



Equality at work: flexible working and disability inquiry

Submission to the Women and Equalities Select Committee



June 2026

About CIPD

The CIPD is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years.

It has 160,000 members across all sectors and sizes of organisation and provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Public policy at the CIPD draws on our extensive research and thought leadership, practical advice and guidance, along with the experience and expertise of our diverse membership, to inform and shape debate, government policy and legislation for the benefit of employees and employers. It also seeks to promote and improve best practice in people management and development and to represent the interests of our members.

Method

Drawing on CIPD's reports, past consultation responses and submissions, and new external evidence published, this response synthesises the best available data and practice on flexible working and disability. Some of the main sources referenced, include:

- [Pathways to Work](#)
- [Keep Britain Working Review](#)
- [Employment support for disabled people: call for evidence Submission to the Work and Pensions Select Committee](#)
- [CIPD \(2025\) Flexible and Hybrid Working Practices](#)
- [Home-based working - submission to the House of lords Commission](#)
- [Inclusive Recruitment Guide for Employers](#)
- [CIPD \(2025\) Good Work Index](#)
- [CIPD \(2025\) Health and Wellbeing at work](#)

Our response

1. *Why has the cultural shift since the Covid-19 pandemic towards greater acceptance of flexible working not yet had a substantial impact on the employment rate of disabled people and the disability employment gap?*

As reported in the [Department for Work and Pensions' Employment support for disabled people \(2026\)](#) the official statistics on disability employment point to the challenges facing disabled people who want to work. As outlined in the report, in the second quarter of 2025, the employment rate for disabled people was 52.8%, compared with 82.5% for non-disabled people - a disability employment gap (DEG) of 29.7 percentage points. Up until the pandemic, the DEG had been falling steadily for several years, but it has been relatively flat ever since. Disabled people also move out of work at more than twice the rate of non-disabled people (10.1% a year, on average, since 2014, compared with 4.6%).

As we outline in [our response](#) to the DWP Select Committee, progress in closing the disability employment gap has slowed in recent years because public policy reforms have leaned too heavily on supply-side interventions, without sufficient emphasis on boosting employer demand through better-resourced systems and guidance that encourage the recruitment, retention, and progression of disabled people.

There has also been a rise in working-age disability [prevalence](#), which has increased the complexity of support needs and there are ongoing challenges with the resourcing and administration of support schemes such as [Access to Work](#).

In terms of access to flexible working, we know it is not equal. The CIPD [Update on Hybrid and Flexible Working Practices \(2025\)](#), found that while most organisations provide some flexible working arrangements, a quarter of employers believe senior employees are more likely to work flexibly than more junior staff. Employees also pointed to an unmet demand for certain types of flexible working, including compressed hours and flexi-time. A continued focus is also needed on flexibility for those in frontline and non-remote roles - around three in five employers said they provide some kind of flexibility to this group, with flexibility in scheduling shifts and in start and finish times the options most frequently provided.

Concerningly, according to the CIPD [Update on Hybrid and Flexible Working Practices \(2025\)](#) those with a disability are significantly **less** likely to feel comfortable than those without when requesting formal flexible working. This is despite employers having a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments, outlined in the Equality Act 2010, to remove or reduce any disadvantage a disabled person faces, which could include flexible working. Those with a physical (34%) or non-physical health condition (36%) are also more likely to feel uncomfortable requesting formal flexible working than those without (25%).

The findings are similar for comfort levels requesting informal flexible working, with 31% saying they wouldn't feel comfortable requesting informal flexibility (without a change to contract). Often informal flexibility can help support employees with ad hoc issues that occur as well as support a sense of control and work-life balance. Those with a physical or non-physical health condition are also **more likely to feel uncomfortable** requesting informal flexible working than those without.

In relation to home and hybrid working specifically, The House of Lords Home-based Working Committee report, ['Is working from home working?'](#) also found that not everyone can work from home/ remotely and access to it is unequal, with levels higher among professionals, university graduates, and those living in London.



2. *Are there differences in disabled people's experiences of flexible working across different types of disability or impairment and among disabled people with a range of other protected characteristics, for example their age, sex, and race and ethnicity?*

Based on analysis of our 2026 Good Work Index data (analysis available on request) we find levels of access to and use of flexible working arrangements were broadly similar for disabled and non-disabled employees.

