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## House of Lords

17<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Dear Lord Tohuig, Baroness Thornton and Baroness Brinton

During the Oral Question on 6 March, Lord Touhig asked about **Extending Supported Internships to people aged 25 and over**. I would like to provide a more detailed response.

The Department for Education (DfE) is responsible for the Supported Internship policy, which is a study programme for young people aged 16 to 24 who have an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan, want to move into employment and need extra support to do so. As set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, a local authority may continue to maintain an EHC plan for a young person until the end of the academic year during which the young person reaches the age of 25.

The Government is investing £18 million until 2025 to build capacity in the Supported Internships Programme and support more young people with EHC plans into employment. In the Spring Budget 2023, government announced to invest up to £3m to pilot extending Supported Internships to young people without EHC plans, to see if this is an effective model for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

To enable supported interns to experience work, Access to Work provides funding for the intern's in-work support needs during the work placement. Recognising the importance of this programme, DWP secured funding at the last spending review to support the expansion of the Programme.

In addition, there are range of Government initiatives supporting disabled people and people with health conditions of all ages, to start, stay, and succeed in work. These include:

- increasing Work Coach support in Jobcentres for people with health conditions receiving Universal Credit or Employment Support Allowance;
- Disability Employment Advisers in Jobcentres offering advice and expertise on how to help disabled people and people with health conditions into work;
- the Work and Health Programme and Intensive Personalised Employment Support, providing tailored and personalised support for participants;
- Access to Work grants towards extra costs of working beyond standard reasonable adjustments;
- Disability Confident encouraging employers to think differently about disability and health, and to take positive action to address the issues disabled employees face in the workplace;

- the Information and Advice Service providing better integrated and tailored guidance on supporting health and disability in the workplace; and
- support in partnership between DWP and the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Talking Therapies, which combines psychological treatment and employment support for people with mental health conditions.

Furthermore, to tackle rising economic inactivity due to long-term sickness, we also announced a wide-reaching package at the Spring Budget to support disabled people and people with health conditions to work. New investment will provide faster access to joined-up work and health support, including for mental health and musculoskeletal conditions, the two leading causes of economic inactivity due to long term sickness. In terms of progress on disability employment, in 2017 the Government set a goal to see a million more disabled people in employment between 2017 and 2027. Between Q1 2017 and Q1 2022 the number of disabled people in employment increased by 1.3m – meaning the goal was met after only five years. Our goal to reduce the disability employment gap remains. We will continue to galvanise action across, and outside of, Government to ensure we are ambitious about the employment of disabled people, and supporting them to start, stay and succeed in work.

In response to the question raised by Baroness Thornton on **Economic and Social Inclusion Unit Research**. DWP officials are always interested to learn from research from a wide range of sources and seek to draw on this in our policy development. We are unable so far to source the specific Research report we believe she has. Therefore, I would be most grateful if the Baroness can share this with me.

Baroness Brinton asked about signing up to **Disability Confident Scheme**. I can confirm that the Secretary of State (Mel Stride) and the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work (Tom Pursglove) are now signed up to Disability Confident scheme and names appear on the latest update of members as of 28 February 2023. The department is also signed up as a corporate body. This is available on Gov.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-confident-employers-that-have-signed-up>.

I trust you will find this clarification useful. I will place a copy of this letter in the House of Lords Library for reference.

With best wishes,  
James

**VISCOUNT YOUNGER OF LECKIE  
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE**