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09/03/2023

Dear Anne

### **Inquiry into the Disability Employment Gap**

I write with regards to Action Points originating from my appearance before the Economy and Fair Work Committee on 8 February 2023.

I made an undertaking to the Committee to provide further details on some issues raised. These are documented as Action Points, and are listed in **Annex A**. I hereby fulfil that commitment by addressing these issues in **Annex B**. I hope that the Committee finds this information useful.

Yours sincerely,

**Richard Lochhead**

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire  
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### 1. Provide Mental Health statistics in relation to covid impacts on the workforce—how many are impacted, by what and how.

#### Impact of covid on mental health and consequent employment figures

There is much data available illustrating the potential and actual impact of covid on mental health such as the Scottish Health Survey, a large, combined analysis of UK longitudinal studies, and the Scottish covid (SCOVID) mental health tracker study.

In contrast, data looking at the direct consequent impact on employment is more difficult to identify given other factors impacting on mental health such as 'cost of living' increases and also reverse causality of employment status impacting upon mental health. We are not aware of any data currently being collected which illustrates a direct link. UK labour force data from the Office of National Statistics looks at levels of unemployment and reasons for these, and also reasons for people wishing to return to work, from which some inference can be made about the impact of covid. Separately, long covid has many enduring health effects, including on mental health, and there is general data about the impact of long covid on economic activity, but not broken up by different health reasons.

#### Covid and mental Health

- Data from the 2021 Scottish Health Survey showed a drop in mean well-being (WEMWBS) scores in adults from 49.8 in 2019 to 48.6 in 2021, the lowest recorded across the survey years. Lowest wellbeing scores were recorded for younger individuals, particularly those aged 25 to 34 years, and those in the more deprived areas.
- In addition, 22% of adults had a GHQ-12 score of four or more (indicative of a possible mental health condition), which signifies an increase from 17% in 2019. The highest scores were seen in the 16 to 24 year old age group, [The Scottish Health Survey 2021 - Volume 1: Main Report \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2021-volume-1-main-report/pages/16-to-24-year-old-age-group.aspx).
- A combined analysis 11 UK longitudinal population-based studies examined the prevalence of poor mental health in the pre-pandemic period and at 3 pandemic time periods: 1- initial lockdown (March to June 2020); 2 - easing of restrictions (July to October 2020); and 3 - a subsequent lockdown (November 2020 to March 2021). Analyses were stratified by sex, race and ethnicity, education, age, and UK country.

In total, 49,993 adult participants (12,323 [24.6%] aged 55-64 years; 32,741 [61.2%] women; 4,960 [8.7%] racial and ethnic minority) were analysed. Across the 11 studies, mental health deteriorated from pre-pandemic scores across all 3 pandemic periods.

*Psychological Distress Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Adults in the United Kingdom Based on Coordinated Analyses of 11 Longitudinal Studies | Anxiety Disorders | JAMA Network Open | JAMA Network*

- The Scottish covid mental health tracker study assessed various mental health outcomes throughout the pandemic. This found that population mental health worsened during the pandemic, although noted that caution must be exercised in making comparisons with the available pre-pandemic measures. Worsening of mental health outcomes was sustained. However, trends suggested some improvement occurred between early in the pandemic (wave 1, May/June 2020) and 15 months in (wave 5, May/July 2021): mental wellbeing increased, rates of depressive symptoms decreased slightly, suicidal thoughts remained about the same. Rates of anxiety symptoms decreased slightly, although anxiety symptoms in wave 5 were higher than

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the previous 3 waves, suggesting a continuing impact upon people’s mental health.

People reported poorer mental health at times of higher restrictions.

*The early impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Scotland’s mental health - The early impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Scotland’s mental health – not just one story - Publications - Public Health Scotland*

### Mental Health and Employment

- The ONS Labour Force statistics document reasons for economic inactivity. However, data broken down by condition is only available to July 2022. It can be seen that the numbers for various conditions including mental illness have risen, although for depression, bad nerves or anxiety, this fell back in the most recent period.

Percentage change in economic inactivity owing to long-term sickness, by most common primary condition, people aged 16 to 64 years, UK, 2019 to 2022

| Date               | Other health problems or disabilities | Mental illness or suffer from phobias, panics or other nervous disorders | Depression, bad nerves or anxiety | Problems or disabilities connected with back or neck | Progressive illness not included elsewhere (e.g. cancer) |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| April to July 2019 | 239,364                               | 256,692  | 283,245                           | 200,353  | 211,095  |
| April to July 2020 | 304,509                               | 253,146  | 306,066                           | 225,952  | 209,766  |
| April to July 2021 | 298,490                               | 278,689  | 314,861                           | 228,878  | 183,014  |
| April to July 2022 | 336,556                               | 312,977  | 281,850                           | 262,272  | 213,146  |

*Half a million more people are out of the labour force because of long-term sickness - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)*

- Adults aged over 50 years have driven the increase in inactivity since the pandemic. Amongst those who left work since the pandemic and had not returned, adults aged 50 to 54 years were more likely to report mental health (11%) as reasons for leaving employment compared with those aged 60 to 65 years (3%), who were more likely to give retirement as the reason.
- However, amongst those who left work since the pandemic and had not returned, 42% of adults aged 50 to 65 with a physical or mental health condition or illness would consider returning to work in the future to improve their mental health (compared to 30% of those with no physical or mental illness).

