

# Delivering change for disabled people through economic empowerment: COSP15 roundtable

Thank you Madam Chair,

The aim of the United Kingdom government is clear: to deliver long term change through practical actions and wide ranging policies across government, which enable disabled people to live full and independent lives. I'm therefore delighted to take part in this very important roundtable discussion.

We are delivering on this ambition in terms of economic empowerment. We've seen 1.3 million more disabled people in work than in 2017, delivering a government commitment five years early. The general trend in disability employment has been positive, with strong growth in the number and rate of disabled people in employment and a narrowing of the disability employment gap.

Over the next three years, our government will invest £1.3 billion in employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions. For example, the Access to Work Scheme provides employees with grants of up to up to £62,900 per year to cover workplace adaptations such as special equipment, support workers and travel to and from work.

More and more employers are recognising the value that disabled people can bring to their business as talent and indeed, as customers. But many employers still lack the confidence, the knowledge, the processes and skills they need to support disabled staff effectively and be inclusive and fully accessible. And that's why through the Disability Confidence Scheme, we're working with employers to change attitudes and create employment opportunities through the recruitment and retention of disabled people in the workplace.

I want to take this opportunity to agree with the representative of the World Blind Union who spoke so powerfully of dignity and simple desire, but also of the interlocking other challenges. Josh Wintersgill's story from the panel told us this as well.

So our goal therefore is to improve disabled people's everyday lives in the United Kingdom. And together with all of you at this conference, we want disabled people to be economically empowered and part of economic growth as we build back better after the pandemic. Thank you.