer. These will run to 2009, after which good practice will be embedded in a range of government and non-government guidance services.
- The Department is preparing for 2010 which will see the equalisation of State Pension age, the extension of welfare to work benefit conditionality and full provision to clients aged 60 to 64, and the rising of the eligible age for Pension Credit Guarantee.

## ➤ Proposal for further progress – Older people employment (continued)

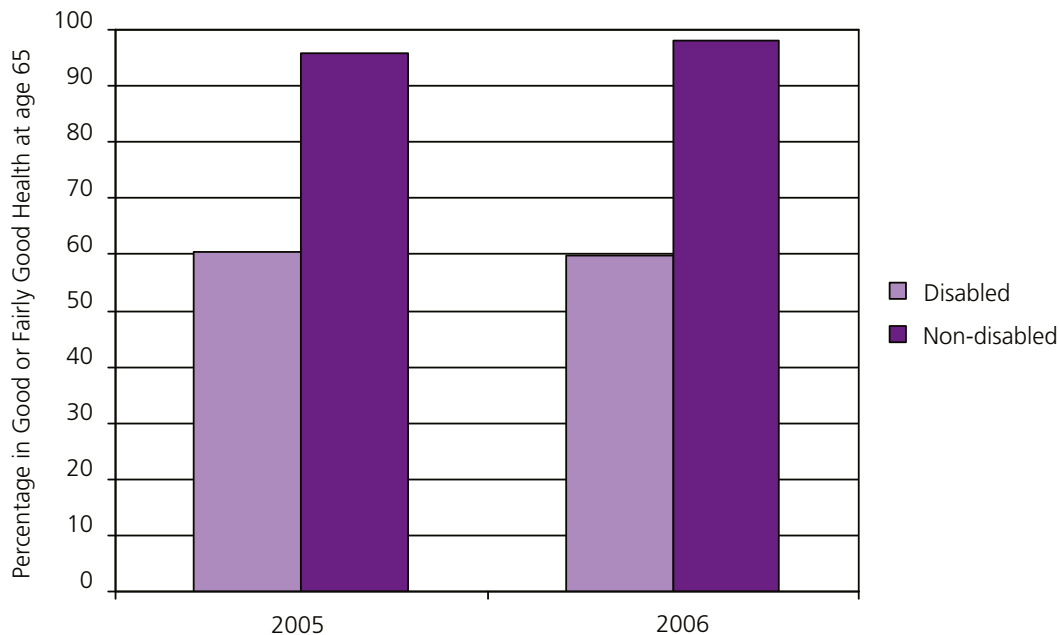
### Supporting over-50s back to work

- The Department, including Jobcentre Plus, is working closely with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills to improve the effectiveness of back to work help for the over-50s in existing and developing areas of work.
- This includes:
  - assessing the performance of current programmes by age, undertaking secondary analysis and developing new research to fill gaps in evidence;
  - subsuming New Deal 50 plus, which has supported over 175,000 older people in their return to work, into Flexible New Deal;
  - inputting into the development of new skills and the adult guidance services; and
  - making changes to the 50+ In Work Training Grant so that it can be promoted within a wider range of employment and skills provision.

### Healthy life expectancy at age 65

20. Disabled people aged 65 are **substantially less likely to report that they are in good or fairly good health** than non-disabled people aged 65. Whilst over 9 in 10 non-disabled 65 year olds suggest they are in good or fairly good health, this figure falls to under 6 in 10 for disabled 65 year olds.

## Healthy Life Expectancy at 65 by disability



Source: General Household Survey 2005 and 2006. Data is for GB.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Healthy life expectancy

Evidence shows that people value cost-effective health and social care support that enables them to live independent lives and play their full part in society. This is particularly true of older and disabled people.

Core business and policy imperatives for adult social care include:

