



International
Inequalities Institute

An Inclusive Future for Work

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Learning in the pandemic

- Am I alone in having worked for an organisation that said it was impossible for someone to work remotely? – ‘working together every day just is how we work’
- Yet recently some disabled people found work flexibilities they’d been told were impossible were ushered in almost overnight. Frances Ryan describes people’s fear of going back to the ‘normal’ of being excluded from everyday life if on-line work and social meetings are phased back out (Guardian June 2 2021)



Learning in the pandemic

- Most home workers - despite health challenges and risks of overworking - want hybrid or home working in future, to live a larger life
(<https://www.vitality.co.uk/business/healthy-hybrid-report/>)
- Employers are exploring the best hybrid models: eg face to face for creativity, serendipity, social connection
(<https://home.kpmg/uk/en/blogs/home/posts/2021/04/why-we-will-need-to-return-to-the-office-but-not-as-we-know-it.html>)



Wider pandemic challenges

- Impact of pandemic on large numbers of people, in challenging situations: no choice to work remotely, insecure work/income, no work, business closure, living with bereavement, long covid.....
- People receiving Universal Credit went up by 3 million (98%) from March 2020-Jan 2021(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-statistics-29-april-2013-to-14-january-2021>)
- In London, 41% of low income workers had no secure contract with minimum set of hours (<https://learningandwork.org.uk/resources/research-and-reports/paved-with-gold-views-on-job-quality-in-the-capital/>)
- Unequal impacts of recession on labour market – young people hit hard, esp. from black and minority ethnic communities. Projected growth in long-term unemployment (<https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/news/one-year-we-averted-jobs-catastrophe-now-we-need-secure-recovery>) also older and disabled people

Inequalities compounding those that went before

- RSA found in sectors like hospitality and sports, there were workers at risk from both Covid impacts and automation. They tended to be under 30, lower-paid and have lower levels of education (https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/foundation/new-site-blocks-and-images/reports/2020/10/work_and_automation_in_time_of_covid_report.pdf)
- The disability employment gap seemed to show a welcome reduction from 2015-19 and then rise slightly in 2020. But academic analysis suggests the gap may not have truly shrunk: more people at work were open about disability but there was no reduction in disabled people out of work (<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7540/>; <https://www.nao.org.uk/press-release/supporting-disabled-people-to-work/>)

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
33.6%	30.8%	30.6%	30.2%	28.1%	28.8%

Inequalities compounding

- The disability pay gap ‘means that disabled people effectively work for free for the last 60 days of the year and stop getting paid on Sunday 1 November’ (TUC at <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/disabled-workers-earning-fifth-less-non-disabled-peers-tuc-analysis-reveals>)
- In many organisations, data illuminates unequal experiences – for instance, black and minority ethnic colleagues being less likely than their peers to trust the fairness of progression opportunities
- Despite the temptation to get ‘back to normal’ we may not want to – or be able to – turn the clock back

So what is to be done?

A vision:

- the opportunity for all to secure good work
- where the concept of 'good work' fully incorporates inclusion, so everyone can thrive

2 (linked) challenges:

- Who has the greatest chance of having work, with security and at what level of hours, seniority and pay?
- What is the quality of that work in terms of inclusivity?

Targeted - or piecemeal? - action

- Action to date has often focused on only some components of the change vehicle needed
- For instance employers affected by gender pay requirements have reduced the pay gap on average by 19% (<https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2021/c-March-21/Gender-pay-gap-closes-by-one-fifth-after-reporting-introduced>)



Yet if employers gain by understanding their workforce and overcoming barriers to recruiting and progressing talent – why not go on to analyse beyond gender eg on race and disability?

Wider benefits

‘Why are there requirements to report on gender as employers but not on disability?’

(Paul Polman, then Chief Executive, Unilever)

- Reports from EHRC, Centre for Social Justice, Sayce, All-party parliamentary group on disability recommend this
- Business Disability Forum details the business gains that global companies like HSBC seek through doing so
- 89% of respondents to their research named an inclusive culture as a goal of understanding their data

Inclusive culture and practice

- Hard to argue with focus for impact – but we need a whole vehicle to move to good work for all
- Valuable 500 uses the term ‘diverse-ish’ to describe Boards that discuss (say) race but not disability
- The NHS is moving from its Workplace Race Equality Standard to a disability standard



Thinking across
different experiences,
linking different
networks and policies to
achieve inclusive
culture

To return to flexible working

- Flexible working policies started life to meet a demand, especially from parents (mainly women), for part-time work and job share
- The pandemic - and organisations like www.timewise.co.uk - show it has far wider importance, to support those with caring roles, impairments/health conditions, and simply people who want a different balance in life eg reducing commuting time
- So it needs an integrated approach

What different groups of people say they need

People with energy impairments seek greater autonomy over when and where to deliver the work, with these key adjustments available:

- reduced hours of work
- working from home in order to eliminate the energy demands of commuting, manage sensory sensitivity, and promote rest breaks
- flexibility over working times and
- autonomy over pacing of work activity and rest

(<https://www.centreforwelfarereform.org/library/i-already-have-a-job.html>)

People with learning disabilities seek job redesign so that not every job requires constant change of tasks – but rather putting learnable tasks together into roles in which people can thrive

Flexible working

- Integrated policies on flexible working cover the ‘where, when, what and how’ of the work – not just where and when
- So people can achieve the outputs and outcomes in the way that best works for them and for the particular job – thinking creatively about win-wins, making work genuinely inclusive
- All roles could be advertised as open to flexible working – with discussion available as to which flexibilities are on offer
- A 2021 CIPD survey found almost half (46%) of workers responding did not have flexible working options
(<https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/flexible-working-impact-covid#gref>)
- Timewise found only 22% of job adverts cited flexible working
- There is still a way to go

Learning: for employers

- Integrated approaches bring wider and often simpler gains of inclusive policies, practices, culture – working on individual components but critically also linking them
- Foster good, inclusive work for all: bringing together the outcomes required and people's autonomy and well-being
- At local level, networks of employers, with public sector anchor institutions, can use their leverage to spread not only (vitally) the number of living wage employers but employers offering good, inclusive work (building on examples like London's 'good work standard', Greater Manchester's 'good employment charter')

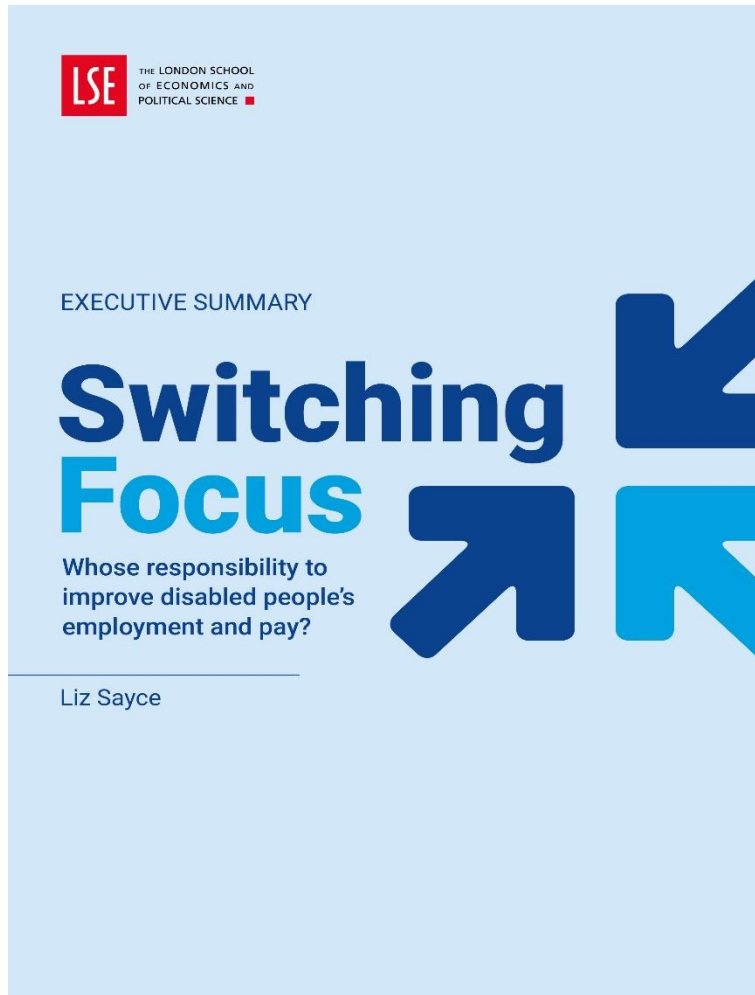
For government

- Think inclusion across policy eg if free childcare supports parents to work, what about social care support both to give older and disabled people freedom AND to enable their relatives to work?
- Disability Rights UK recently challenged government to ensure all their jobs programmes – like Kickstart – were fully inclusive to disabled people. Not relying only on specialist programmes (often for small numbers) but opening up the mainstream
- Employment policy has often focused on the individual – through benefit incentives, back to work programmes. OECD recently stated that in 20 years of promoting policies, including work incentives and early intervention, the disabled employment gap has barely changed in OECD countries
- It is time to shift focus from the individual to inclusive policies – to promote shared responsibility between governments, employers and individuals for good work opportunities for all



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Switching focus

Making employment and pay better for people with disabilities - Who is responsible for it?



In conclusion

- Let's work for an integrated vision of good work – that opens up new opportunities, for more diverse people to have work with a living wage, living hours - and inclusion
- In the organisation I worked in years ago, we changed the rigidities and recruited and retained great, diverse people as a result

<https://mailchi.mp/5891db7984b4/special-report-liz-sayce-switchingfocus-whose-responsibility-to-improve-disabled-peoples-employment-and-pay>

