

# READY AND ABLE

Removing the barriers that prevent young disabled people from finding employment



TRAILBLAZERS

Muscular  
Dystrophy UK

Fighting muscle-wasting conditions



# FOREWORD

Tanvi Vyas, a Trustee of MDUK, worked for the charity for seven years, starting as a volunteer Trailblazer in 2009. Tanvi has spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), and has a keen interest in social care, breaking down social perceptions and barriers, and mental health. Tanvi now works as a disability consultant, and is currently a member of the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) at the Department for Transport.

After my A Levels, I found securing relevant work experience in policy and campaigns, an area I was passionate about pursuing, a daunting prospect. It was a challenge to find employers willing to give me a chance, to treat me as an equal and to see that a disabled person could be the best, most qualified person for the role. Diversity in the workplace didn't seem to include disability and there was so much awkwardness around disability – it was almost comical at times! It was after I'd completed my undergraduate Law degree that I found Trailblazers.

Trailblazers is a truly fantastic network of incredible individuals achieving great things. Through campaigning, work experience and attending events, it was possible to move outside my comfort zone, meet an incredible network of people and take every opportunity I could – of which there were many. My family and friends could see that my involvement had challenged me and they saw a newfound confidence emerging.

I joined the Trailblazers staff team in 2010. Because my experience of finding work experience and employment was so close to my heart and to the heart of many other Trailblazers, I was proud to launch *Right to work*, the first Trailblazers employment report, later that year.

It is truly unacceptable that, nine years on, some of the challenges I and many others faced are still



at the forefront of young disabled people's minds. Despite the improvements, such as evolving attitudes, increasing knowledge of ways to secure the right support, and a growth in the number of employers embracing concepts like flexible working, the findings are disappointing.

Initiatives like the Trailblazers Employability policy project are fantastic ways of recognising the small adjustments people may need in the workplace. Projects like this are fundamental to equip disabled people to take chances, seize opportunities and develop their confidence and skills in a role that's relevant to their career choice. They also give employers a chance to challenge themselves to do better and to highlight what they can and will do to create an inclusive environment.

A lack of cohesive employment, social care and accessible housing policy makes it a huge navigational challenge to secure employment – especially with the added challenges of accessible transport. Disabled people want to work but clearly, the issues are not straightforward.

Real solutions to the issues exposed in this report do exist if thought about holistically. It is important to genuinely involve disabled people in the decision-making process to achieve this.

Muscular Dystrophy UK gives real opportunities to young disabled people. Trailblazers continues to develop skills, confidence and self-belief and the Employability policy project is a great example of how this can happen.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Muscular Dystrophy UK's Trailblazers Employability Policy Project, funded by City Bridge Trust, began in October 2017 and set out to identify the key barriers faced by young disabled people when trying to find and stay in work. This report summarises the findings of the project and makes recommendations to employers and to Government that would help remove these barriers. Through speaking directly with young disabled people and employers, the project has found out specific challenges faced and identified changes that would improve things for disabled jobseekers.

The report provides an in-depth picture of the challenges faced by young disabled jobseekers. These include a flawed Disability Confident scheme,

and a lack of funding for care costs at work, which prevents people from getting into the workplace. Through working with employers, this report has been able to better understand the preconceptions about disability that prevent young people finding employment; preconceptions that the young people who took part in this project experience on a daily basis. The report found that the problem isn't an unwillingness to take on a disabled employee but rather a lack of confidence in knowing how to adequately support disabled employees.

This report concludes with a series of recommendations for both employers and for Government.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Opportunities for young disabled people – for employers

1. Create opportunities for skilled and educated disabled people – have these opportunities be paid and/or respectful of the 16-hour Permitted Work limit for Employment and Support Allowance. Engaging with disability organisations such as Trailblazers can help accomplish this.
2. Provide alternative methods of testing for candidates that struggle with standardised testing.
3. Provide feedback for disabled applicants who do not receive an interview, to demonstrate there is no discrimination.
4. Consider all aspects of reasonable adjustments for employment schemes aimed at young jobseekers.