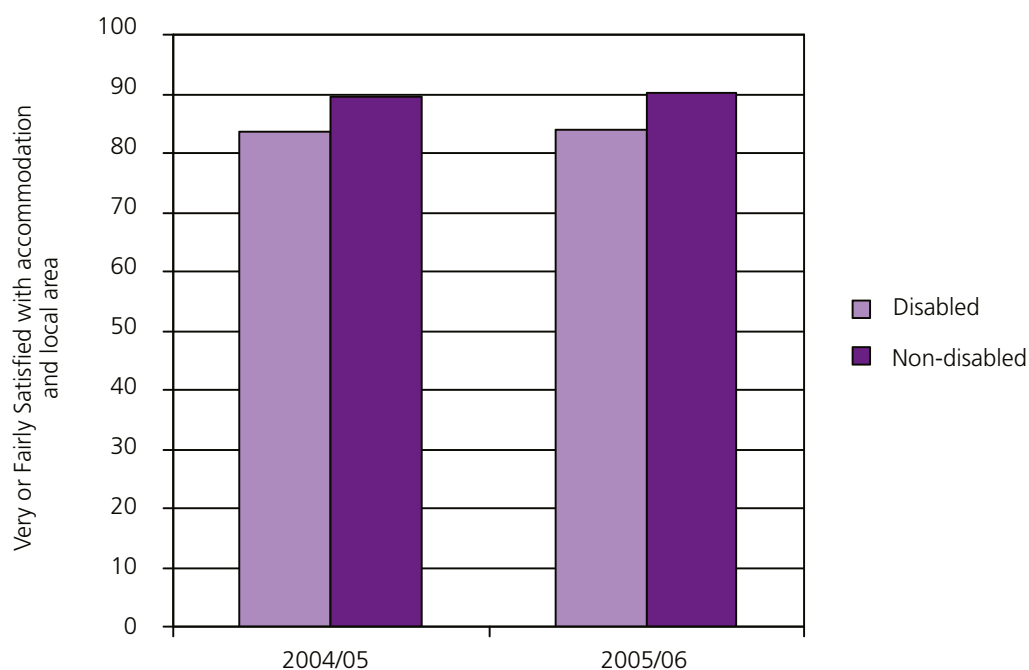
- prevention and early intervention: identifying at risk individuals and putting in place strategies to proactively manage their health and well-being;
- personalisation: promoting independence, choice and control to respond to users' preferences; and
- accessibility of local services: availability and quality of social services, information resources, advocacy and brokerage, enabling services closer to the individual.

A clear cross-sectoral vision for the future direction of travel has been set out in the Department of Health's 'Putting People First: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care' (December 2007). The concordat set out the vision and the transformation of adult social care, and underpins the Government's policy and aspirations for the sector. The vision is supported by a ring-fenced £520m Social Care Reform Grant.

## Satisfaction with home and neighbourhood among the over-65s

21. There is a small difference between the proportion of disabled people (83.9 per cent) and non-disabled people (90.3 per cent) over 65 who are satisfied or fairly satisfied with accommodation and local area in 2005/06, similar to results from 2004/05.

### The proportion of people over 65 who are satisfied with their home and neighbourhood by disability



Source: Survey of English housing 2004/05 and 2005/06. Data is for England.

22. 'Lifetime homes, lifetime neighbourhoods' (February 2008) is Communities and Local Government's housing strategy for an ageing society. It outlines their plans to meet both the current and future housing and housing support needs of older people, including disabled people.

### Lifetime Homes Standards

23. Lifetime Homes Standards encourages the construction of homes that are accessible to everyone and where the layout can easily be adapted to meet the needs of future occupants. Lifetime Homes are suitable for older people and the majority of disabled people, as well as non-disabled people.

24. Currently at least 1.4 million people living in private and social housing require specially adapted housing to meet their needs. Too few either live in inclusive housing or get the adaptations they need. As a result, around a quarter of these people report living in unsuitable conditions. Research shows that the numbers of older people, disabled people and those requiring

housing with care is set to rise dramatically. It is expected there will be an additional 2.3 million older and disabled people in England by 2041.

### ➤ **Proposal for further progress – Lifetime Homes Standards**

Communities and Local Government are proposing that Lifetime Homes Standards will be mandatory in the Code for Sustainable Homes (a standard designed to improve the overall sustainability of new homes) at level 6 (the highest level) from 2008; at level 4 from 2010; and level 3 from 2013. This will have the effect of ensuring that all public sector funded housing is built to Lifetime Homes Standards from 2011.

While these code levels will be mandatory on the public sector, private developers may choose what code level they wish to develop at. In the next few years Communities and Local Government will encourage change through public funding, benchmarking and incentives with the aspiration that by 2013 all new homes will be built to Lifetime Homes Standards.

## **The Disabled Facilities Grant**

25. The Disabled Facilities Grant funds home adaptations that enable disabled people and people with mobility issues to continue to live independently in their own homes. These include bathroom adaptations, stair lifts and kitchen modifications.

26. An important feature of the Disabled Facilities Grant is that it is a mandatory entitlement, subject to an assessment of need and test of financial resources, administered by local housing authorities. The programme currently helps around 37,000 people a year, approximately 70 per cent of whom are older people. The programme is highly successful with Government funding increasing from £57 million in 1997 to £126 million in 2007. By 2010 the Disabled Facilities Grant budget will be £166 million; this represents **an increase of 31 per cent from 2007/08**.