The flexible working options we include are:

- Flexi-time (ability to choose the start and finish time of the working day)
- Job sharing (sharing a full-time job with someone)
- The possibility to reduce your working hours (e.g. full time to part-time)
- Compressed hours (working the same number of hours per week across fewer days, e.g. 37 hours in four days instead of five)
- Working from home in normal working hours
- Working only during school term times
- Annualised hours (a set number of contracted hours in a year)
- Career breaks
- 4-day week

Access to flexible working options

Overall, 89% of disabled employees had access to at least one form of flexible working arrangement in the last 12 months, comparable to the 90% of non-disabled employees. By age, 86% of disabled workers aged 45+ have access to at least one form of flexible working, lower than those with disabilities aged 45 or under (92%). 90% of disabled women had access to at least one form of flexible working, compared to 86% of disabled men. The results indicate that most disabled employees report access to at least one form of flexible working arrangement, but access is more unequal for some.

Use of flexible working options

Despite have similar access to flexible working options overall 60% of disabled employees have used at least one form of flexible working in the last 12 months, compared to 64% of non-disabled employees. By age, 57% of disabled workers aged 45+ have used flexible working, lower than those with disabilities aged 45 and under (64%). 62% of disabled women have used flexible working, compared to 58% of disabled men. The results show that more than half of employees have used flexible working, regardless of their age and whether they have a disability, but again use is lower among pockets within the disabled working population.

Disabled employees were more likely to report having used the option to reduce their working hours (15% compared with 11% of non-disabled employees). This suggests that the ability to move to part-time hours or otherwise reduce working, time may be particularly important for disabled workers.

Those with health conditions

When the analysis is expanded to focus on any workers with health conditions (not just those with a mental or physical disability) those with mental health conditions were significantly more likely to report having used working from home than employees with physical health conditions (51% compared with 48%).

Across several arrangements including job sharing, compressed hours, term-time working, annualised hours, career breaks and four-day weeks workers with mental or physical health conditions were more likely to report that these options were not available to them and less likely to report that they were available but unused. This pattern suggests that workers with health



conditions may have access to a narrower range of flexible working options than those without a health condition.

3. *What are the experiences of flexible working of disabled people across different sectors of the labour market?*

Line manager approach to facilitating flexible working

Based on our analysis of our 2026 Good Work Index undertaken for this consultation, we find that disabled employees are more likely to disagree that their line manager takes a positive approach to facilitating flexible working where possible (17%) compared to non-disabled employees (14%). This gap is particularly evident in the private sector, where 19% of disabled employees disagree that their line manager takes a positive approach, compared with 16% of non-disabled employees. Disagreement is overall lower in the public sector, although disabled employees remain more likely to disagree than non-disabled employees (15% compared to 10%). Differences are pronounced in the retail and wholesale sector, the largest industry for disabled employees in our sample. Nearly one-third (32%) of disabled employees disagree that their line manager takes a positive approach to facilitate flexible working, compared to 21% of non-disabled employees.

However, most disabled employees (66%) say it is easy to take a few hours off work to take care of personal or family matters, this is at the same rate as non-disabled employees.

Access to flexible working options

Access to flexible working was highest for both disabled and non-disabled employees in the public sector, where 97% of employees reported having access to at least one flexible working arrangement in the last 12 months. In the private sector, fewer employees have access: 85% of disabled employees, and 88% of non-disabled employees.

Use of flexible working options

Flexible working use was highest among disabled employees in the public sector, where 86% reported using at least one flexible working arrangement in the last 12 months. This percentage is slightly lower for non-disabled employees, at 84%. In comparison, the uptake of flexible working arrangements is lower in the private sector, with just 52% of disabled employees and 59% of non-disabled employees having used at least one flexible working arrangement. This suggests there are areas of the private sector where uptake of flexible working options is low, which could be driven by a lack of support from the organisation and line managers.

4. *What evidence is there about the impacts of flexible working on disabled people's progression in work?*

To look at progression in work we looked at employees' subjective view on whether their existing role offers opportunity for progression using our 2026 Good Work Index data.

Disabled employees are less likely to agree that their job offers good opportunity for career advancement (29%) compared to non-disabled employees (37%).

Overall, all employees who have used a flexible working option in the last 12 months were more likely to agree that there is opportunity for career advancement in their job (41% vs. 28%).

Among disabled employees, flexible working use is associated with a more positive perception of career advancement opportunities. Disabled people who use flexible working options were more likely to agree that their job offers good opportunities for career advancement (35% versus 21%).



This suggests that the positive relationship between flexible working and perceived career progression found in the wider workforce also holds for disabled employees.