## Disclosure of disability – for employers

5. Do not have only a “tick box” to disclose disability and space for applicants to explain their conditions/needs should they wish to. Ask applicants about the impact of their disability, not just what disability they have.
6. Let the applicant decide when to disclose their disability.

## Access to Work – for Government

7. Remove Access to Work limitations so that Personal Assistants can be funded for personal care in addition to work-related support for the number of working hours.
8. Provide more disability training for Advisors at Access to Work so they can better handle applications and facilitate support.
9. Have organisations put together an example list of reasonable adjustments they will provide; when employers are clear about what is “reasonable” to them, disabled applicants will be clear about the adjustments they can ask for.

10. Provide more funding for support workers.
11. Extend Access to Work to cover volunteering and unpaid work experience.

## Access to Work – for employers

12. Create paid internship/work experience opportunities so disabled people can apply for Access to Work to cover travel costs until Government policy changes to include volunteers and work experience participants in Access to Work funding.

## Disability Awareness training – for Government

13. Make Disability Awareness training affordable for employers. Organisations with the resources should self-fund this and for smaller organisations this should be Government-funded.
14. Raise awareness among employers that disabled people may need to take additional sick leave/time off owing to their disability.
15. Have a recommended organisation (on a national level) that provides comprehensive disability awareness training.

## Disability Awareness training – for employers

16. Provide training for the entire organisation so that all colleagues of disabled employees feel comfortable.

## Disability Confident – for Government

17. Remove the self-certification for level one of the scheme – ensure each employer is assessed by an external authority for each level.

# BACKGROUND



## About Trailblazers

In April 2007, a conversation took place at Muscular Dystrophy Campaign's (now Muscular Dystrophy UK's) annual Northern Ireland conference and social weekend in County Fermanagh. The then Chief Executive Phil Butcher, Family Care Officer Oonagh Morrison and Michaela Hollywood, now Trailblazers Campaigns Officer, talked about how young disabled people did not have a voice in the decisions that affected their lives. This conversation resulted in the idea of a 'young persons' forum' that could empower disabled people to have a voice in the decisions that affected them.

Eight months later, 20 young disabled people came together in a hotel at Belfast International Airport.

We realised how many of our young disabled people were blazing trails and advocating for better services and accessibility for disabled people. The name Trailblazers was coined and we began running the network in Northern Ireland.

Less than a year later, backed by a £250,000 grant from V Involved, we launched Trailblazers as a UK-wide network of young disabled people. About 50 attended the very first Trailblazers meeting, chaired by Oonagh Morrison and Michaela Hollywood.

Today the Trailblazers network includes over 750 young disabled people and their supporters, and is part of Muscular Dystrophy UK. We campaign for change, provide guidance, and through our lived

experience are experts in what life is like for young disabled people. We are passionately committed to challenging the barriers in society that stop us from living full and independent lives.

### Why is employment an issue for Trailblazers?

Supporters often ask Trailblazers how and where to find work as a young disabled person. They are unsure about which employers will give a disabled applicant equal consideration to a non-disabled applicant, and about how and when to disclose their disability. Employment is a constant theme on the Trailblazers Facebook group and at Trailblazers' events and conferences.

Because of this, in 2010 we ran an in-depth investigation on the issues facing young disabled jobseekers through our survey, and we discovered that over half of the survey participants had experienced barriers when looking for work experience. This and other findings of the investigation were contained in the resulting *Right to work* report.

In response, Trailblazers developed and launched the Moving Up project in 2015. Through this project, we offer placements, events and careers resources to young disabled people living in London, and we work with project partners to improve employment opportunities. This project forms part of Bridge to Work, funded by City Bridge Trust, the City Corporation's charitable arm, which aims to narrow the employment gap for young disabled people and strengthen links between employers and the disabled community in the capital, with financial backing for organisations tackling the issue.