## **Performance of other public bodies**

### **Pension, Disability and Carers Service**

#### *Better targeting benefits to tackle pensioner poverty*

27. In 2007/08, The Pension Service Local Service undertook over 753,000 visits that resulted in 355,000 successful applications to benefit. Of these, 135,000 were for Pension Credit, 105,000 for Attendance Allowance/ Disability Living Allowance and 53,000 to Housing Benefit/Council Tax

Benefit. They also made 311,000 referrals for complementary services. These included Home Helps, home adaptations/fittings (such as handrails in the bathroom), help with shopping, gardening and cleaning by voluntary organisations, loft insulation and energy efficiencies.

➤ **Proposal for further progress – Working with public authorities to tackle pensioner poverty and increase independence and well-being in later life**

The Pension, Disability and Carers Service is working jointly with policy colleagues in the Department for Work and Pensions to engage with Government Offices in the promotion of the Department's Later Life and other Public Service Agreement ambitions. The Pension, Disability and Carers Service will promote regional plans for tackling poverty and jointly develop actions and measures for services at a local level that illustrate the impact on customer income, independence and well-being from joint working.

## **Pensions Ombudsman**

28. The Pensions Ombudsman published its Disability Equality Scheme on 7 May 2008. This includes details of how:

- its customer satisfaction surveys now include questions to monitor information on disability and related needs;
- it aims to ensure that all employees are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to promoting fairness within the organisation and that there is no direct or indirect discrimination against disabled people; and
- it is currently reviewing its website to make it more accessible and will provide information on tape and in large print or Braille if required.

29. No employees of the Office of the Pensions Ombudsman (around 40 employees) are known to be disabled. However, it has committed to continue to monitor the employee profile and provide appropriate support for any disabled employees. It also offers guaranteed interviews to suitable candidates with disabilities when recruiting.

➤ **Proposal for further progress**

The Office of the Pensions Ombudsman is considering options for a forum for customers with disabilities, to seek their input into key working practices and policies.

## The Pension Protection Fund

30. The Pension Protection Fund has a single equality scheme in place. The Equality Scheme was reviewed in December 2007 in order to introduce a more detailed set of actions in relation to the Disability Equality Duty. This review was done in conjunction with the equality and diversity discussion group in order to ensure the interests of disabled people were represented.

31. Less than 2 per cent of Pension Protection Fund staff state that they are disabled, although 21 per cent of staff do not state whether they are disabled or not (30 April 2007). The actions that have taken place since the review include:

- guidance for staff online to make sure they are aware of the equality duties and how these affect them and their work. This forms part of the Corporate Induction (March 2008);
- completing an Anti-harassment and Equality and Diversity policy review;
- publishing a Stress at Work policy (issued in July 2008); and
- introduction of mental health awareness sessions in conjunction with MIND.

32. The Pension Protection Fund is keen to work towards the 'Mindful Employer' accreditation. This is aimed at increasing awareness of mental health at work and providing support for businesses in recruiting and retaining staff. It will form part of the Pension Protection Fund's work to promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards disabled people, whilst ensuring that disabled people's interests are represented.

## The Pensions Regulator

33. The Pensions Regulator published its single equality scheme on 21 May 2007. In May 2008 it published an update on the delivery of the action plan in its scheme, outlining the actions which had taken place in the year since the publication of its scheme. These included:

- establishing a diversity forum;
- running recruitment and selection training courses for managers;
- publishing a Dignity At Work Policy;
- establishing a diversity monitoring system for recruitment; and
- completing a disability policy review.

34. Of The Pensions Regulator's 260 permanent and fixed-term staff (March 2008), five said that they had a disability.

## The Pensions Advisory Service

35. The Pensions Advisory Service is not required by statute to have a disability equality scheme at present, but have agreed in advance of their inclusion in schedule 1 of the Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2005 to develop and publish a scheme.





## Chapter Five: Disability Equality

1. The Department for Work and Pensions is the lead department for disability equality. The Minister for Disabled People is a Department for Work and Pensions minister and the Department has a Departmental Strategic Objective to 'promote equality of opportunity for disabled people'. The Office for Disability Issues, which works across government to ensure equality becomes a reality for disabled people, is based in the Department.

2. In January 2005, the Government published the report 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People'<sup>39</sup>. The report states that by 2025 **disabled people should have the same opportunities and choices as non-disabled people** and be respected and included as equal members of society. It identified a lack of coordination between government departments in the ways in which policy is developed and services are delivered for disabled people.

3. The report identified three key areas for development and improvement:

- common goals between government departments;
- collective ownership of policies for disabled people; and
- collective commitment to and delivery of the policies.