5. *To what extent will the flexible working provisions in the Employment Rights Act 2025 benefit disabled workers and jobseekers? Are there further legislative or policy steps the Government could take to increase disabled people's access to flexible working?*

The CIPD [Update on Hybrid and Flexible Working Practices \(2025\)](#), found that around a fifth of employers say their organisations are more likely to grant flexible working requests, following the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 and the day one right to request flexible working. Employers are also more likely to say the legislation has had a positive rather than negative impact for both their employees and their organisation. If the legislation is strengthened in the Employment Rights Act as anticipated, more than a third also expect an increase in the number of flexible working requests their organisation accepts.

In theory this should benefit more employees including disabled employees and those with health conditions, however as referenced earlier, the same research rather worryingly showed access to flexible working is not equal.

Despite the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 allowing employees to request flexible working from day one of employment, three in 10 say they wouldn't feel comfortable requesting formal flexible working (a change to a contract), with 59% feeling comfortable.

Concerningly, those with a disability are significantly **less** likely to feel comfortable than those without when requesting formal flexible working. This is despite employers having a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments, outlined in the Equality Act 2010, to remove or reduce any disadvantage a disabled person faces, which could include flexible working. Those with a physical (34%) or non-physical health condition (36%) are also more likely to feel uncomfortable requesting formal flexible working than those without (25%).

Policy recommendations

In terms of further actions, the Government could take to increase disabled people's access to flexible working, we recommend that they:

- **Enhance guidance and communication around employers' legal duty to make reasonable adjustments as part of the Equality Act 2010:** employers have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that individuals with disabilities are not significantly disadvantaged in performing their role when compared to other workers. This duty applies at all stages of the employment life cycle. Better employer communication of this legal duty and supporting guidance would be helpful.
- **Provide comprehensive guidance on forthcoming legal changes:** ensure comprehensive employer and employee guidance as part of the Employment Rights Act 2025 strengthening of the Flexible Working legislation.
- **Follow the recommendations of the House of Lords Home-working Committee:** specifically setting out whether remote and hybrid working are being considered as part of existing initiatives to support people with disabilities and long-term health conditions back into work.
- **Targeted funding for frontline sectors:** Since many roles cannot be done remotely, we recommend that the government establishes a Flexible Working Challenge Fund for sectors like healthcare and retail to trial alternative models and include a focus on flexible working that supports disabled people across these sectors.
- **Establish a Workplace Commission:** We believe there is the case for establishing a Workplace Commission to bring together representatives across different government departments and labour market institutions, including employer bodies and trade unions, to support policy making across government and consensus on key workplace issues like support for disabled



employees and agendas including new regulation. It would also act as forum to help promote guidance and good practice.

6. *How clear and well understood is the law around employers' Equality Act duties to provide flexible working options and associated aids and equipment as "reasonable adjustments"?*

While the legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 is clearly defined in writing, it is not always well understood or consistently applied in practice.

According to the CIPD [Health and Wellbeing at Work survey report 2021](#), only round three-in-ten (28%) respondents believe their organisation doesn't experience any challenges in managing people with a disability and/or long-term health condition.

The most common challenge cited by employers is developing line manager knowledge and confidence (50% of organisations experiencing challenges), followed by **'developing an understanding about making reasonable adjustments' (38%)**, 'developing an inclusive culture in the organisation' (29%) and 'developing leadership on disability-related and/or health issues (25%)'.

The [TUC recently surveyed](#) 1,000 disabled workers and asked them to share their experiences around reasonable adjustments. The survey confirmed that one of the biggest issues facing disabled workers is not getting the reasonable adjustments they need (34%). Over a third (37%) of respondents had put in a request for reasonable adjustments and over half (55%) of disabled workers who had put in a request had, either only some of their request or none of their needed reasonable adjustments, implemented.

Furthermore, recent [research by Lancaster University](#) found nearly half (47%) of the disabled workers in their study lacked full implementation of the reasonable adjustments they had requested to work remotely or in a hybrid way, putting them at risk of illness or injury. They also observed inequities in access to reasonable adjustments and other resources needed for remote and hybrid working, as well as inequities in outcomes.

More therefore could be done to ensure the law around employers' Equality Act 2010 duties to provide flexible working options and associated aids and equipment as 'reasonable adjustments' is understood and consistently applied in practice. Resource would need to be put into employer education and enforcing these rights, as discussed below.

7. *How effective is the Equality and Human Rights Commission in enforcing disabled people's rights to flexible working? What steps could the Commission take to improve understanding, compliance and enforcement?*

The effectiveness of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in enforcing disabled people's rights to flexible working is currently limited by significant resource constraints and a lack of proactive enforcement power.

Providing employers with reliable and accessible information, advice and guidance on managing, supporting and progressing disabled people, including in relation to flexible working, is also part of an effective enforcement regime to nudge better compliance and good practice behaviour among employers. Acas, as well as the EHRC, plays a crucial advisory role and has a wealth of advice and guidance that are very accessible for employers of all sizes, particularly SMEs. The more employers that can benefit from its advice and guidance at an early stage, the greater likelihood there will be of more employers avoiding non-compliance in relation to employees' rights to flexible working.

In summary, we believe the EHRC need more adequate resources to fulfil their regulatory duties and carry out more proactive enforcement activities. SMEs may also need additional support to comply/improve their people management practices, for example, from Acas.

8. To what extent can disabled people access the aids and equipment they need to work flexibly via the Government's Access to Work scheme? What changes could be made to make the scheme more effective in this regard?

Access to work has substantial value and potential, but it is underfunded and has a narrow reach. Despite recent increases in resources, the scheme only supports around 60,000 - not much more than 1% of working disabled people, according to the [Pathways to Work Green Paper](#).

Feedback from [CIPD members](#) indicates many organisations are unaware of the service, and that there is more scope for the service to more effectively support people with a disability who are already in employment to improve retention. We need to shift the negative misconception among many employers about adjustments being onerous and costly - many can be simple and low-cost, and can make an enormous difference to disabled people being able to access employment and remain in work. There's a range of good guidance and advice available on making workplace adjustments, including Acas' guidance on making and handling requests, including for mental health-related adjustments and for neurodiversity, that is very accessible for employees and employers, including SMEs. However, many organisations are still unclear about which resources to access, and where to find them, and individuals don't necessarily have the knowledge either.

It could also be better resourced (waiting times are too long) and more flexible and responsive, with much greater promotion of its potential benefits. There is also the potential to reform it to include advice for employers on making effective reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

We welcome the Government reviews of both Access to Work and Disability Confident, including the proposal in the [Pathways to Work Green Paper](#) on providing funds to individuals to pay for workplace adaptations beyond what could be considered reasonable adjustments - there is currently a high bar to meet for disability under equalities law and making adjustments where needed could help to keep more people with health conditions in work.

Feedback from our HR community and in focus groups with members and experts, as well as those with lived experience, has emphasised the need for the scheme to be simpler and more responsive. We agree that available resources need to have wider reach, as set out in the Pathways to Work Green Paper, for example by supporting employers to develop more disability inclusive workplaces that attract and retain more disabled people. There could be much better communication with employers, including HR professionals and line managers, as the scheme's design means that many individuals may not even inform their employer that they have applied for support. Given that the scheme is often an integral part of an employer's approach to making suitable reasonable adjustments for an individual, there would be benefits to including employers in the scheme. Employers also need to be kept up to date on any changes to the scheme.

There also needs to be more proactive and high-profile communications and signposting of credible sources of information, advice and guidance (IAG). Government is a key enabler, and should work with employment and professional bodies, such as the CIPD, as well as regional and local networks that are linked into small employers, as well as digital channels, to build awareness and education. The role of the EHRC and Acas are critical.

In summary, we believe that government schemes such as Access to Work should be optimised. We also believe that the government should launch a well-resourced workplace health publicity and education campaign: there needs to be much greater promotion of available support and schemes by the government as part of a well-funded national campaign, to help boost employer confidence and capability in recruiting, managing and retaining disabled people and those with health conditions.

9. What are the impacts on disabled workers of employers' "back to the office" mandates?



According to the [CIPD Update on Hybrid and Flexible Working Practices \(2025\)](#) flexible working is pivotal to the attraction and retention of talent. Flexible working remains important to employees and has a positive impact on their quality of life. At a time of substantial economic inactivity and a UK Government focus on this area through the Get Britain Working and Keep Britain Working reviews, it is worth emphasising that flexible working can help to support people facing a range of circumstances into, and to remain in, work.

Our report found hybrid working practices remain commonplace, with around three-quarters having some kind of provision. Some of the wider advantages of hybrid working reported by employers include attraction and retention of a broader, more diverse talent pool, increased employee wellbeing, a positive impact on the environment, and business resilience. But there are also key challenges to be navigated, particularly the ability of managers to lead teams effectively, the connection of employees to organisational purpose and the impact on organisation culture.

While media headlines have been dominated by announcements of ‘return to office’ mandates, at the time of our research we found that just over one in 10 said their organisation was looking to either introduce or mandate further returns to the office in the following 12 months. However, half of organisations that offered hybrid working had put in place incentives to encourage employees to be in the workplace more often, and more than half of employees believed there is pressure to spend more time in the physical workspace. Overall, perceptions of organisation productivity and efficiency have remained positive for those experiencing an increase in home/ hybrid working.

As highlighted in our [response](#) to The House of Lords Home-based Working Committee Call for Evidence, much of the latest international evidence suggests that mandated returns to the office may not be effective in supporting better business or employee outcomes - they can lead to the exit of employees, particularly more experienced employees and a reduction in positive employee sentiment ([Flynn et al, 2024](#)) ([Dinga et al, 2024](#)) ([Van Dijke et al \(2024\)](#)).

The House of Lords Home-based Working Committee report, [‘Is working from home working?’](#) concluded that home and hybrid working could support the Government’s plans to get people back into work, by enabling people to work who might not otherwise be able to do so. The Committee investigated the effects and future development of remote and hybrid working in the UK and also found that: Many return-to-office mandates amount to formalising hybrid working, rather than a return to full-time office attendance and there is no “one-size-fits all” answer to the question of working from home and productivity.

The Committee’s recommendations to Government included:

- Setting out whether remote and hybrid working are being considered as part of existing initiatives to support people with disabilities and long-term health conditions back into work;
- Promoting and incentivising employer investment in management training to support effective remote and hybrid working,
- Reviewing the relationship between its 60% office attendance policy for civil servants and cuts to government office space;
- Avoiding major further regulation or legislation on home working, but publishing updated guidance to help employers.

The report also includes additional recommendations on increasing investment in broadband, addressing the shifts in demand for transport created by hybrid working, and tackling the risks AI may pose to remote jobs in the future.

[Research by the Work Foundation \(2022\)](#) suggests that employers’ ‘back to office’ mandates can have significant negative impacts on disabled workers, ranging from heightened anxiety to physical exhaustion and increased risks of unemployment. Pertinent issues, highlighted, include:

- Mandates trigger significant anxiety for those who have found remote work essential for managing their health. For example, 70% of disabled workers report that if their employer did not allow them to work remotely, it would negatively impact their physical or mental health.

- Commuting costs disabled workers substantial time and energy, which is particularly detrimental for those with chronic pain, fatigue, or mobility issues. The effort required to travel often leaves workers physically exhausted for days afterward, negatively impacting their wellbeing even on their remote days.
- Returning onsite can remove the ability to use home-based coping strategies, such as taking short naps or changing physical positions to manage pain.
- Some organisations mandate specific days for office attendance. If these days fall when a worker is experiencing a health flare-up or cumulative fatigue, the worker may be forced to take sick leave or holidays simply because they cannot manage the travel on that specific day.
- Many downsized offices now rely on hotdesking, which is often inappropriate for disabled workers. Problems include lack of height-adjustable desks for wheelchair users, sensory distress for neurodivergent workers in unfamiliar settings, and the difficulty of booking desks near support workers.
- Disabled workers fear that being less visible in the office will lead to being overlooked for promotions or "stretch" opportunities.

10. *Are there best practice examples of access to flexible working for disabled workers? How can these be spread across sectors to benefit a much greater proportion of disabled people?*

Helping employees stay in work when they become sick or develop a disability

[A DWP rapid review](#) of international evidence demonstrates the success of some interventions that effectively help employees stay in work when they become sick or develop a disability, particularly:

- supported employment programmes
- flexible and accommodating workplaces
- return-to-work planning and some health interventions (particularly with an employment focus).

The review also highlighted that:

- interventions should focus on both individuals and employers
- availability and awareness of support are important - many of the more successful interventions were small-scale or have low take-up;
- early intervention is key, both to prevent individuals leaving employment due to the onset of an impairment, and to ensure early access to the right support for those on benefits.

Building more supportive and inclusive workplaces to attract, retain and manage disabled people and those with health conditions

As we outline in our response to the [Keep Britain Working Review](#), there are a number of helpful steps that workplaces can implement, including:

- **empowering managers** to make decisions and take action where it is in the best interests of the employee, the team, and the organisation, without seeking additional sign-off from senior management or HR - this means ensuring managers are trained, skilled and capable to have work and health conversations and implement helpful policies and support.
- **offering access to a wider range of flexible working opportunities:** flexibility in terms of working arrangements and job tasks can act as a powerful retention tool, enabling many people to balance the impact of their symptoms on work and remain economically active.
- **encouraging job-crafting** where possible so employees work to their strengths and empower individuals.



- **encouraging employees to adopt self-care strategies to help manage their condition** and embed as part of the organisation's health and wellbeing policies and approaches, for example via wellbeing action plans or health passports.
- **facilitating effective workplace adjustments for all that need them** - many employees will benefit from early and supportive work adjustments, whether or not they fall into the statutory disabled category avoid the rigid implementation of sickness absence procedures and ensuring they are responsive and compassionate to support people's fluctuating health conditions. For example, by taking care around the use of 'trigger points' that could unfairly penalise someone with a genuine ongoing health issue, such as menopause symptoms or a chronic illness.

Good practice examples of offering access to flexible working for disabled workers

Good practice examples of flexible working for disabled employees often prioritise autonomy, trust-based management, and principles or guidance, over rigid formal policies. They also seek to provide support across the employment lifecycle, such as:

- **Advertise jobs with specific flexible working [options](#):** Advertise jobs with specific flexible options by default wherever possible. This means that all jobs are advertised with flexible options unless hiring managers make a valid case for 'why not' to HR/ the organisation. Flexible working increases workplace diversity by making roles accessible to those with caring responsibilities (primarily women), disabled staff, and both older and younger workers.
- **Proactively ask applicants if they need reasonable adjustments during [the recruitment process](#):** Instead of waiting for applicants to request reasonable adjustments, explicitly and proactively ask all applicants if they would like to request any once applications have been submitted. Reasonable adjustments are often considered once a candidate has been hired for the role. However, offering these modifications during the recruitment stage can support a more diverse range of candidates to participate in the recruitment process.
- **Proactively offer reasonable adjustments to all new joiners:** in our [Inclusive recruitment](#) guidance with the Behavioural Insights Team, we recommend offering all new joiners reasonable adjustments that meet their individual needs. While reasonable adjustments should be prioritised for disabled staff, non-disabled employees could also benefit from such job modifications.
- **Offer flexible working for promotion opportunities:** to help retain senior talent, close skill gaps and build diverse, inclusive leadership teams. It is particularly important to offer part-time options across all seniority levels, as part-time workers often get 'stuck' due to a lack of quality part-time roles.
- **Hybrid and remote working options:** offering options for hybrid and remote working, where the business and role requirements allow, can help to attract and retain a diverse group of workers including disabled employees.
- **A range of flexible working practices:** Organisations should also consider what types of flexibility they can offer to workers in non-office and front-line roles. There are lots of small things employers can do to increase flexibility for front-line workers, such as allowing direct input to shift rotas, making it easier to change shifts, or even offering split shifts and job share options. Being flexible about how people can use leave to help cover short appointments or events can also help to give workers more control and support flexibility.
- **Redesigning Workspaces:** providing accessible workspaces, quiet areas, desk reservations and contributing where possible to payments for home-office equipment to ensure a healthy environment regardless of location.
- **Adjustment Passports:** Implementing workplace adjustment passports can allow workers to record their needs and preferences in a live document that transfers between managers, preventing the need for repeated explanation or self-advocacy.

Recommendations for spreading these practices across sectors



To spread good practices across sectors and benefit a greater proportion of disabled people, recommendations include:

- **Manager training:** Organisations should invest in dedicated training for line managers to equip them with the confidence to understand a range of different disabilities and support them to have sensitive conversations about adjustments and managing flexible workers effectively.
- **Targeted funding for frontline sectors:** Since many roles cannot be done remotely, we recommend that the government establishes a Flexible Working Challenge Fund for sectors like healthcare and retail to trial alternative models such as annualised hours or digital self-rostering.
- **Sector-based knowledge networks:** Creating sector specific networks allows employers to pool resources and share learning, which is especially beneficial for smaller firms with limited HR capacity.
- **Public sector leadership:** The government should lead by example by ensuring the civil service and NHS provide inclusive flexible working roles and set internally consistent best-practice standards.
- **Centralised resource hubs:** Developing an online resource hub would provide employers, particularly SMEs, with accessible tools, signposting to specialist advice, and stories of success from employers who started from a low baseline of flexible working and inclusion.