

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Cydraddoldeb a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol ar Anabledd a Chyflogaeth

This response was submitted to the Equality and Social Justice Committee consultation on Disability and Employment

DE13

Ymateb gan: Dr Jonathan Vincent | Response from: Dr Jonathan Vincent



Senedd Consultation | Disability and Employment

Submitting: Dr Jonathan Vincent, submitted as an academic at Lancaster University

Terms of reference	Evidence offered
What progress has been made to deliver the recommendations set out in the 'Locked Out' report and to reduce and remove barriers faced by disabled people who want to access Wales's labour market.	<p>Vincent and Ralston (2024) demonstrate that autistic university graduates (including those from Wales) had consistently the poorest employment outcomes over a six year period compared to graduates with other disabilities or those who did not report a disability.</p> <p>For a highly qualified group within the UK population, only 34% of those who identified as autistic recorded working full time compared to 57% with an Other Disability and 68% of those who reported No Disability.</p> <p>This same study showed under-employment with autistic graduates less likely to earn over £25,001 and more likely to earn below £20,000 compared to graduates with Other Disabilities and those with No Disabilities.</p>
Why progress to reduce the employment and pay disability gap has been so difficult to achieve.	<p>Vincent, Harkry and Hamilton (2024) demonstrate that whilst some employers have adequate knowledge of autism, there is a lack of confidence about how to implement inclusive work environments.</p> <p>Vincent, Harkry and Hamilton (2024) report how some employers (especially from SMEs) perceive employing disabled / autistic people as an organisational risk – both reputationally and economically.</p> <p>Tomlinson, M, Vincent, J...Toogood, C. (2024) showed that the recruitment process was a barrier for neurodivergent graduates, who were often not able to convert their degree-related skills into desired graduate-level roles. This represents a degree of under-employment.</p> <p>Vincent (2020) also shows that many autistic graduates experience barriers in the recruitment processes including interpreting job descriptions, applying for roles, completing interviews, and on-boarding processes.</p>

<p>How the social model of disability is being used to underpin employment and recruitment practices, and what barriers continue to exist throughout society that impact on access to work (i.e. transport, attitudes).</p>	<p>Vincent and Fabri (2021) outline how discrimination in the workplace has led to disabled / autistic people not accessing work or leaving employment prematurely.</p>
<p>What further policy measures are needed to support disabled people, young disabled people and employers to increase participation rates and what can be learned from elsewhere.</p>	<p>Vincent and Fabri (2021) remind about the importance of seeing employment as part of a wider ecosystem where both proximal (personal characteristics and preferences) and distal factors (employer / social attitudes and government policy) all interact simultaneously. A re-framing focuses policy on the complexity and multifaceted nature of employment.</p>
<p>What actions would support those who are currently unable to work to access voluntary opportunities (which could lead to future work opportunities).</p>	<p>Vincent, Harkry and Hamilton (2024) report that the main perceived driver to employing disabled / autistic people was training. The study showed that training led by disabled/autistic people themselves tended to have a positive impact on hiring attitudes.</p> <p>Vincent (2020) indicates how making recruitment processes more transparent and offering reasonable adjustments would make these more inclusive for disabled and autistic people.</p> <p>Vincent and Fabri (2021) also show how training for employers can shift the culture in workplaces although they warn against the commodification of disabled / autistic people as having an ‘economic advantage’ without balancing this against putting reasonable adjustments in place.</p>