### About the Employability Policy Project

There were an estimated 3.7m disabled people of working age (16-64) in the UK in employment in January-March 2018 – an employment rate of 50.7 percent. The employment rate for people without disabilities was 81.1 percent. A total of 376,000 disabled people of working age were unemployed.<sup>1</sup>

This figure remains unchanged according to a recent National Audit Office report which states the employment gap has “only narrowed by 4 percentage points since 2015 and is still high at 30 percentage points.”<sup>2</sup>

In 2017, the UK Government made a commitment in its White Paper *Improving Lives: the future of work, health and disability*<sup>3</sup> to get one million more disabled people into work over the course of 10 years. The White Paper outlined a number of measures that were designed to help meet this commitment, including improving the experiences of those with mental ill-health and promoting the Disability Confident scheme.

However, the National Audit Office report outlines “that despite the Department’s [for Work and Pensions] decades of experience supporting disabled people it does not yet know as much as it could about what works in helping disabled people to get and keep jobs. It has also missed opportunities over the years to assess the impact and cost-effectiveness of its programmes, leaving it with limited evidence to support its current efforts.”<sup>4</sup>

Trailblazers initiated the Employability Policy Project to re-examine what the barriers are today for young disabled people trying to find and stay in work, and to make recommendations to mitigate these. Through speaking directly with young disabled people and employers, the project has been successful in finding out specific challenges faced and in identifying the changes that both employers and disabled people believe would improve things in the future for disabled jobseekers. This work is funded by the City Bridge Trust and therefore was focused on disabled people aged 16-30 living in London; however the recommendations are relevant across the UK.

As part of the Employability Policy Project, we created two Working Groups to find out what barriers young disabled people face when trying to find and stay in work. This initiative is unlike work

<sup>1</sup> <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7540>

<sup>2</sup> [www.nao.org.uk/press-release/supporting-disabled-people-to-work](https://www.nao.org.uk/press-release/supporting-disabled-people-to-work)

<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability)

<sup>4</sup> [www.nao.org.uk/press-release/supporting-disabled-people-to-work](https://www.nao.org.uk/press-release/supporting-disabled-people-to-work)

done in this area by other leading charities<sup>5</sup> as it has allowed for in-depth discussions to take place and for the opportunity to take part anonymously.

This project understood many people may not feel comfortable with their names and stories being known to potential employers and colleagues, therefore all members were given the option of remaining anonymous. Nearly every member of the group mentioned they would not have shared a particular thought or experience if they were not able to remain anonymous, which provided for a unique insight. The project centred on the creation of two working groups and the delivery of Disability Employment Rights sessions and Employability Weekends.

### Young Disabled Persons' Working Group

The Young Disabled Persons' Working Group was formed in November 2017, and comprises members of the Trailblazers network aged 16-30 who are living in London. The group then expanded to include friends and families and it currently has about 24 members. Members are recruited on an ongoing basis.

The meetings of the Young Disabled Persons' Working Group have been both in person and online to enable as much participation as possible. The members have been very willing to share their experiences anonymously, both positive and negative, and to work together to think of possible solutions to the barriers they face.

### Employer Working Group

The Employer Working Group first met in March 2018. The members are contacts of Muscular Dystrophy UK's Moving Up project and personal staff networks. This group comprises 13 individuals representing a range of sectors including the charity sector, the media and Government departments.

Members are recruited on an ongoing basis. It was clear from the first meeting of the Group that the


employers had many unanswered questions about disability but all wanted their organisations to be more inclusive employers.


### Disability Employment Rights Sessions

In partnership with the Disability Law Service, the Moving Up project also runs Disability Employment Rights Sessions, where trained ambassadors teach the attendees about their rights under the Equality Act 2010. These sessions have been very well received and have given the attendees confidence around knowing what they are entitled to. These sessions have been run at various universities across London, including King's College London and Brunel University, and at neuromuscular care clinics.

### Employability Weekends

The Employability Policy Project also held two Employability Weekends where attendees could build up their confidence and skills over an entire weekend. The attendees were all aged 16-30 with a range of disabilities. The weekends covered a wide variety of topics including interview skills, managing work with a disability, and networking. The weekends also featured Disability Employment Rights Sessions by one of the ambassadors. Sessions were run largely by Moving Up staff, but also involved some external speakers from PUSH Talks, HSBC and Amnesty International. Those who attended the weekend left feeling much more confident about entering the world of work.