4. The report recommended that the Office for Disability Issues be set up to coordinate progress towards the vision set out in the 'Life Chances' report. The Office works across government to deliver equality for disabled people by:

- promoting joined-up thinking to secure improvements in policy-making and service delivery which will benefit disabled people;
- involving disabled people and their expertise to shape what the Office does and encouraging others to do the same;
- being a source of evidence and expertise on disability within government;
- promoting human rights and ensuring effective disability equality legislation; and
- communicating the Government's programme on disability.

5. As progress towards disability equality in major policy areas will be assessed by departments in their own Secretary of State reports, this chapter will focus on the added value achieved by the specific work of the Office for Disability Issues.

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<sup>39</sup> [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work\\_areas/disability/](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/disability/)

### Key Public Authorities: Disability Equality

- Department for Work and Pensions;
- Office for Disability Issues;
- Equality and Human Rights Commission;
- Equality 2025; and
- Government Equalities Office.

## Progress towards disability equality

### Independent Living Strategy

6. The Office for Disability Issues worked with government departments, an expert panel and disabled people to co-produce a five year strategy on independent living. The Independent Living Strategy was published on 3 March 2008, and its aims are that:

- disabled people (including older disabled people) who need support to go about their daily lives will have **greater choice and control** over how support is provided; and
- disabled people (including older disabled people) will have **greater access** to housing, education, employment, leisure and transport opportunities and to participation in family and community life.

7. The strategy seeks to realise the Government's aim that all disabled people (including older disabled people) should be able to live autonomous lives. They should have the same choice, freedom, dignity and control over their lives as non-disabled people, thus helping ensure that disabled people enjoy their human rights. It reflects the Government's belief – as firmly demonstrated by its signature and work towards ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People – that disabled people have the same human rights as non-disabled people and are on an equal basis with them.

8. It takes a life course approach, from young people in transition to adulthood and including older people. In developing the Strategy there was also a focus on barriers experienced by particular groups of disabled people, such as those from black and minority ethnic communities.

9. The Strategy was co-produced with disabled people and their organisations and contains over 50 commitments from across Government, including a commitment to monitor and report annually on the progress of those commitments. In line with the principles of co-production, the Office

for Disability Issues carried out a consultation to seek views on how best to involve disabled people in the implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

### ➤ **Proposal for further progress – monitoring the Independent Living Strategy**

Together with disabled people, the Office for Disability Issues will review and monitor progress on the delivery of the Independent Living Strategy. This will allow it to ensure it is making a tangible difference to disabled people's lives and, if necessary, identify what else may be required to make independent living a reality. Progress on implementing the Independent Living Strategy will be reported on within the Office for Disability Issues Annual Report, using a range of indicators. A number of local government performance indicators will also be monitored as proxy indicators for an increase in choice and control.

## Choice and control for disabled people

10. The **'Experiences and Expectations of Disabled People'** study published in July 2008 underlined the importance of choice and control in disabled people's lives. The majority of disabled people were satisfied with the level of choice they had in their life, for example, in relation to formal support or health services. Those who felt they had a choice were more likely to be satisfied with the service they received.

11. Two-thirds (64 per cent) of disabled people felt that they always or usually had enough control over what happens in their life. Seven out of ten (70 per cent) of those who had **aids or adaptations** had at least some say in choosing the aids they had at home, although a quarter (26 per cent) said that they never had a choice in deciding what aids or adaptations to get.

12. Respondents in households with higher levels of annual income were more likely to say that they always had a choice. This could perhaps be because they are more able to finance the purchase or installation of aids or adaptations for themselves. The majority (91 per cent) of those with financial difficulties agreed that their financial situation has meant that they have fewer choices in life.

## The right to request control of an individual budget

13. The Office for Disability Issues is consulting publicly and working with government departments and Local Authorities to give disabled people more control over the support they receive from the State.

14. The Department for Work and Pensions' Green Paper 'No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility' explores how disabled people might achieve better outcomes by having more control of the funds used to meet their needs. This could be through a legal right to request control of certain types of state funding as an individual budget.

15. The Office for Disability Issues has worked with the Department of Health and Communities and Local Government to pilot individual budgets for social care customers. It will use lessons from these pilots to inform its thinking on how best to deliver a right to request control of an individual budget and to improve its understanding of the risks and benefits involved.

16. The Office for Disability Issues has also asked Baroness Campbell of Surbiton to chair a working group of government officials and other stakeholders with disability expertise to consider the best, most practical way of developing this proposal.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – delivering the right to request control of an individual budget

- The Office for Disability Issues will support the working group in developing a practical approach to deliver this right to request control of an individual budget.
- As part of this, the Office for Disability Issues will analyse the results of the individual budgets pilots and apply lessons from them to the development of the proposed right.