*Reasons for workers aged over 50 years leaving employment since the start of the coronavirus pandemic - Office for National Statistics*

### Long covid

In July 2022, 23.3% of people aged 16 to 64 years with self-reported long COVID (symptoms at least four weeks after a confirmed or suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) infection that could not be explained by something else) were economically inactive (not working and not looking for work), compared with 21.4% of those without self-reported long COVID.

Between July 2021 and July 2022, the inactivity rate among working-age people with self-reported long COVID grew by 3.8 percentage points, compared with 0.4 percentage points among working-age people without self-reported long COVID.

*Self-reported long COVID and labour market outcomes, UK: 2022 - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)*

## 2. Investigate how much of Scottish Government budget to supporting organisations who support autistic people has been delayed in allocation; why the delay; and further justification on why Scottish Government are not using multi-year funding (offering at least minimum level funding)

Officials are not aware of any delays in funding allocation to organisations that support autistic people. However, officials are aware of an organisation that contacted Kevin Stewart MSP the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care, in January 2023, regarding funding for their organisation. The Scottish Government have spoken to the organisation, outlining its funding intentions through the Increasing the Understanding of Autism Fund and the core funding which the Scottish Government provides through its Learning Disability budget. This

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has allowed the charity to push back the triggers for their closure plans – those triggers are set by the charity themselves and I believe they work to a 9 month cycle.

The same organisation has applied for two funds *The Children, Young People, Families and Adult Learning Third Sector Fund* ((CYPFAL) and the *Investing in Communities Fund*. We wrote to all CYPFAL applicants on 19 December advising them that while we had planned to inform applicants of funding decisions by the end of 2022, this was unfortunately not possible as further consideration of funding awards was required. We recognise that the delay in communicating a funding decision will pose challenges for organisations and I am aware that the letter advised that next steps on the fund will be communicated at the earliest in the middle of February but no later than the end of March.

Submitted applications for the Investing in Communities Fund were assessed and considered by an Independent Panel in January 2023. All applicants were notified of the outcome on 21 February 2023. A list of all projects approved by the independent assessment panel for the second round of funding from the Investing in Communities Fund can be found at [Investing in Communities Fund - round 2 2023 to 2026: approved awards - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/investing-in-communities-fund-round-2-2023-to-2026-approved-awards-2023/pages/12.aspx)

With reference to why the Scottish Government does not use multi-year funding, I can advise that The Investing in Communities Fund is a multiyear communities fund that is delivered as part of the Empowering Communities Programme.

Employability officials have explored use of this funding approach. However, this is not considered feasible until the UK Government change their approach to funding devolved nations.

### **3. Provide further information on the National Transition to Adulthood Strategy and The Association for Real Change (Arc) Scotland's Principles into Practice Programme**

#### **National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy**

As set out in the 2021 Programme for Government, the Scottish Government are committed to introducing Scotland's first National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy in this Parliamentary term to support disabled young people as they make the transition to adult life:

*We will also begin work on a new National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy to support disabled young people as they make the transition to adult life, and provide them and those who look after them with joined-up guidance and support to unlock better educational and employment opportunities and health outcomes.*

(A fairer, greener Scotland, Programme for Government 2021-22, page 49)

To date we have laid the foundations to deliver on Scotland's first National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy through research and engagement. This has included:

- Funding the Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland to develop and test a web-based application called 'Compass' and to trial 'Principles into Practice' in 10 local authority areas to identify, design and test changes that transform how young people with additional support needs are supported in their transition to young adult life. The purpose of the trial is:

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- to improve the lived experiences of young people who need additional support to make the transition to young adult life, and to ensure young people are at the centre of all transition planning for their future;
- to test and bring Principles into Practice and its associated resources to completion.

More information on Principles into Practice and Compass can be found here [www.pn2p.scot](http://www.pn2p.scot).

- Commissioning a literature and evidence review of transitions to adult life, with a particular focus on what disabled young people have said to date to help inform future stakeholder engagement and to support the development of the Strategy.
- Re-forming a cross-policy working group (which was paused during the pandemic) to facilitate greater communication and co-ordination of the breadth of work across Scottish Government which contributes to improving outcomes for disabled young people as they transition to young adult life.

We are now progressing our external stakeholder engagement to develop the vision, values, aims and objectives of the National Transitions to Adulthood Strategy. This includes forming a new external strategic working group with representation of disabled young people, parent carers, education, social work, health, local authorities and third sector partners.

### **4. Provide information on how many disabled people are employed in Minister's portfolio area (JTEFW)**

Due to the overlap with other Ministerial portfolios, there are no clear splits across Directorates. I will, therefore, provide statistics using Director General areas that my portfolio has an interest in.

In 2019, the Scottish Government launched its Recruitment and Retention plan for disabled people. The plan outlines actions we will take as an employer to support more disabled people into work in Scottish Government and to enable existing disabled employees to thrive and succeed at work.

On 30th June 2019, 156 staff in DG Economy had declared they were disabled, which was 9.7% of all those who had declared, with 996 staff that hadn't declared their disability status. DG Net Zero was part of DG Economy at this point.

The number of staff declaring that they are disabled as at **30<sup>th</sup> September 2022** in each of Director General Economy and Director General Net Zero are 70 and 147 respectively. These are 15.4% and 9.6% of all paid and permanent staff in the Directorates General that have declared their disability status, with 221 and 793 staff in DG Economy and DG Net Zero respectively that have not declared their disability status. Temporary staff are not included in these counts as we don't collect their diversity data.