 **Interviews were my biggest fear and now I feel so confident. I am so glad I came to this workshop.** – Employability Weekend attendee and university student, 23

 **An absolutely amazing, fun and educational weekend!** – Employability Weekend attendee and university student, 21

<sup>5</sup> See appendix A


# FINDINGS OF THE PROJECT

The Employability Policy Project set out to identify the key barriers young disabled people face when trying to find and stay in work, and to develop recommendations to mitigate these. Through speaking directly with young disabled people and employers, the Project has been successful in finding out specific challenges and identifying possible changes to improve things for disabled jobseekers.

## Opportunities available to young disabled people

The Young Disabled Persons' Working Group members are almost all university graduates and have all struggled to find opportunities that match their expertise. According to the Group's experiences, schemes targeted at disabled people often do not consider applicants having higher education qualifications. Several young people said they had been rejected from these schemes for being "too qualified". As a large proportion of the Trailblazers network are young disabled students and graduates, these findings are relevant nationwide and not solely within London.

'Mainstream' graduate schemes, such as the Civil Service Fast Stream, also pose a problem for disabled applicants who require alternative assessments or other adjustments, such as needing to use eye gaze software or having extra time. The schemes are designed to have "standardised" testing but often these disadvantage disabled applicants and put these candidates off applying for the schemes. This does a disservice to both the young disabled person, who is denied an opportunity that is available to their non-disabled peers, and to the organisation who misses out on talented individuals.

 **Standardised testing put me off applying for schemes like the Civil Service Fast Stream. Given my disability I would have really**

**struggled and not done well on the assessments even though I could do the job." – University student, 21**


This leaves young disabled graduates in an impossible position when it comes to graduate schemes that do not make reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process, as these schemes are often where graduates get their first formal work experience. Without this experience, disabled graduates have to apply for roles and compete against applicants whose work experience makes them more likely to be successful. This creates a 'limbo' for young disabled students, leaving them without a clear next step after they complete their studies.

Even if young disabled people are successful in applying to schemes, reasonable adjustments aren't always delivered in an effective way. One individual was successful in getting on to a mainstream graduate scheme and asked for – and was given – extra time to complete tasks. This resulted in a much longer work day than everyone





else on the scheme, and because this was too physically demanding, they needed to drop out of the scheme. The scheme failed to make reasonable adjustments that allowed the young person to be on an even level with their non-disabled peers. Extra time to complete tasks is a reasonable adjustment, but it's not an appropriate solution if it doesn't work in practice and if it creates another challenge for the disabled person.

 **In one graduate scheme I was given extra time to do tasks which was good but ended up with a very long day which wasn't possible for anyone, let alone a disabled person."**  
– University graduate, 27


### Disclosure of disability

Disclosure of disability is one of the biggest concerns shared by every member of the Young Disabled Persons' Working Group. Each member had considered this issue at length and had decided when they typically would be comfortable to disclose their disability. The Group agreed they were all concerned about being rejected from roles on the basis of disability, despite knowing it is illegal for an employer to do so.

Disabled people who feel they have or could have been discriminated against on the grounds of disability rely on the Equality Act 2010. This has been a positive piece of law, but since the removal of legal aid for employment tribunal cases<sup>6</sup> it has been difficult for disabled people to fully utilise it. One member of the Young Disabled Persons' Working Group had been to an employment tribunal against an employer who discriminated against them. This was before the removal of legal aid and they said they would not have been able to pursue their case without this crucial legal support.

The Working Group is seriously concerned that the Equality Act 2010 doesn't adequately protect disabled jobseekers. With an already diminished confidence in themselves, the Group members agreed they were unlikely to ask a potential

employer if they were rejected for a job because of their disability.

 **I did an experiment with a friend with identical CVs and cover letter other than disability – I disclosed I was disabled. I didn't even get an interview and my friend got the position."** – Young Disabled Persons' Working Group member, 28

The Young Disabled Persons' Working Group agreed that it should always be left to the applicant to decide when to disclose their disability, and that the employer should encourage disclosure by focusing on the reasonable adjustments rather than on the named condition. So, for example, the employer should make it clear that extra time is available for candidates who need it, rather than listing the conditions for which they'll make adjustments.