## Involving disabled people – Equality 2025

17. The Office for Disability Issues is keen to support the involvement of disabled people in policy development and service delivery. One of the ways in which this commitment has been demonstrated has been through the setting up of Equality 2025 in December 2006, an advisory body which gives disabled people a direct voice into the Government. Equality 2025 is a network of 19<sup>40</sup> disabled people with a wide range of impairments and it includes members from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

<sup>40</sup> Figure at time of print.

18. The aim in setting up Equality 2025 was to establish a new way of bringing the views and experiences of disabled people to the Government to help design policies for disabled people. Disabled people's organisations will continue to have a wide range of opportunities to represent their views, but can also now inform Equality 2025 of the views of the disabled people they represent.

19. So far, Equality 2025 has advised government departments on issues such as how best to consult with disabled people and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. It has also given views to the independent inquiry into healthcare for people with learning disabilities and responded to public consultation on the Department's specialist disability employment services and on the proposed Equality Bill.

## Measuring progress

20. The Office for Disability Issues leads on the monitoring of progress towards the Department for Work and Pensions' Departmental Strategic Objective 5: 'To promote equality of opportunity for disabled people'. This objective focuses on improving choices and opportunities for disabled people by removing barriers to equality and promoting their economic and social participation. Baseline data for the Departmental Strategic Objective is currently being collected and should be available in early 2009.

21. Linked to Departmental Strategic Objective 5 is the cross-government Public Service Agreement 15 which seeks to address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation or religious belief. The Government Equalities Office has overall responsibility for this Public Service Agreement.

22. In 2007 the Office for Disability Issues published a comprehensive cross-government set of outcome-based measures to be used as indicators of progress towards equality for disabled people. These indicators were developed following consultation with disabled people who highlighted which areas of policy were most important to them. They will be monitored and reported on in the Office for Disability Issues' Annual Report, and they will be reviewed regularly to ensure they reflect any changes in priorities identified.

23. The main areas the Annual Report cover are:

- educational achievement of disabled children and young people;
- employment outcomes and opportunities;
- discrimination in the workplace;
- use and accessibility of transport infrastructure;
- participation in civic life, cultural and leisure activities, and volunteering;
- access to goods and services;
- awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act;
- accessibility and suitability of housing; and
- child and adult poverty, as well as fuel poverty.

Moreover, from this year's publication we will be expanding the current indicator set with additional measures focussed on:

- crime and victimisation;
- use of basic financial services; and
- persistent poverty.

24. The current set of indicators does not cover all areas that disabled people have told the Office for Disability Issues are important to measure. One reason for this is a lack of availability of some information. The Office for Disability Issues is working with partners across government to fill these gaps. For example, the Office for National Statistics Omnibus Survey now includes a set of questions around the extent to which people have choice and control over the support they need to go about their daily lives. This information is currently being collected and it is expected that initial data can be reported on in 2009.

25. One area that disabled people told the Office for Disability Issues was important to them, and that has been monitored in recent years, is difficulties in accessing goods and services. There has been a decrease in the percentage of disabled people experiencing difficulties in accessing goods and services related to their impairment or disability, from 37 per cent in 2005 to 33 per cent in 2007<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Office for National Statistics Omnibus Survey. Data is for GB.

## Proposals for further progress – developing an evidence base

- The Office for National Statistics-led Equalities Data Review highlighted areas where there are current equality data gaps and inconsistencies in the inequalities evidence base. The report made recommendations for the Office for National Statistics and other government bodies to improve coordination and processes, data comparability and quality, and data accessibility and presentation.
- The Office for National Statistics highlighted where they would work in partnership with the Office for Disability Issues to play a leading role for delivering in three specific areas:
  - **developing, agreeing and championing** a consistent approach to collecting information on disability widely across government and the wider public sector;
  - **developing best practice methods** and publishing guidelines for research with those who are frequently excluded from mainstream data collection methods. For example, those with learning difficulties or those requiring proxy interviews; and
  - **developing good practice guidance** for improving the physical accessibility of data and information for a diverse user group.

## Developing a national longitudinal disability survey

- The Office for Disability Issues has commissioned the Office for National Statistics to develop a longitudinal disability survey of Great Britain. The survey will explore the barriers experienced by disabled people from the social model perspective. It will become a major new source of statistical information on disability issues, providing data on the key topics as prioritised by disabled people for measuring progress towards equality by 2025.
- Survey development involves a cross-government steering group of other departments and a Reference Network of disabled people and their organisations to inform each stage of survey development work.

## Disability Equality Duty

26. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 placed a statutory duty on all public authorities to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people (the Disability Equality Duty). This duty came into force on 4 December 2006. It requires public authorities to consider the needs of all sectors of the society they serve and how they make sure they are delivering services, and carrying out functions, in a way that promotes greater equality for disabled people.

