

# DWP Secretary of State outlines plans to boost labour market

During her first keynote speech, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions today (Thursday 13 October) implored businesses to play a greater role in tackling inactivity in return for government action on vacancies, in a bid to kickstart economic growth.

Speaking with business leaders and stakeholders at the Policy Exchange, Chloe Smith MP outlined her vision for the Government's mission to deliver higher paid, higher quality jobs, grow the economy, unleash the potential of the labour market, drive prosperity and deliver opportunity for everyone.

Determined to lead the Department for Work and Pensions as Britain transitions into a new era of prosperity, she impressed on businesses the importance of their role in driving growth and urged them to play their part in reducing economic inactivity by investing in their workforce's progression and health.

Her plea to industry included: attracting; investing in; and supporting and retaining British workers within an accessible and inclusive workforce.

Her speech comes as new labour market figures released this week show the unemployment rate is at a near record low, and the number of people on company payrolls remains high.

However, the Secretary of State stressed that the millions of unfilled posts across the country represent unfilled potential, and her focus is on helping people of all working ages and circumstances back into work and having the opportunity to progress.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Chloe Smith MP, said:

In return for the Government helping businesses fill their vacancies, we are expecting employers to invest in their workforce's progression and health. And doing so is a crucial step to ensure we don't face similar labour market challenges in the future.

We can pull out all the stops to help businesses fill their vacancies, we need employers to help people to start and stay and succeed.

Businesses can play their part in reducing inactivity and growing the economy by making the labour market more accessible and

inclusive.

As part of her speech, the Secretary of State reflected on her experience with cancer. October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and she talked about how her personal journey made her realise the importance of supporting people who become sick into work.

Further to her call to businesses, the Secretary of State outlined how the department is going further to encourage more movement in the labour market by:

- Reforming work incentives and support within the welfare system helping more unemployed people move into available jobs, and for those already in work, to increase their earnings.
- Preventing the flow of people moving into economic inactivity helping people return to the workforce with the support of dedicated Work Coaches by securing the role that's right for them and supporting people to remain in work – so they can experience the benefits of our drive for growth.

Here is a transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered: [A gold mine for growth and opportunity](#)

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