### **5. Provide information on specialist support available in schools and also in wider Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) portfolio area, e.g. around building capacity for young disabled people and their parents/ carers.**

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people, including those with additional support needs, get the support that they need to reach their

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full learning potential, and to be able to learn in the environment which best suits their needs.

Under the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004, education authorities have duties to identify, provide for and review the additional support needs of their learners. This includes children and young people within Early Learning and Childcare and those attending school.

Under the Act, an additional support need can arise for any reason and be of long or short-term duration. Support should be put in place as soon as a need is identified and is not dependant on a diagnosis.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide funded ELC to all entitled children in their area. All providers who wish to deliver funded early learning and childcare have to meet the National Standard for early learning and childcare in Scotland. This ensures consistent, high quality provision across all provider types. By entering into an agreement with local authorities to deliver the funded entitlement, funded providers are required to comply with the duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to provide appropriate support to ensure that children's additional support needs do not provide a barrier to them accessing a full range of experiences and meets their individual needs.

The Scottish Government is committed to supporting children and young people and their families to access their rights under the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004. We provide Reach - a website dedicated to children and young people aiming to help them feel supported, included, listened to and involved in decisions at school. For parents, we fund the Enquire Service to provide advice to parents on additional support for learning. We also provide Let's Talk ASN, a national advocacy and legal representation service supporting parents and carers with a right of reference to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal in exercising their rights around their child's support.

We recognise that more needs to be done to improve the learning experiences of children and young people with additional support needs. In 2020, Angela Morgan's review of implementation of additional support for learning was published. We have been working closely with local government partners to implement the review's recommendations. In November 2022, we published an updated action plan and a second progress report. We are working closely with local government partners on the Additional Support for Learning Project Board to deliver the remaining actions. A further update is due to be published in May 2024.

### **6. Provide information on comparative performance data on listed areas:**

- Fair Start Scotland & No One Left Behind performance (people supported) in rural and urban areas;
- Disability employment rates and Disability Employment Gap (DEG) in public, private and third sectors;
- Disability employment rates and DEG in different economic sectors (manufacturing etc);
- Disability employment rates and DEG in different geographical areas;
- Intersectional data, e.g. older/ younger disabled workers in different geographical areas and sectors.

### **Employability Services in Rural and Urban Areas**

Information on Fair Start Scotland participants split by rural and urban areas can be found at: Fair Start Scotland year four annual report: accompanying statistics - gov.scot ([www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot))

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This information is not currently available for No One Left Behind, however we will continue to work with Local Authorities to develop the data we collect and publish with a view to releasing further geographical analysis in the future.

### Background information on disability analysis

The analysis presented in this section is from the Annual Population Survey which is collected and published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The analysis relates to January to December 2021.

### Equality Act Disabled definition

The Equality Act Disabled variable is a derived variable which identifies those who self-reported a health condition lasting 12 months or more and who report that this condition reduces their ability to carry out day to day activities by a little or a lot.

From 2014, the definition of disability was changed to reflect the Equality Act 2010 legal definition of disabled, measured according to the Government Statistical Service Harmonised Standard.

### Disability Employment Gap

The disability employment gap is calculated by taking the difference between the employment rates of non-disabled and disabled people.

### Age range (16-64 years)

The age range has been restricted to 16-64 years as the disability variable is not robust for people aged 65 and over. Disability data is collected for people aged over 64 years at first contact only, resulting in a smaller sample size for this group which is not accounted for by the weighting. This means that data for those aged 65 and over will not be fully representative of the population.

### Employment in the public, private and third sectors by disability, 2021

- In 2021, it was estimated that 25.4 per cent of those in employment in the third sector aged 16 to 64 years were disabled. This was higher than the proportion in the public sector (17.2 per cent) and the private sector (15.3 per cent).

| Sector         | Proportion of people employed within sector who are not disabled | Number of people employed within sector who are not disabled | Proportion of people employed within sector who are disabled | Number of people employed within sector who are disabled |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|
| Private sector | 84.7%  | 1,420,100  | 15.3%  | 257,100  |
| Public sector  | 82.8%  | 591,500  | 17.2%  | 123,300  |
| Third sector   | 74.6%  | 72,400   | 25.4%  | 24,600   |
| All sectors    | 83.7%  | 2,089,500  | 16.3%  | 407,400  |

Source: Annual Population Survey, January-December 2021, ONS

Note: Third sector is defined as 'Charities, voluntary organisations and trusts'.