27. The duty has two components:

- a general duty on the face of the Act that requires public authorities to give due regard to disability issues when carrying out their functions; and
- specific duties covered in regulations which require listed public authorities to publish Disability Equality Schemes. These set out how they will carry out the general duty, monitor and report on progress, and how they have involved disabled people in developing their schemes.

28. The Office for Disability Issues has taken a leading role in actively promoting the Disability Equality Duty across government and the public sector. It has also worked closely with government departments, providing training, guidance and support to help them implement comprehensive and compliant schemes.

29. In January 2007 the Office for Disability Issues commissioned an audit of compliance which revealed that, at that point, **72 per cent of public authorities covered by the audit were found to have published a Disability Equality Scheme**. At least 54 per cent of all authorities covered in the audit had published a Disability Equality Scheme that contained evidence that the authority had involved disabled people in its production.

30. This information then informed the (former) Disability Rights Commission enforcement strategy and meant that early action could be taken against the few authorities that had failed to comply with the Duty.

### Research into the Disability Equality Duty in practice

31. In December 2007 the Office for Disability Issues commissioned research to assess the implementation of the Disability Equality Duty legislation by public authorities, one year on from its introduction. The research assessed how Disability Equality Schemes have been developed and how disabled people were involved. It also highlighted examples of good practice in how the schemes were developed and any positive outcomes as a result of the schemes being implemented.

32. The research showed that there is considerable variation across the public sector regarding aspects of the interpretation and implementation of the Disability Equality Duty. The report highlighted a number of challenges organisations faced in informing disabled people and successfully implementing disability equality schemes.

33. For many organisations, the focus at that stage was primarily on the process of developing and implementing their equality schemes, rather than being able to demonstrate improved outcomes for disabled people. Examples of positive impacts of the Disability Equality Duty that were highlighted include:

- greater priority given to disability equality issues within public sector bodies. For example, a changed perception of disability equality among senior managers and equality officers, from being an 'add-on' to 'part of core business';
- improved perceptions of, and increased respect for, disabled colleagues within workplaces;
- a better understanding of disabled people's support requirements;
- an appreciation of the importance of involving people with different types of impairment and those experiencing a range of barriers;
- as a consequence of the previous points, an increased rate of declaration of disability by employees in some organisations; and
- some contacts made with new sections of the disability population, sometimes leading to their involvement in an organisation's activities and/or development of the Disability Equality Scheme.

## Discrimination Law Review and preparation for the Equality Bill

34. The Government Equalities Office is currently developing an Equality Bill which aims to simplify and harmonise equality legislation. The Office for Disability Issues has worked closely with the Government Equalities Office, and with Communities and Local Government, to ensure that:

- disability rights aspects were properly reflected in the consultation document for an Equality Bill; and
- opportunities will be taken to simplify disability discrimination aspects of the harmonised legislative framework whilst ensuring that there is no erosion of existing levels of protection<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> 'The Equality Bill – Government Response to the Consultation' (published 21 July 2008) set out the decisions which will inform the Bill's provisions.

## Equality and Human Rights Commission

35. On 1 October 2007 the Equality and Human Rights Commission was launched, bringing together the previous Commissions – the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission – and assuming responsibility for age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, as well as for the promotion and protection of human rights.

36. The Office for Disability Issues ensured that there were provisions in the founding legislation for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (The Equality Act 2006) to ensure that disabled people continue to steer the Commission's work on disability and that disability permeates the Commission's considerations.

### ➤ Proposal for further progress – Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Office for Disability Issues will work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and its Disability Committee as they take forward their disability agenda. This was developed with the active involvement of disabled people and identified ten social policy priorities and objectives for reform to ensure disabled people's increased participation.

## UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People

37. The Office for Disability Issues is leading and coordinating work across government in respect of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

38. The Convention aims **to secure for the estimated 650 million disabled people across the world the same human rights as non-disabled people have and on an equal basis with them.** The principles on which the Convention is based underpin the UK's approach to disability equality and the work of the Office for Disability Issues.

39. The UK is now working towards ratification and implementation of the Convention. The UK will only ratify international treaties of this type when it is sure that it can comply with its provisions. Departments and the devolved administrations have been scrutinising their laws, policies, practices and procedures to identify any issues with compatibility. The Office for Disability Issues has been coordinating this work, as well as the work in respect of the UK position towards the European Commission's draft proposals for ratification of the Convention.

40. The Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Scottish Human Rights Commission, the Northern Ireland Equality Commission and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission have agreed to form the independent element of the monitoring and reporting framework required by Article 33 of the Convention. The Office for Disability Issues will liaise with them on the development of their role.

