



## Scottish Parliament Academic Fellowship Scheme 2023/24

### Fellowship on the disability employment gap in Scotland

The Scottish Government publish regular data on the disability employment gap which is sourced from the [ONS Annual Population Survey](#). This is the difference between the employment rates for those who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 compared to those who do not.

On [25 January 2023 the Economy and Fair Work Committee held an evidence session to explore the disability employment gap](#) and how policy is working to reduce this in Scotland. This was followed by a [session with the Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work](#).

One of the key themes in these sessions related to the limitations in data available to understand this issue. In particular, while the data exists to identify the headline employment rate for those with a disability under the Equality Act, there is a lack of granularity in this data. This means that it is very difficult to make an assessment of the experience of different groups within the labour force. The Committee heard that progress in reducing the disability unemployment gap had been uneven, and that there was a lack of granular data to be able to assess which interventions were having a positive impact.

The Economy and Fair Work Committee is interested in returning to this work later in the Parliamentary session and wishes to have research to help it better understand the availability of data and the effectiveness of current policy.

#### What will the work involve?

Whilst we are happy to discuss approaches, we envisage that the work could involve:

- Producing an overview of data currently available.
- Identification of gaps in this data collection, and where these could be addressed to improve the timeliness and granularity of data on disabled people's experience in Scotland's labour market.
- Some evaluation of which factors have contributed to the reduction in the disability employment gap in Scotland over the last decade, and identification of any areas of uneven progress.

#### Outputs and ways of working for this fellowship

At this stage we envisage that the main output for this work would be a SPICe briefing summarising the issues outlined above. The briefing must be written in a clear, accessible and jargon free manner which can be easily used and understood by MSPs. The [SPICe style guide](#) explains what this means in practice.

For a recent example of a similar SPICe fellowship briefing see the 2022 SPICe briefing on [Human rights budgeting](#).

In addition, as this fellowship would complement the work of the Economy and Fair Work Committee, we expect that there would be some opportunities to engage directly with the Committee, for example in presenting the final report.

We aim to give the fellow a rounded experience of working in, and with, the Parliament, and where relevant can look for opportunities for the fellow to observe a range of parliamentary activities.

### **Experience needed**

We are looking for candidates who have in-depth understanding of Scotland's labour market and the datasets available. Ideally, candidates would also have understanding of employability and fair work policy in Scotland, and the service delivery landscape.

As outlined above, candidates will have to be able to communicate clearly and succinctly for a parliamentary audience who are not necessarily experts in this field.

We do accept joint applications. However, if more than one person is applying it will be advantageous to be able to demonstrate that the candidates have worked effectively together in the past.

### **Timescale**

We anticipate at this stage that the work would have to be completed by the end of September 2023, with a final briefing being published around October 2023.

### **Funding**

The Parliament does have a limited budget which it can use to fund or part-fund fellows (previously, funding provided has typically been between £3-4,000), and applicants have often identified additional sources of funding to complement this.

### **Further information**

Please contact Andrew Feeney-Seale in SPICe if you wish to discuss further ([andrew.feeney-seale@parliament.scot](mailto:andrew.feeney-seale@parliament.scot)).