The Group felt there was very little point in stating the name of their condition, as it didn't provide an accurate picture of them or their needs. This was perfectly illustrated by two Group members who had the same condition, which manifested in very different ways.

When the Employers' Working Group was asked how their workplace approached disclosure, they all said they let the applicant disclose when they wished to. However, they also said they preferred the applicant to disclose early on in order to have time to make any reasonable adjustments required. All the employers in this Group encourage disabled applicants and employees, which is certainly not always the case.

### Access to Work

Access to Work is a Government grant for specialist equipment and other support at work for disabled people that their employers cannot provide. Employers are under a legal obligation to provide reasonable adjustments for their disabled employees, but what can be provided will vary from employer to employer. The Young Disabled Persons' Working Group was unsure what employers should provide and what Access to Work could fund.

<sup>6</sup> [www.lawsociety.org.uk/for-the-public/common-legal-issues/problems-at-work](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/for-the-public/common-legal-issues/problems-at-work)

The Group had mixed experiences with the fund but agreed overall it was a good resource and should be expanded. Currently<sup>7</sup> Access to Work is only available for paid work and does not cover volunteering or work experience placements.

### Access to Work and care costs in the workplace

One expansion the Young Disabled Persons' Working Group wanted to see was more funding for carers/Personal Assistants at work. Nearly every member of the Young Disabled Persons' Working Group required some level of care during the work day and many said their current care packages (provided by Health and/or Social Care within a local authority) would not be enough to allow them to go to work. One young person received only eight care hours a week and relied on family for care outside of this, which would not be possible if they were in work.

Lack of care hours has also had an impact on the placements run by Moving Up at Muscular Dystrophy UK. The Moving Up team have heard from several participants that they are unable to complete their placements because they rely on family at home for their care. Moving Up has

investigated other ways of funding care at work experience, but because of the State's statutory obligations under the Care Act 2014 to provide care, it is not possible. Given the Government's commitment to taking a holistic approach to Health and Work as outlined in its White Paper *Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability*, funding enough care to allow people to work seems to be a very clear next step.

### Access to Work for unpaid work experience

The Young Disabled Persons' Working Group agreed that Access to Work should provide work-related support during unpaid work experience. It has become a requirement in today's job market to have some work experience before your first paid job. Because these opportunities are often unpaid, Access to Work will not cover any support needed. And given the difficulties mentioned in graduate schemes, volunteering and unpaid internships are particularly crucial opportunities for young disabled people.

Some Group members said the funding restriction meant they were unable to apply for certain opportunities, as they were unable to self-fund things like transport suitable for wheelchair users.



Others said they had to self-fund or use their Direct Payments/Personal Health Budget to pay for care and transport at work.

**“ My family has to drive me everywhere as I have no carers who drive. They have their own lives so I feel bad asking them. I stay away from public transport as much as possible. For one work experience/internship I used a private hire company where the drivers helped me inside which was great but expensive, not everyone has this option. For me it was worth it though.”** – University graduate, 24

Many young disabled people experience difficulties in the vast amounts of paperwork, the occasional attitudes of some of the advisors and the length of the process.<sup>8</sup> However, Access to Work is a vital lifeline for disabled people in work, without which they could not afford to go to work. A 2017 report by Action on Hearing Loss found that, “Access to Work has previously been described as ‘DWP’s best-kept secret’ (Work and Pensions Committee, 2009).”<sup>9</sup>

The fund is under-utilised at present and needs to be expanded in order to truly provide ‘access to work’.

**“ I use my direct payments to fund PAs at work. I gave up Access to Work due to work changing and employer changing in the time it took to apply. I’m self-employed and they asked for lots of information I didn’t have like a business plan. I’m a freelance researcher so I don’t know when I’ll get work.”** – Masters graduate, 28


### Disability Awareness in the workplace

Everyone in the working groups understood the importance of Disability Awareness training. The Young Disabled Persons’ Working Group felt this would allow them to feel more confident that employers would have an accurate understanding of disability and would not judge them during the recruitment process. The awareness training could also make employers aware of what is and isn’t appropriate to ask/say to a disabled person.