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### Employment by industry section and disability, 2021

- The proportion of disabled people in employment varies by sector.
- In 2021, the ‘Administration and support services’ sector had the highest proportion of disabled people in employment.

| Industries  | Proportion of employed people in 2021 within specified industry who are not disabled | Number of people employed within specified industry who are not disabled | Proportion of employed people in 2021 within specified industry who are disabled | Number of people employed within specified industry who are disabled |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| A: Agriculture, forestry and fishing              | 87.4%  | 29,000   | 12.6%  | 4,200  |
| B: Mining and quarrying                           | 92.6%  | 51,800   | 7.4%   | 4,200  |
| C: Manufacturing                                  | 87.5%  | 154,200  | 12.5%  | 22,100   |
| D: Electricity, gas, and air conditioning supply  | 88.8%  | 28,600   | 11.2%  | 3,600  |
| E: Water supply, sewerage, and waste              | 77.1%  | 17,400   | 22.9%  | 5,200  |
| F: Construction                                   | 88.3%  | 124,100  | 11.7%  | 16,400   |
| G: Wholesale, retail, and repair of vehicles      | 80.5%  | 231,100  | 19.5%  | 55,800   |
| H: Transport and storage                          | 86.0%  | 80,500   | 14.0%  | 13,100   |
| I: Accommodation and food services                | 84.5%  | 118,700  | 15.5%  | 21,800   |
| J: Information and communication                  | 87.3%  | 89,000   | 12.7%  | 12,900   |
| K: Financial and insurance activities             | 85.4%  | 104,100  | 14.6%  | 17,700   |
| L: Real estate activities                         | 85.2%  | 14,500   | 14.8%  | 2,500  |
| M: Professional, scientific, technical activities | 87.4%  | 159,900  | 12.6%  | 23,100   |
| N: Administration and support services            | 74.8%  | 73,200   | 25.2%  | 24,600   |
| O: Public administration and defence              | 84.7%  | 190,200  | 15.3%  | 34,400   |
| P: Education                                      | 82.1%  | 197,300  | 17.9%  | 42,900   |
| Q: Health and social work                         | 79.7%  | 298,600  | 20.3%  | 76,200   |
| R: Arts, entertainment, and recreation            | 82.4%  | 62,100   | 17.6%  | 13,200   |
| S: Other service activities                       | 82.9%  | 55,300   | 17.1%  | 11,400   |
| <b>All Industries</b>                             | <b>83.7%</b>   | <b>2,089,500</b>   | <b>16.3%</b>   | <b>407,400</b>   |

Source: Annual Population Survey, January-December 2021, ONS

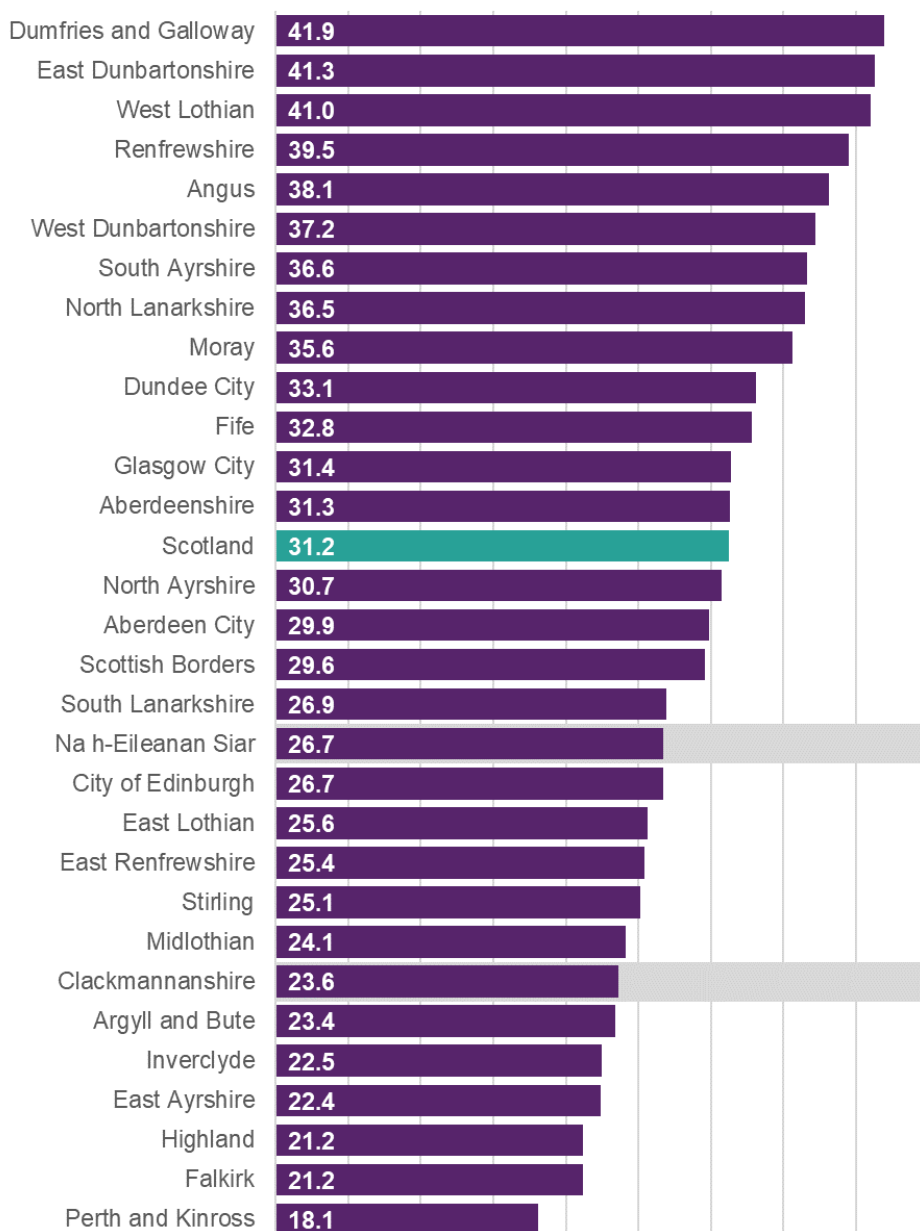
Notes: 1. Shaded estimates are based on small sample sizes and should be used with caution.

