

Subject: Tackling the Disability Employment Gap

Report to: Economy Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 17 January 2019

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides background information for the Economy Committee meeting on the disability employment gap in London. The discussion with expert guests will explore the disability employment gap in London, with a focus on what support is available to disabled Londoners in-work or looking for work and what actions the Mayor can take to support better these Londoners.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the report as background to the discussion with invited guests on the disability employment gap in London and notes the subsequent discussion.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee delegates authority to the Chairman, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree an output from the meeting.**

3. Background

- 3.1 London's employment rate is at historically high levels. However, the employment rate for disabled Londoners was only 51.4 per cent in 2017. That's 27 percentage points below the rate for all Londoners (age 16 to 64). Although more disabled people are in employment as a proportion of the total than in 2007, the disability employment gap has barely moved in a decade.
- 3.2 The evidence base for the Mayor's Skills for Londoners Strategy points to a number of underlying factors that may be impeding disabled Londoners in their search for suitable employment. These include:
- Disabled people have on average lower level qualifications. Around a fifth of Londoners with a disability have a qualification at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 4+, compared to around a half of those without;
 - Disabled people are more likely to be working part time, if they are in employment; an

- Almost a quarter of disabled people have never used the internet, compared to 4.9% of non-disabled people.

3.3 There are a number of initiatives at both the national and regional level to help to begin to close the gap including the 2018 devolution of the Work and Health Programme (WHP) to London government and the government's Disability Confident Scheme designed to encourage businesses to employ more disabled people.

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The Committee is asked to note the terms of reference for its investigation into the disability employment gap in London, as set out below, which were agreed by the Chair under delegate authority, following consultation with the Deputy Chair and party Group Lead Member:

This inquiry will:

1. Identify the challenges of getting someone who is disabled into, and to stay in, work from the perspective of the employer and the potential employee;
2. Identify the key intervention points in someone's journey into work when support is likely to be most effective;
3. Highlight initiatives that work and assess whether the Mayor's current initiatives in this area are delivering for disabled people; and
4. Propose concrete steps that the Mayor can take to help support individuals with disabilities and those organisations that work with individuals with disabilities to better access the labour market.

4.2 On 4 December 2018, the Committee visited the Poppy Factory, the country's leading employment charity for veterans with physical and/or mental health conditions. The Committee heard about the challenges that disabled people face when trying to access the labour market and about the great work that the Poppy Factory does to support disabled veterans into work and in employment. A note of the site visit is attached at **Appendix 1**.

4.3 At this second meeting, Members will discuss with guests the main issues faced by disabled people in London when seeking work and examine the support offered by leading organisations to help disabled people finding work and in-work.

4.4 The following guests have been invited to attend the meeting:

- A representative from London Central Forward;
- A representative from Remploy;
- James Taylor, Head of Policy, Campaigns and Public Affairs, Scope;
- Tracey Lazard, Chief Executive Officer, Inclusion London; and
- Jon Rees, Making it Work Project Manager, Inclusion London.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in the report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications to the Greater London Authority arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – Note of site visit to the Poppy Factory held on 4 December 2018

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
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