

# Press release: Multi-million pound fund to help tackle the disability employment gap launched

A £4.2 million challenge fund to support people with mental health or musculoskeletal conditions to stay in work has been launched by the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton, and the Minister for Mental Health and Inequalities, Jackie Doyle-Price.

The fund is the latest in a range of government measures that are part of a 10-year strategy which aims to see 1 million more disabled people in work by 2027.

The challenge fund, run by Rocket Science on behalf of the government, is aimed at testing new approaches to help people experiencing mental ill health or musculoskeletal issues to remain in employment.

They might be at risk of losing employment because of the effects of their condition, or may already be temporarily off work through ill health.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton, said:

We know there is a gap between disabled people who want to work and those who have the opportunity to do so.

With 78% of people acquiring their disability or health condition during their adult life, it's crucial that we support disabled people who want to work to stay in or return to employment.

The joint initiative between the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and Social Care will fund projects that help people to stay in work by:

- increasing their ability to self-manage their conditions
- helping people access advice and support about what sort of work they might be capable of doing

Minister for Mental Health and Inequalities Jackie Doyle-Price, said:

For too long if you had a disability or serious mental health issue the world of work was off limits, potentially affecting the lives of millions of people across the country.

This fund will help people overcome the barriers that so many still face when trying to get into and progress in the workplace.

Other areas to be tested will include new approaches to help employers and employees develop workplace solutions, and developing ways of working that facilitate greater participation of those with mental health or musculoskeletal conditions.

Applications are welcome from organisations in any sector, including employers, charities, social enterprises, local authorities, health bodies and others, with applications from smaller organisations particularly welcome.

Visit the [Challenge Fund website](#) for information on how to apply.

The challenge fund is open for applications until 5pm on 17 August 2018.

Share your thoughts about the fund on social media using #WHChallengeFund and #WorkandHealth.

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