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### Disability employment rate gap by Local Authority

- The disability employment rate gap varies between Scottish local authorities.
- In 2021, Dumfries and Galloway, East Dunbartonshire and West Lothian had the largest disability employment rate gaps while Perth and Kinross, Falkirk and Highland had the smallest gaps.

Disability employment rate gap in 2021 (percentage points)



Source: Annual Population Survey, January-December 2021, ONS

Notes: 1. Estimates for Shetland Islands and Orkney Islands are not available as they are considered unreliable. 2. A shaded background indicates estimates are from small sample sizes and should be used with caution.

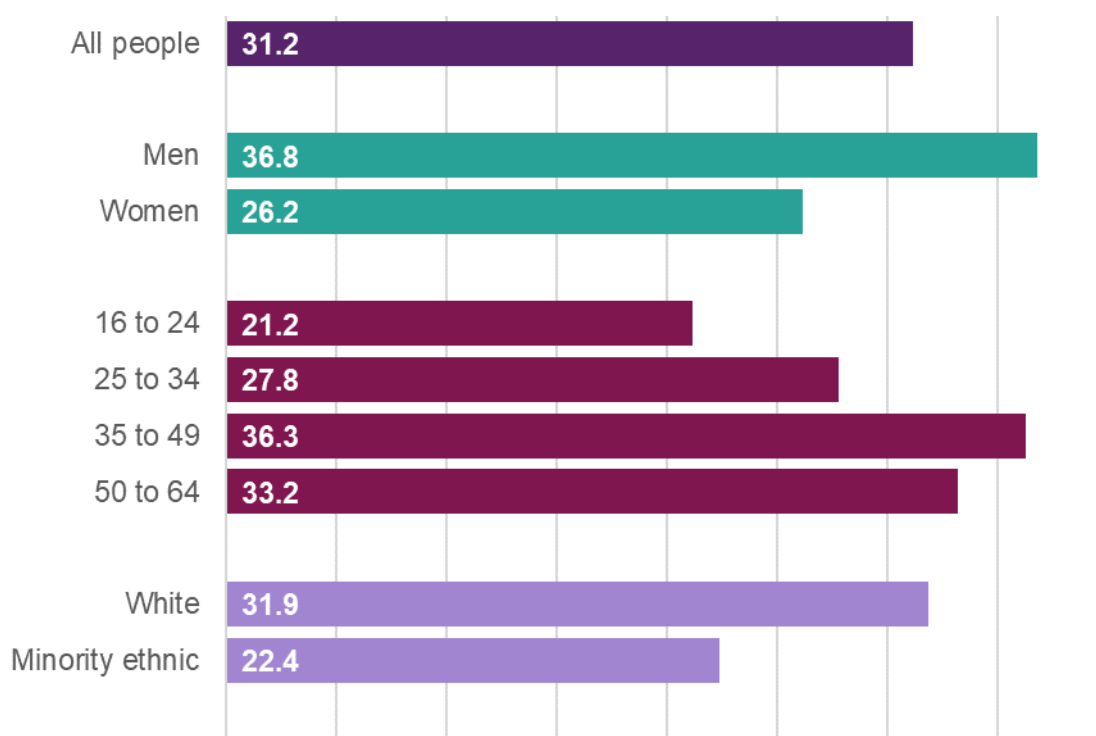
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### Disability employment rate gap by personal characteristics

Key points are:

- The disability employment rate gap was lowest for those aged 16 to 24 and highest for those aged 35 to 49.
- The disability employment rate gap was lower for women aged 16 to 64 (26.2 percentage points (pp)) than men (36.8 pp). The gap was lower for women than men across all age bands.
- The disability employment rate gap was lower for minority ethnic groups (22.4 pp) than white groups (31.9 pp)

#### Disability employment rate gap in 2021 (percentage points)



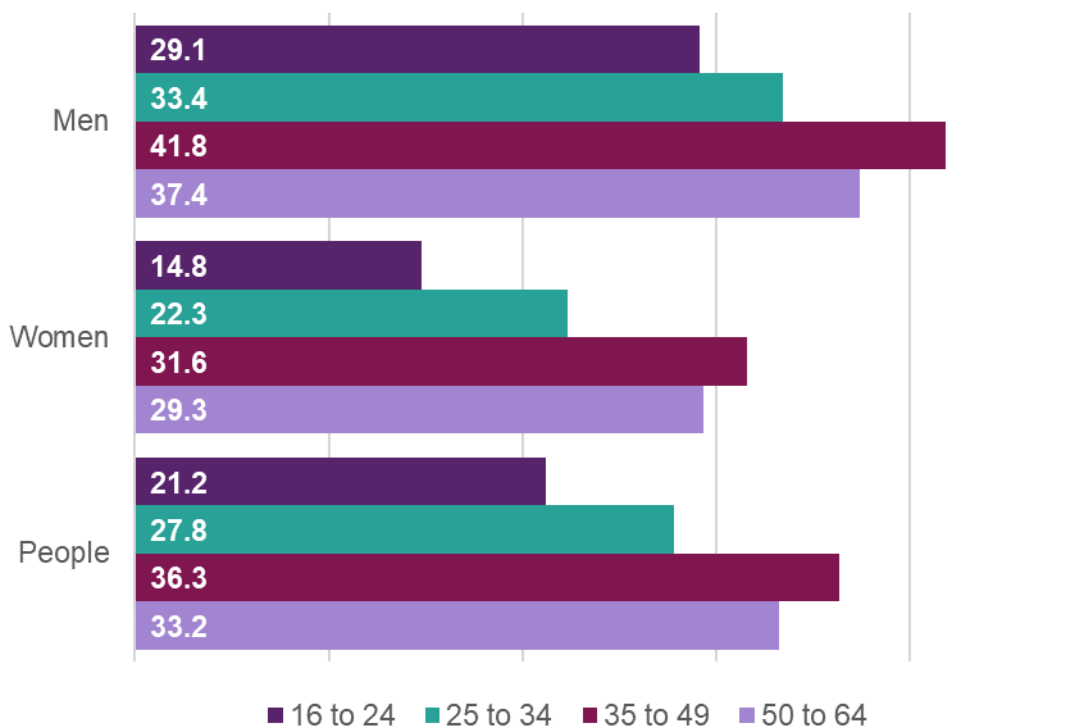
Source: Annual Population Survey, January-December 2021, ONS

Note: Respondents are asked questions about their ethnicity in the labour force survey interview. "Minority Ethnic" describes all ethnic groups excluding those who answered "White" to the first question.

There will be variation between the individual ethnic groups included within the combined 'Minority ethnic' group which should be considered. In Scotland, minority ethnic groups may suffer labour market disadvantages compared to white groups. "White" includes ethnic groups such as "White – Polish" and "White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller". Such groups may also suffer disadvantages in the labour market.

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Disability employment rate gap in 2021 (percentage points)



Source: Annual Population Survey, January-December 2021, ONS

*Scotland's Labour Market: People, Places and Regions – Protected Characteristics. Statistics from the Annual Population Survey 2021 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) (Pages 38-41)*

### **Scottish Government Equality evidence strategy**

In response to the Equality Data Improvement Programme review, the Scottish Government plans to publish detailed analysis on disability in the labour market in Scotland from the ONS Annual Population Survey by the end of 2023. This analysis would include intersectional breakdowns of disability by age, sex and ethnicity, etc.

Information from the Annual Population Survey for labour market outcomes is also published in: [Scotland's Labour Market: People places and regions- Protected Characteristics Disabled People in the labour market in Scotland](#)

### **7. Share information on learning disability/ autism/ neurodiverse actions (action plans) specifically focusing on employment**

#### **Background**

Employment helps people to feel valued - opportunities and choices to work are important for everyone. It is estimated that the employment rate for autistic people is 16% for compared with Scotland's national employment rate of 73%. The pandemic will have made this worse. The Scottish Government is reviewing the current schemes that help people with learning disabilities, autistic people and other marginalised groups to successfully obtain and keep a job.

The Scottish Government published our Learning/Intellectual Disabilities and Autism: Towards Transformation Plan in March 2021. The plan looks at the actions needed to shape supports, services and attitudes to ensure that the human rights of autistic people and

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people with learning /intellectual disabilities are respected and protected and that they are empowered to live their lives, the same as everyone else.

The actions with the plan on Data and Employment were:

- **Action 9** - The Scottish Government and partners including NHS Boards, the Scottish Commission for people with Learning Disabilities and the Scottish Learning Disability Observatory will deliver improvements in data collection and access to data to improve the visibility of these populations and consider the development of a Key Performance Indicator to monitor improvements.
- **Action 20** - The Scottish Government will continue to work towards our ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap as stated in A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People and A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan.
- **Action 21** - The Scottish Government will ensure that the voices of autistic people and people with learning/intellectual disabilities are heard and a meaningful and important part of the decision making in the review of supported employment provision across Scotland. Supported Employment plays an important part in helping people into work who would otherwise struggle to gain employment in the open labour market. As such, it is a model that can make an important contribution to the ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap in Scotland and will be more important than ever as part of our COVID-19 recovery efforts. The review is taking place in the first quarter of 2021 with the final report due in the summer of 2021.

### **Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill**

The Scottish Government wants to improve opportunities, outcomes and support for autistic people, people with learning disabilities, and neurodivergent people. To this end, we have committed to introducing a Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill.

The Bill will ensure that the rights of autistic people, people with learning disabilities, and neurodivergent people are respected and protected, addressing current inequalities, including exploring access to information and communication.

The Scottish Government aims to adopt a human rights-based approach to ensure that the Bill will be fully co-designed with people with lived experience, involving from the outset Disabled People-led Organisations and charities representing the views of a wide range of people who would be affected.

Scoping work on the Bill took place between May and July 2022. As part of this the Scottish Government ran a series of events to consider how people with lived experience view the Bill and to discuss potential key elements, including the role of a commissioner. We carried out 30 events with 18 different organisations and analysis of this work will be published soon.

To develop these options, we are establishing three advisory panels - a Lived Experience Advisory Panel, to assist in co-designing the formal consultation and key elements of the Bill's development; a Professional Panel; and a Stakeholder Panel.

The consultation will provide an opportunity for people across Scotland to express their views on policy options that could be included in the draft Bill, including whether the Bill should establish a Commissioner.

