

# Disability Confident scheme leads to inclusive workforce

More than 29,000 disabled benefit claimants have been supported to start their own business through government funding, new figures show.

This represents almost a quarter of all total start-ups funded by the New Enterprise Allowance, which launched 8 years ago to help unemployed people become their own boss as a route off benefits.

The New Enterprise Allowance offers budding entrepreneurs a cash injection of up to £25,000 for their business idea, as well as the support of a personal business mentor and weekly living allowance.

The figures come as we mark the third anniversary of the Disability Confident scheme, which was created to provide employers with the skills and confidence they need to attract, recruit, retain and develop disabled people in the workplace.

Today the Secretary of State has confirmed a series of changes to the scheme to help businesses achieve their goal of workplace inclusivity, including a new requirement for leading Disability Confident employers to practice what they preach and ensure disabled people are on their payroll.

Work and Pensions Secretary Thérèse Coffey said:

I want to ensure we live in a fair society in which disabled people are empowered to get on in their chosen career. These figures show the huge progress being made under this government to help them realise their aspirations.

While we have made great gains so far, today I am calling on all businesses to take a look at their record on disability employment and think about what they can do to help create a more equal Britain.

Thousands of businesses – including major employers such as Sainsbury's and GlaxoSmithKline – have already signed up to the scheme.

Changes being rolled out imminently include requiring Disability Confident Leader businesses to publicly report on their disability employment using a Voluntary Reporting Framework and extending membership for new signups to 3 years, and changing the terms of membership to make it explicit senior members must employ disabled people.

Minister for Disabled People Justin Tomlinson said:

Disability Confident and the success of the New Enterprise Allowance scheme reflect our bold commitment to get one million more disabled people into work by 2027.

Smart employers recognise that disabled people can bring a wealth of skills and talents to an organisation – and they're making sure they're not missing out.

To date 15,000 businesses have joined Disability Confident.

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