<sup>8</sup> [www.muscular dystrophyuk.org/blog/access-to-work-the-good-and-the-not-so-good](http://www.muscular dystrophyuk.org/blog/access-to-work-the-good-and-the-not-so-good)

<sup>9</sup> [www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/how-we-help/information-and-resources/publications/research-reports/working-for-change-report](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/how-we-help/information-and-resources/publications/research-reports/working-for-change-report)

 **At Interview I get asked “what happened?” when I show up in my wheelchair without disclosing.”** –University graduate, 29

The Young Persons’ Working Group also felt that awareness training could benefit both them and their employers in effectively managing needs on an ongoing basis. This could include how to approach sickness absences and other disability related absences. The Employer Working Group raised this concern as they were unsure how much time-off was reasonable for a disabled employee to take or how to document these absences (for example, as annual leave or sick leave).

The Employer Working Group was enthusiastic about wanting to hire more disabled people and they recognised the missing talent pool. Many members were unsure about the needs and day-to-day challenges of disabled people, and were unsure how to provide for these as an employer. The members all felt that having some basic training would allow them to feel more confident as employers, and would enable them to create an inclusive workplace. The Group said they would want this support/training to be ongoing so they could ask how to handle situations that came up during someone’s employment.

 **In a previous role we noticed an awkwardness around deaf candidates so I asked for deaf awareness training which was hugely valuable. We had refresher sessions every few months.”** – International Recruitment Lead, Amnesty International


One member of the Employer Working Group saw the value in awareness training in a previous role, when a deaf candidate came for interview and staff did not know how to act in the situation. They then arranged for deaf/hard of hearing awareness training for the entire organisation. This was an organisation that could afford to do this; the Group was concerned about where to source this training and whether or not their organisation could afford it.

Currently, very few organisations offer Disability Awareness training and it can be prohibitively expensive. For example, one trainer offers a half- or full-day ‘Introduction to Disability’ course, which costs £1,020 and £2,040 respectively. These costs are significant and many employers cannot meet them. With so few providers available, employers are often unsure if this training exists and how much it would cost if they were able to find it. If the Government truly wants to support disabled people to get into the workplace, it’s vital they recommend this training at a non-prohibitive cost. Disability Awareness training would give young disabled people more confidence in applying for jobs and staying in work, and would give employers the confidence to manage and support disabled employees.

### Disability Confident

The Disability Confident scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and was developed by a group of employers and disabled people. The Disability Confident scheme’s three levels have been designed to support organisations on their ‘Disability Confident journey’. Employers must complete each level before moving on to the next.<sup>10</sup>

While the Young Disabled Persons’ Working Group did not have much experience of the scheme, one member shared an experience of going to an interview at a Disability Confident employer only to find it was inaccessible to a wheelchair user. The employer had only reached level one of the scheme, which does not require an assessment by an outside source.

 **Self-assessed isn’t ok – we can’t self-assess for PIP (Personal Independence Payments). I once went to interview at an employer who was registered as ‘disability confident’ but they were anything but!”** – University graduate, 29  
According to the Government website, “to be recognised as Disability Confident Committed just



agree to the Disability Confident commitments and identify at least one action that you'll carry out to make a difference for disabled people." One such "commitment" is merely to offer an interview to disabled people which, if an employer did not do purely on the grounds of disability, would be illegal under the Equality Act 2010. If an employer 'commits' to do this they will receive a "certificate of recognition of achievement" and a badge on their website saying they are a Disability Confident employer. When a disabled applicant see this, they could mistakenly think the employer has taken

active measures towards being accessible and inclusive when, at level one of the scheme, there is no guarantee of this.