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My colleague, Kevin Stewart – Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care - announced that consultation on the Bill will take place in the second half of 2023. A decision on the timing of the Bill's introduction to Parliament will be taken by Cabinet in the context of setting the content of future legislative programmes.

### **Data on Learning Disabilities and Autism / Employment**

The Scottish Government acutely understands the importance of robust and caveated evidence to build understanding of the inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

Due to the limitation with current datasets, there is little reliable data on people with learning disabilities and autism in employment. Scottish Government recognises the need to clarify this picture and improve current employment statistics to better include autistic people.

This is why we have been working with our partners through the Keys to Life, the Scottish Strategy for Autism and the Towards Transformation Plan to take forward research to better understand the daily lives of people with learning disabilities and autistic people and the inequalities/barriers they face.

The Scottish Government has commissioned the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory (SLDO) to understand the health equalities and barriers faced by people with learning disabilities. SLDO reports and their methods can be found on their website.

Similarly the Scottish Commission for Learning Disability (SCLD) also produced a variety of evidence based reports to inform the development of policy around experience of people with learning disabilities including: employment, hate crime, health, social care, parenting and human rights. Through the pandemic SCLD also produced the How's Life Survey and provides a snap shot of the lives of people with learning disabilities through the pandemic. They also work alongside Public Health Scotland to produce routine Learning Disability Statistics Scotland using census data.

The Scottish Government is committed to ensuring autistic people have access to data that is important to them, including evidence about employment and employability in Scotland.

To achieve this Scottish Government are working with our partners to refocus data collection efforts to encompass the whole life journey through a Learning Disability and Autism Data Action Plan.

### **Different Minds Campaign**

We launched our Different Minds campaign in October 2020 to raise awareness and understanding of autism. The campaign was developed with autistic people, and runs in conjunction with funded projects across Scotland. As well as the website, there have been two runs of an advertising campaign on Scottish television. The Different Minds campaign aims to deliver a clearer understanding of autism and dispel myths surrounding it, leading to greater acceptance and increased understanding of autism.

The Scottish Government works with, and provides funding to, a variety of national organisations who provide services and support for people with neurodevelopmental differences as well as their families. These organisations help to increase awareness and understanding of autism and neurodevelopmental differences.

## **ANNEX B – Scottish Government response to the Action Points**

Through our Increasing Understanding of Autism Programme, in partnership with Inspiring Scotland, the Scottish Government funds employment projects run by nine autism organisations. The projects, including autism training for employers, aim to make employment and community participation more accessible and to help autistic people live active and independent lives. This programme is a direct response to the Scottish Government's 2017 engagement exercise, which emphasised the need to raise understanding of autism amongst the non-autistic population, and is linked to our Different Minds campaign.

### **8. Provide information on who the Scottish Government has engaged with in relation to Neurodiverse Bill, as well as employability related themes from engagements**

#### **The organisations we have engaged with regarding the Neurodiverse Bill are:**

- Autistic Mutual Aid Society of Edinburgh (AMASE)
- Down Syndrome Scotland (DSS)
- Autism Understanding Scotland (AUS) and Scottish Ethnic Minority Autistics (SEMA)
- Scottish Commission for Learning Disability (SCLD)
- Inspiring Scotland
- Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland
- Genetic Alliance UK
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Hub Scotland
- People First (Scotland)
- Learning Disability Assembly
- Autistic Knowledge Development
- Scottish Transitions Forum, Divergent Influencers
- ENABLE Scotland
- National Autistic Society (NAS)
- Scottish Autism
- Scottish Women's Autism Network (SWAN)
- Autism Rights Group Highland (ARGH)
- Number 6, One Stop Shop

The scoping report of work conducted last year on the Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill was published on 27 February 2023. The EFW Committee was copied into the letter regarding the report, separately, and provided with a link to that publication.

## **ANNEX B – Scottish Government response to the Action Points**

### **9. Speak to Permanent Secretary about the Scottish Government’s inflexibility to offer young people career academies compared to private sector.**

Young people career academies run in Scotland under the organisation [Career Ready](#). The Scottish Government is a long term supporter of this initiative and is listed on the Career Academies UK website as a supporter. Career Ready is not specifically aimed at disabled young people (neither are career academies UK). It is a social mobility charity which supports young people who potentially face barriers in education and employment. The scheme provides one-to-one mentoring and a paid internship.

Last year we successfully onboarded Scottish Government’s largest ever Career Ready cohort – 38 interns. We received outstanding feedback from Career Ready team: *The welcome and quality of work offered [...] sends a very clear message about what you stand for and how you are seriously enabling young people’s futures. [...] Simply wonderful.*

Our partnership with Career Ready continues with 16 mentoring partnerships underway which will lead to paid internships in summer 2023.

### **10. Provide details of Fair Start Scotland in-work support for disabled people.**

- Up to 12 months in-work support is available to disabled participants and employers on Fair Start Scotland.
- The in-work support offer includes a dedicated key worker, one-to-one regular appointments and payment to cover travel costs in the first weeks of starting a job. It can also include support such as workplace adjustments to ensure participants needs are met to help them sustain employment.

