

**Economy and Fair Work Committee**  
**Wednesday 8 May 2024**  
**14<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2024 (Session 6)**

**Disability Employment Gap**  
**Note by the Clerk**

**Background**

1. “Disability employment gap” is the term used to refer to the difference in employment rates between disabled and non-disabled people. Statistics show that disabled people in Scotland have a lower employment rate than non-disabled people.
2. The Committee agreed on [21 February 2024](#) to undertake an inquiry to identify the barriers that limit the ability of disabled people to get and keep a job and consider how these might be addressed.

**Previous Work**

3. The Committee undertook some initial work on the disability employment gap in 2023. This included visits, [an evidence session with stakeholder organisations](#), and [an evidence session with the then Minister for Just Transition, Employment and Fair Work](#).
4. A [letter with the Committee’s initial findings](#), and [the then Cabinet Secretary’s response](#) can be accessed online.
5. The Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry to build on this initial work.

**Remit**

6. During this inquiry, the Committee will consider—
  - the help available for disabled people to get back into the labour market;
  - the support available for employers for more inclusive recruitment practices and workplaces;
  - specific barriers faced by people with learning disabilities and neurodivergent people; and
  - the employment support systems for disabled people.

**Call for Views**

7. The Committee previously undertook a call for views. This ran from 20 December 2022 to 16 February 2023 and received [41 responses](#).

## Witnesses

8. Today's evidence session will focus on employers and the support they need to make workplaces and recruitment practices more inclusive, the barriers they face, and how employment data is collected and reported.
9. The Committee will hear from—
  - Heather Fiskien, Chief Executive, [Inclusion Scotland](#);
  - Vikki Manson, Deputy Head of Policy, [Federation of Small Businesses Scotland](#);
  - Angela Matthews, Head of Policy and Research, [Business Disability Forum](#); and
  - Chirsty McFadyen, Knowledge Exchange Associate, [Fraser of Allander Institute](#).
10. The [Federation of Small Businesses Scotland](#), [Fraser of Allander Institute](#), and [Inclusion Scotland](#) previously responded to the Committee's call for views.

**Clerks to the Committee  
May 2024**