The next levels of the scheme require an assessor to visit the workplace to verify that it meets the necessary criteria. However, there is no distinction for disabled people on the websites of a level one or a Disability Confident Leader, which is level three. Each level needs an assessment by an external authority to make the scheme an accurate demonstration of an employer's commitment to inclusion of disability.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## What needs to happen

### Opportunities for young disabled people – for employers

1. Create opportunities for skilled and educated disabled people – have these opportunities be paid and/or respectful of the 16 hour Permitted Work limit for Employment and Support Allowance. This could be accomplished by engaging with disability organisations such as Trailblazers.
2. Provide alternative methods of testing for candidates that struggle with standardised testing
3. Provide feedback for disabled applicants that do not receive an interview in order to demonstrate that there is no discrimination
4. Consider all aspects of reasonable adjustments for employment schemes aimed at young jobseekers.

### Disclosure of disability – for employers

5. Do not have only a “tick box” to disclose disability and give applicants space to explain their conditions/needs should they wish to. Ask applicants about the impact of their disability, not just what disability they have.
6. Let the applicant decide when to disclose their disability.

### Access to Work – for Government

7. Remove Access to Work limitations so that Personal Assistants are able to be funded for personal care in addition to work related support for the amount of working hours.
8. Provide more disability training for Advisors at Access to Work so they can better handle applications and facilitate support
9. Have organisations put together an example list of reasonable adjustments they will provide for clarity of what is “reasonable” to them to provide clarity to disabled applicants about the adjustments they can ask for.

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11. Extend Access to Work to cover volunteering and unpaid work experience.

### Access to Work – for employers

12. Create paid internship/work experience opportunities so disabled people can apply for Access to Work to cover travel costs until Government policy changes to allow volunteers and work experience participants to use Access to Work funding.

### Disability Awareness training – for Government

13. Make Disability Awareness training affordable for employers. Organisations with the resources should self-fund this and for smaller organisations this should be government funded.
14. Raise awareness among employers that disabled people may need to take additional sick leave/time off due to disability.
15. Have a recommended organisation (on a national level) that provides comprehensive disability awareness training

### Disability Awareness training – for employers

16. Provide training for the entire organisation so that all colleagues of disabled employees feel comfortable.

### Disability Confident – for Government

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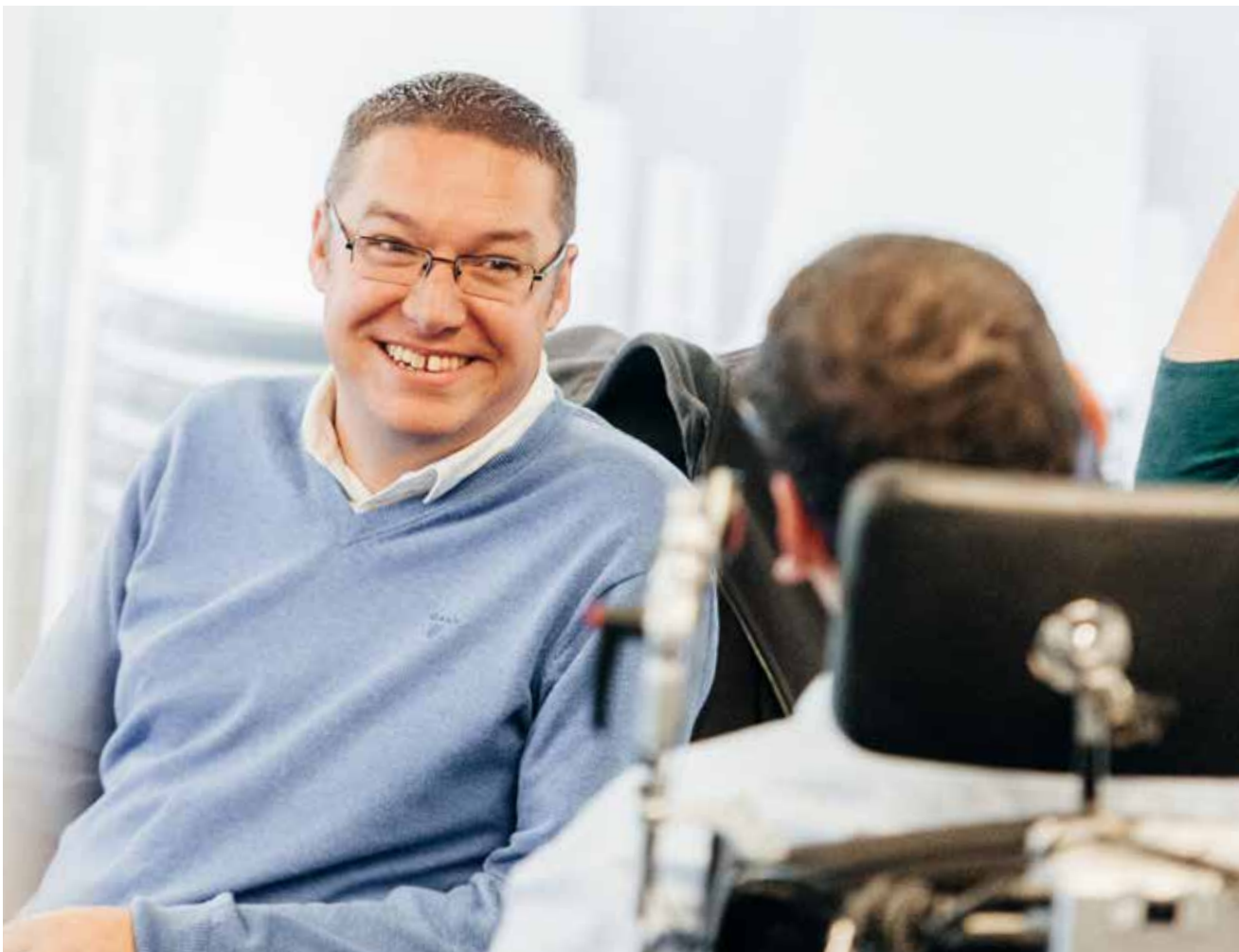
# CONCLUSIONS

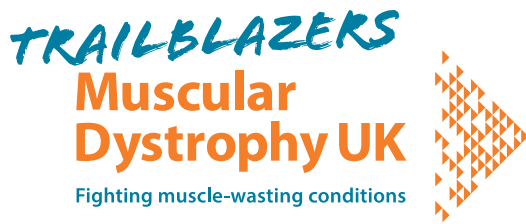
## What next?

Trailblazers will continue to push forward these recommendations through our networks and the Young Disabled People's All Party Parliamentary Group of which we are the Secretariat. We will also continue to support young disabled people through our Moving Up placement programme. Muscular Dystrophy UK supports those who want to take action to change the communities around them so the barriers they face to living independently are removed. Closing the disability employment gap is also an important strategic aim for Muscular Dystrophy UK. This report is part of our campaign to make sure people with muscle-wasting conditions are treated as equal members of society and to remove the barriers that stop them from being fully involved in their communities.<sup>9</sup>

## Appendix A

- [www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/employment](http://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/employment)
- [www.disabilityrightsuk.org/policy-campaigns/education-skills-and-employment](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/policy-campaigns/education-skills-and-employment)
- [www.mencap.org.uk/about-us/what-we-think/employment-what-we-think](http://www.mencap.org.uk/about-us/what-we-think/employment-what-we-think)





Muscular Dystrophy UK is the charity for 70,000 children and adults living with muscle-wasting conditions. We provide vital information, advice and support to help people live as independently as possible. We accelerate progress in research and drive the campaign for access to emerging treatments.

We know we can beat muscle-wasting conditions more quickly by working together and hope you will join us.

**0800 652 6352**

**info@muscular dystrophyuk.org**

**@MDUK\_News**

**www.muscular dystrophyuk.org**

Muscular Dystrophy UK, 61A Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0BU  
Registered Charity No. 205395 and Registered Scottish Charity No.  
SC039445

**For further information contact Trailblazers:**

**020 7803 4846 / trailblazers@muscular dystrophyuk.org**

**facebook.com/mduktrailblazers**

**@MD\_Trailblazers**

**www.muscular dystrophyuk.org/trailblazers**