



What works to support employers to recruit disabled people and people with health conditions?



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evidence programme

Olivia Garner (IES)

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Research questions

1. What are the most effective ways for employers, particularly SMEs, to recruit disabled people and people with health conditions?
2. What enables employers, particularly SMEs, to increase their recruitment of disabled people and people with health conditions?

What are the main barriers employers face that influence the extent to which they can or are willing to recruit disabled people and people with health conditions, and how can they be overcome?

3. What information can be provided by Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) delivery staff to employers to encourage and support the recruitment of disabled people and people with health conditions?



What did we set out to find?

Practical evidence for local employment support delivery, focussing on:

- **inclusive recruitment practices** that aim to increase recruitment of disabled people and/or people with health conditions at the point of job entry; **enablers** of inclusive recruitment practices; and **ways to support employers** to adopt inclusive approaches; and/or
- the attainment of individual **outcomes**, employer outcomes or effective practice;
- high and moderate **quality** impact studies, process studies and studies/reviews highlighting ‘**what works**’ elements of a programme or intervention;
- published between 1997 and April 2026, in high-income OECD countries.

15 moderate or high-quality reports were found in the core evidence base



Enablers of inclusive recruitment practice

Capability and confidence is key – SMEs may need more support with developing this.



Employer knowledge and access to information



Senior leadership commitment and organisational intent



External support and advice



Honest communication with applicants



Recruitment tools to support inclusive decision-making



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Inclusive recruitment practices



Structured assessment

Clear, job-relevant criteria and objective scoring

Example: Inclusion-focused AI used fairness prompts to support merit-based decisions (Yang 2026)



Disability-specific training

Improves knowledge, attitudes and intent to hire

Example: Interactive video training on blindness and low vision (McDonnall and others 2026)



Accessible application processes

Accessible processes help remove barriers at the application stage



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The role of Active Labour Market Policy delivery staff



Explain schemes and tools

Build employer knowledge

Access to Work, Disability
Confident and Health
Adjustment Passports



Provide accessibility advice and guidance

Support employers to
make job adverts and
recruitment processes
more accessible

Inclusive language,
communicating employer
flexibility and
accommodations clearly



Intermediary role

Match opportunities with
participants' capabilities,
support needs & work
preferences



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Next steps

01

Find more information in the published report

The review draws on robust evidence but there are evidence gaps

02

Adapt approaches locally

UK-specific evidence is limited, and differences by sector, local economy and for SMEs.

03

Further outputs coming soon

Recommendation sheets, useful links and discussion questions



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Webpages:

www.employment-studies.co.uk/labour-market-evidence-programme-landing-page/

Please email us: labourmarketevidence@learningandwork.org.uk

Next webinar: 21st October, What works to support people to retrain at the local level?

Past recordings and webinar booking available here: <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/labour-market-evidence-programme-landing-page/forthcoming-webinars-recordings-of-past-events/>

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