#### ➤ **Proposal for further progress – UN Convention**

- The Office for Disability Issues will support the Minister for Disabled People and work with other departments and devolved administrations to resolve outstanding issues and move towards its ratification.
- The Office for Disability Issues will also lead work across government to ensure that the human rights set out in the Convention are respected.
- The Office for Disability Issues will work on awareness raising and promotion of the Convention with disabled people and their organisations, as well as with other government departments and non-government organisations.
- Work has begun within the Office for Disability Issues to ensure the requirements of Article 31 are met. This Article calls for member states to collect appropriate information, including statistical and research data, to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the UN Convention and to disseminate these statistics and ensure their accessibility to disabled people and others.
- Also, Article 35 requires the Government to report on measures taken to give effect to the UK's obligations under the UN Convention and on the progress made in that regard.
- The Office for Disability Issues is also liaising with the Devolved Administrations and relevant government departments to ensure that the research and statistical data needed to comply with Articles 31 and 35 is available. The first report is due two years after ratification.

## European Legislation

41. In 2008/09 the Office for Disability Issues will work with the Government Equalities Office to support the UK's negotiation of the proposed EU Directive on discrimination outside the workplace on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

## Communications

42. The Office for Disability Issues is working to raise awareness of the Government's objective of equality for disabled people by 2025 and to communicate progress made towards it. The Office also provides communications support to specific initiatives which support that objective, such as the Independent Living Strategy and Equality 2025.

43. The Office for Disability Issues aims to be an exemplar of accessible communication within government. It works with other government departments through the Images of Disability project and other initiatives, to ensure that public sector communications are increasingly inclusive of disabled people.

44. The Office for Disability Issues' website has been redesigned and restructured with additional content. It will act as a focal point for other government departments seeking to learn more about disability equality and the Office for Disability Issues' work. Triple A compliance (an internationally recognised online standard, developed by the World Wide Web Consortium) has been achieved through external audit. In addition, a new Office for Disability Issues email bulletin now has 1300 subscribers.

45. In addition to work around the strategy and website, the Office for Disability Issues has been leading a project to look at how to improve access to information on public services. It has done this with the close involvement of disabled people and their organisations, as well as government departments, to ensure that disabled people have access to the information and advice they need through the appropriate channels.

46. An Office for Disability Issues report, 'Improving Information for Disabled People', and its guide 'Five principles for producing better information for disabled people', were published last year. In addition, the Office for Disability Issues funded a campaign helping employers and service providers to understand their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act. It also produced two public information films on the importance of making reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

### ➤ **Proposal for further progress – Communications**

- The Office for Disability Issues will publish a tool-kit to help Local Authorities and others deliver accessible information. It will also encourage senior staff in government departments to pay more attention to the provision of accessible information.
- Following publication of the Independent Living Strategy, the Office for Disability Issues will work across government to identify opportunities to communicate messages about independent living, through existing programmes of work. A suite of communications, giving guidance and information, will be developed for practitioners.
- The Office for Disability Issues will work with Equality 2025 to raise their profile with disabled people and government, to help the network to inform and influence policy making and service design within government.
- The Office for Disability Issues will take forward the 'Images of Disability' campaign which was launched in 2002, to ensure that government communicators actively promote positive attitudes to disability.



## Chapter Six: Health and Safety

1. The Department has an objective to improve current levels of health and safety outcomes in Great Britain through progressive improvement in the management and control of work-related risks. The aim is to protect the health and safety of workers and minimise the risks from work to members of the public.
2. The Health and Safety Executive also ensures that the major hazard industries (such as nuclear, petrochemicals and offshore) manage and control the risks around their work to a high standard, which enhances assurance and allows these industries to operate with a high degree of public acceptance.

### Key Public Authorities: Health and Safety

- Department for Work and Pensions; and
- Health and Safety Executive

### Progress towards disability equality

3. The Health and Safety Executive worked jointly with the former Disability Rights Commission in 2007 to develop and publish principles and guidance on disability and risk management. This was given a high profile launch by the Chairs of both organisations and was warmly welcomed by disabled people. Available at the Health and Safety Executive website [www.hse.gov.uk/disability/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/disability/) or as an Easy Read version, it promotes good practice in disability equality at work and in health and safety risk assessment. It provides:

- an introduction to disability discrimination and health and safety law;
- advice for people doing health and safety risk assessments;
- advice for disabled people; and
- links to further sources of information, including grants.

4. The Health and Safety Executive website at [www.hse.gov.uk/disability/started.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/disability/started.htm):

- advises how to do risk assessments involving disabled job applicants and employees with a minimum of fuss; and
- provides links to information and financial grants. These help businesses make the sort of workplace adjustments that enable disabled people to enter and stay in work.