### **11. Provide further information on the level of ongoing support available to individuals once they are in-work through Fair Start Scotland and No One Left Behind.**

- No One Left Behind in-work support is person centred and the needs of the individual determine the scale, scope and duration of the support required.
- Individuals are assigned a key worker, who works closely with the individual to identify their specific needs and create a tailored package of support, linking in with other services including housing, health and justice to provide holistic wrap-around support, which is available at the point of need.
- There is no fixed duration or content and the person, and their employer, where appropriate, will receive the support required for employment to be sustained.
- Fair Start Scotland offers up to 12 months in-work support, offering a package of support for participants and their employer.
- A broad range of support is offered to help participants on their journey towards and into employment. While support is always tailored to the individual this can include; access to bespoke workshops and training; support improving IT skills; CV and interview support and; work placements or volunteering opportunities. Referrals to specialist partners are also made where required for barriers such as mental health, housing and debt management.



## **ANNEX B – Scottish Government response to the Action Points**

- Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is delivered through Fair Start Scotland and is a model of supported employment proven to work particularly well in offering assistance to people with additional support needs, especially those with severe and enduring mental ill health, to help them find or re-enter sustainable employment that fits their needs and interests.
- Supported Employment is an evidence-based, personalised approach that provides support to disabled people, or other disadvantaged groups, to secure and maintain paid employment in the open labour market. It is based on a “place and train” model, where participants learn on-the-job with support from work colleagues, backed up by the skills of a job coach or employment support worker who provides support to both the individual and potential employer.
- In response to the findings from the Supported Employment and IPS reviews, we have already begun to explore how continuous improvement activities can strengthen the support offer to participants and will use these findings to inform the design of future employability services.

### **12. Whether we know where further improvements to data collection need to be made to inform disabled people’s employment. Also provide timetable and information on specific plans to collect improved data.**

- The Shared Measurement Framework (SMF) was a key commitment made in the 2018 Review of Employability Services and will play a crucial role in delivering one of the No One Left Behind objectives: ‘driven by evidence, including data and the experience of users’.
- The first iteration of the framework, published in April 2022, establishes a shared understanding of how we measure the impact of employability services for the people and areas they aim to support.
- A key element of that is collecting standardised data items with consistent definitions. The initial data recommendations made by the SMF build on existing data collection practice and activity currently in place between Local and Scottish government.
- Data on disability and related employment outcomes for disabled people has been routinely collected since April 2020; the collection and reporting of disability status has been standardised in line with SG recommended classifications as part of the first phase of SMF recommendations, and on the theme of ‘Progression’, we are now collecting additional detail on employment to better understand the type and conditions of work that people enter; such as contract type, hours worked and rate of pay.
- We have also started collecting data on participants’ long term health conditions, providing visibility on the reach and progression for particular groups such as those with learning disabilities.
- All Local Authorities will provide their return on the new template for the next quarter (October - December 2022). The new template will result in a significant improvement to our outputs going forward. We are working closely with Local Authorities through our Data and Reporting Group to ensure the quality and value of our statistics are maintained while this transition takes place.

## **ANNEX B – Scottish Government response to the Action Points**

### **13. Provide further information on local delivery arrangements for Employability programmes including working with local partners and with UK Government (DWP) and governance arrangements for this.**

#### Delivery:

- No One Left Behind is governed locally by Local Employability Partnerships who have the flexibility to design and deliver support aligned with local labour markets and the needs of service users in their areas.
- The No One Left Behind approach is generating locally designed and commissioned services, influencing and supporting more efficient use of public funds in the long term by reducing duplication across the system.
- Partnership working is integral to the success of No One Left Behind which is why Scottish and Local Government are working in partnership with third, public and private sectors and service users themselves as we work to design, deliver and improve the Scottish Approach to employability, ensuring that provision it is more flexible, tailored and responsive to local labour market need.
- Fair Start Scotland is delivered nationally by a mixed economy of public, private and third sector providers across nine geographical areas throughout Scotland.

#### Governance:

- We have published our National Strategy for Economic Transition Delivery Plans which set out how we will work with partners to deliver across five programmes of action. The No One Left Behind approach plays a key role in contributing to Programme 5, A Fairer and More Equal Society. Building on existing governance arrangements, the introduction of an All-Age Employability Steering Group will support the delivery of project level actions as we aim to simplify the employability system and eradicate structural barriers for people participating in the labour market.
- The UK Government Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) activity in delivering support under UK reserved powers continues to play an important role in the success of Employability Services and is the main source of referrals to Fair Start Scotland. The Scottish Government continues to work closely with DWP to ensure that Fair Start Scotland remains visible and reflective of participants' needs via Job Centre Plus work coaches.
- To support Fair Start Scotland and to cement close working between DWP and the Scottish Government, we developed a Joint Operational Framework which was agreed by Ministers to compliment and be consistent with the overarching joint working agreements already in place between the two organisations.

## ANNEX B – Scottish Government response to the Action Points

### 14. Issue a clarification to the Minister’s statement that the draft 23/24 budget includes just under £70 million for employability programmes.

- This year (**2022/23**), we have committed over **£59 million** through the No One Left Behind approach, which is utilised by Local Employability Partnerships to design and deliver services that meet the needs of local people and local labour markets.
- The 2023-24 Budget will provide **£121 million** to support employability, skills for our young people and fair work - this is a **£6.5 million** increase in spend in comparison to 2022-23 and demonstrates our commitment to eradicate child poverty and ease labour shortages for business.
- The draft budget set out plans to invest **£69.7 million** in supporting parents to enter employment, or increase their income. Whilst subject to parliamentary approval, this will support the scaling of support for parents.