**Call for Evidence: Technology use in Supported Employment**

Deadline for submissions: **23:59, Thursday 26 October 2023**.

### **Introduction**

[Supported Employment](https://www.base-uk.org/what-supported-employment) is a personalised model for supporting disabled people and other disadvantaged groups to secure and retain employment.

Policymakers have made Supported Employment a key component of efforts to tackle the disability employment gap. According to the most recent statistics, only 53.7% of working age disabled people are in employment, compared to 82.7% of non-disabled people, and the gap is even wider for people with learning disabilities and/or autism – two groups who are often targeted by Supported Employment schemes.[[1]](#footnote-2)

In 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) launched the [*Internships Work*](https://www.ndti.org.uk/change-and-development/internships-work)programme to double supported internship provision in England, helping 4,500 young adults per year by 2025. In 2023, the DfE published a [*SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan) detailing government action on Supported Employment including the [*Local Supported Employment*](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/7-6-million-to-help-2-000-adults-with-autism-into-work) (LSE) scheme to reach 2,000 people across 28 local authorities by 2025 and develop a model to attract further investment from local commissioners. The Government’s wider [*Universal Support*](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-25-000-long-term-ill-and-disabled-people-supported-into-work-with-58m-boost) offer, is a Supported Employment programme that aims to help at least 50,000 disabled people into sustained work each year, from 2025/26. The first step in the delivery of Universal Support was announced this year with increased funding for [Individual Placement and Support (IPS)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-25-000-long-term-ill-and-disabled-people-supported-into-work-with-58m-boost), that aims to reach 25,000 people by 2025.[[2]](#footnote-3) At the same time, the Opposition has made employment and opportunity central to its [Five Missions](https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Mission-breaking-down-barriers.pdf), including aiming for “85% of young people to be in a sustained destination [education employment or training] by 2030”, and a commitment to “reform Jobcentre Plus ensuring greater local involvement in the delivery and design of Jobcentre arranged employment support, coaching and training”.[[3]](#footnote-4)

In the 5-stage model of Supported Employment[[4]](#footnote-5) disabled people can access and use technology at any stage of the model, which includes:

**Stage 1: Client Engagement** – Jobseekers learn about the supported employment model and make an informed choice on whether it is right for them.

**Stage 2: Vocational Profiling** – A discovery and planning process that enables people to identify what they want to achieve and work out a plan to get there.

**Stage 3: Job Finding** – The employment worker and client work together to find vacancies that meet the client’s employment goals.

**Stage 4: Employer Engagement** – The employment worker learns about the job and works out a plan with the employer on how they will support the client through the recruitment process and in the workplace.

**Stage 5: On and Off the Job Support** – The client is supported to learn the job and sustain employment, through job coaching at work, training, support from a workplace mentor, and workplace reviews.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Assistive Technology (APPGAT) has begun an inquiry into the use of technology in Supported Employment and will publish a report in 2024. The report will explore how policymakers can scale up Supported Employment and improve outcomes by mainstreaming the use of technology by disabled people in these roles. As part of the research, we will consider the experiences of disabled people, employers, and those working in the Supported Employment sector to access and use technology. We would like to thank the Ian Karten Charitable Trust for their generous sponsorship of this project.

Based on scoping for this project we currently have five themes:

**Theme 1 -** establishing best practice for disabled learners to access and receive help to use technology in the Supported Employment model.

**Theme 2 -** ways to build awareness of technology amongst disabled learners and those helping them in Supported Employment.

**Theme 3** **-** examine employers’ perception and use of technology.

**Theme 4 -** assess the impact of disabled people’s digital and literacy skills to use technology in Supported Employment.

**Theme 5 -** how to improve training and guidance offered to those working in the Supported Employment sector from government and external organisations.

### **Instructions**

Please fill in this document and email it to Shamima.Akhtar@policyconnect.org.uk

by **23:59, Thursday 31 August 2023**.

There are two sections within this Call for Evidence. To help us understand how technology is currently being used in Supported Employment, we are asking disabled people, job coaches, businesses, local authorities, and other Supported Employment stakeholders about their current practice. Each question may not be relevant to you, so please answer questions that are relevant to your role and/or organisation.

If you have any questions or additional comments, please contact Shamima at shamima.akhtar@policyconnect.org.uk. She may reach out to you for additional information.

### **Details**

1. Please state your name, organisation, and job role:

**Name:**

**Role:**

**Organisation:**

1. If you would like to be included on our list of report stakeholders, to receive further information as the project progresses, and a copy of the finished report, please select ‘yes’ below and share your preferred email address. **Yes / No**

**Email Address:**

### **Questions**

**If you would like your response to be anonymised for any question, please indicate this after your answer.**

### **Section One - Examples of current practice**

1. In your experience what level of awareness of technology do disabled people, their families, professionals and others supporting them typically have before they move into Supported Employment?
2. What information resources – training, websites, practical guidance and toolkits – do you use to inform your use of, or practice relating to, technology in Supported Employment?
3. What kinds of technology have you or your organisation helped people to use in the context of Supported Employment?
4. How do you support disabled people to use technology in the context of Supported Employment? This could include providing technology, help that improves digital literacy, changing work practices to enable technology use or any other practice.
5. Do you have any examples or case studies of people using technology successfully in Supported Employment? Or examples where technology has not worked, or people have not been supported to get the most from it?

### **Section Two – Enablers of best practice**

1. In what ways has government policy or programmes enabled you or your organisation to support disabled people to use technology in Supported Employment roles? (e.g., is your work funded by Access to Work or another DWP scheme? Have you received training and guidance from the Government? Have you seen employers more willing to work with you as a result of the Disability Confident Scheme?)
2. In what ways have organisations outside of your own enabled you or your organisation to support disabled people to use technology in Supported Employment roles? (e.g., have you worked with or benefited from support from the British Association for Supported Employment, from technology developers, from disability charities, unions, training providers or any other organisation)
3. What more would you like organisations outside of your own to do to enable your work on technology and Supported Employment? (e.g., what could technology developers, or education providers, unions or any other organisation do to help you?)
4. What more would you like the government to do to enable your work on technology and Supported Employment? (e.g., changes to guidance, funding rules, new initiatives, or government grants)

#### **Additional Evidence**

Please use this section to add any additional evidence or information that might support our inquiry. You may also email additional evidence directly (in Microsoft Word format) to Shamima.Akhtar@policyconnect.org.uk

### **Submission permissions**

1. Do you give permission for the report to quote your submission? **Yes / No**
2. May we attribute the submission to the organisation you belong to? **Yes / No**
3. May we attribute the submission to you personally, listing your job role? **Yes / No**
1. [CBP-7540.pdf (parliament.uk)](https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7540/CBP-7540.pdf#:~:text=5.15%20million%20working-age%20disabled%20people%20were%20in%20employment,for%20people%20who%20are%20not%20disabled%20was%2082.7%25.) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Over 25,000 long term ill and disabled people supported into work with £58m boost - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/over-25-000-long-term-ill-and-disabled-people-supported-into-work-with-58m-boost) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [Mission-breaking-down-barriers.pdf (labour.org.uk)](https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Mission-breaking-down-barriers.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [The 5 Stage Supported Employment Model - SUSE - Scottish Union of Supported Employment](https://www.suse.org.uk/what-is-supported-employment/five-stage-supported-employment-model/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)