5. By working together, employers and disabled workers can get to grips with disability and health and safety. The process therefore works best when the employer involves the disabled worker and thinks about their individual circumstances. This helps avoid the following:

- people making assumptions about disabled people which can lead to poor practice or discrimination; and
- people hiding an impairment that might have health and safety implications for fear they won't get or keep a job.

6. Employers should:

- make sure they manage work risks for everyone;
- take account of disability, avoiding assumptions;
- involve disabled workers in doing risk assessments and making 'reasonable adjustments';
- consult others with appropriate expertise where necessary; and
- review the situation if necessary, working with the disabled person and/or their representative.

## Improving Communications

7. Following a review by the Central Office of Information on how it communicates with a diverse audience, the Health and Safety Executive launched a Communications Toolkit. This toolkit is designed to help staff improve communications with disabled people, for example providing guidance on identifying audiences, identifying barriers and ways to reduce these and best practice. The Toolkit is being used by staff and will continue to be promoted.

8. The Health and Safety Executive is working towards improving the diversity of its advisory and stakeholder groups. This is to make sure that the views of minority groups, including groups for disabled people, are represented.

9. Stronger links have been developed between the Health and Safety Executive and groups for disabled people. Examples of this include: a number of disabled groups confirming their interest in involvement in policy development; and the Health and Safety Executive working with tourist mine operators to secure proper access and evacuation for disabled visitors.

10. The Health and Safety Executive are carrying out further work to develop web pages on disability. This will give the wider health and safety community access to information, research findings, and examples of best practice on the issue of protecting the health and safety of disabled people in the workplace.

## Health and well-being at work

11. The Health and Safety Executive currently collects no data on health and safety and disability issues in the workplace. However, in its 2008/09 Diversity Action Plan it agreed to build and make better use of the evidence base in this area in its policies and operations. A literature review of existing research of health and safety and disability issues in the workplace is underway and is due to report by March 2009.

12. The Health and Safety Executive has promoted the use of the Stress Management Standards to senior industry and HR managers through a series of national workshops. Additionally they are developing more informative web pages (with case studies) on how to help people at work suffering from mental health issues connected with work-related stress, and how to help those absent from work with such conditions.

13. As at 31 March 2008, four per cent of Health and Safety Executive staff had a declared disability.

14. Whilst the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council does not have a Disability Equality Scheme (it is not required to have one), its Annual Report does make a commitment to diversity and equality.

➤ **Proposal for further progress – Health and Safety**

- The Health and Safety Executive will continue to apply the existing legislation to protect all workers, irrespective of gender, race or disability. The Health and Safety Executive will continue to provide specific information and advice on its website.
- Promotion of improved health and safety at work for all, including those with a disability, is driven by the Health and Safety Executive and their co-regulators in Local Authorities. Achieving that improvement requires a contribution by a range of other partners including employers and employees, and their organisations in the public and private sectors. The Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities will continue to develop and improve that partnership working to drive forward improvements in health and safety.
- The findings of the literature review the Health and Safety Executive has in hand will potentially inform policy development and inform the design of interventions that take account of the needs of disabled workers. It may also signal where further research would have value.

# CONCLUSION

This document has set out the ways in which the Department for Work and Pensions, its businesses and other relevant public bodies are making progress towards the goal of disability equality in key policy sectors. The Department has focused particularly on offering more specific support for disabled people who are able to work, to ensure equality of opportunity for all. New initiatives such as the Employment and Support Allowance will provide disabled people with more personalised support to get into work, whilst increasing the level of financial support afforded to the poorest and most severely disabled people.

The Department is working towards increased ease of use of its services, improving upon flexibility and accessibility so that advice and support is always available to those who need it. At the same time the Department is examining how to give disabled people greater choice and control over the support the state gives them to manage their conditions.

Progress is being made, but there are areas in which more work needs to be done:

- the Department is investing more in its supported employment provision to help address the barriers to work which disabled people face;
- mental health is still an area surrounded by stigma and discrimination: the Department will coordinate a cross-government response to tackle such difficulties and improve the employment chances of those with mental health conditions;
- working with its partners, the Department will ensure that the needs of disabled children, and children with disabled parents, are central to the development of its strategy for reaching the 2020 child poverty eradication target; and
- almost half of disabled people are over State Pension age: the Department will work with other public authorities to ensure that these people have independence and well-being in later life.

Our vision is equality for disabled people by 2025. With these current and future measures, we hope to achieve it.



This report can be accessed online at:

**[www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/  
dwp/2008/sos-report-on-disability-  
equality.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2008/sos-report-on-disability-equality.pdf)**

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