

THE DISABILITY GAP: INSECURE WORK IN THE UK

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ABOUT THE WORK FOUNDATION

The Work Foundation is a think tank focused on improving working lives across the UK through applied research and new ideas. For over a century, we have worked to break down the barriers individuals and communities face in accessing good work.

We believe everyone should have access to secure, rewarding and high-quality work. By engaging directly with workers, employers, policymakers and leading academics, we deliver rigorous applied research to tackle structural inequalities in the labour market and improve working lives across the UK.

We are part of Lancaster University's Management School, and work with a range of partners and organisations across our research programmes.

CITATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At a time when the UK is facing worker shortages and economic inactivity due to long-term health conditions has hit a record of 2.55 million in May 2023,¹ it is more important than ever for Government, employers, employment services and civil society to understand the challenges facing different groups in the labour market.

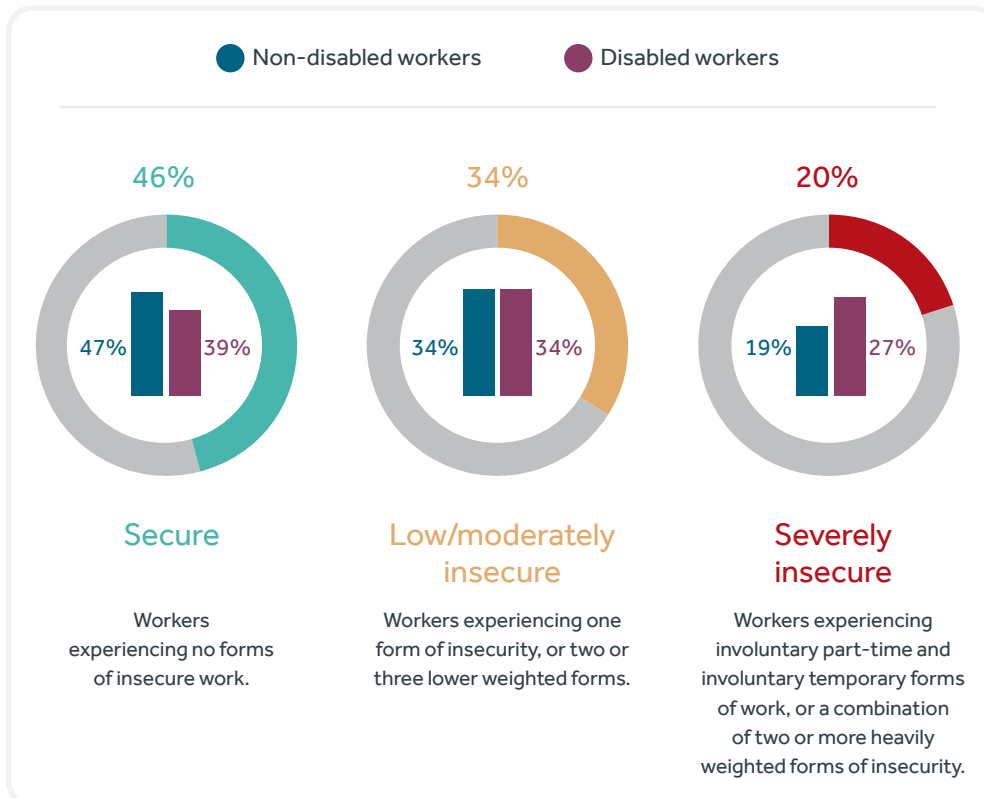
It is well established that disabled people face barriers to entering, staying and progressing in work.¹ This is illustrated by the persistently high disability employment gap. Nearly a quarter of working adults are disabled (23%)² and over the last ten years, the employment rate for disabled people has been approximately 30 percentage points lower than non-disabled people.³

Even when disabled people do move into employment, the Work Foundation's UK Insecure Work Index 2022 found that they are more likely to end up in insecure work than non-disabled people. This briefing provides a deeper exploration of this specific issue, looking at the drivers behind why those with disabilities are more likely to find themselves in insecure jobs, and the ways in which this insecurity affects different groups of disabled workers.

The disability insecurity gap

This new analysis found that **disabled workers are 1.5 times more likely than non-disabled workers to be in severely insecure work**. As of April-June 2022, one in four disabled workers are in severely insecure work (1.3 million).

Figure 1: Insecure work in the UK and the disability insecurity gap, 2022



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey – April-June 2022.

Disabled people are over-represented in lower paid, more precarious work and are more likely to work part-time than non-disabled workers. For some, a shorter working week will be a personal choice which helps to manage a long-term health condition or caring responsibilities.

¹ In this briefing, we follow the Equality Act definition of disability. A person is considered to have a disability if the condition has lasted for at least 12 months and has a substantial adverse impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

However, our analysis found that disabled workers are also more likely than non-disabled workers to be underemployed or in involuntary temporary work which means they would prefer to work more hours or to be on a permanent contract.

Disabled workers are also less likely to be with the same employer for more than two years, which means they might miss out on key rights and protections, such as access to redundancy pay. This could reflect societal barriers to accessing secure jobs and underscores the need to raise the floor of working standards across the UK.

Disabled people are more likely to be self-employed

Disabled workers are more likely to be self-employed because of the barriers they face in finding employment. Just over one in ten (13%) disabled people are self-employed compared to 9% of non-disabled people and are less likely to access to the rights and protections that come with contracted employment.

Some disabled people are more likely to experience severely insecure work

Amongst disabled workers, insecure work disproportionately affects groups of disabled workers already facing structural disadvantages in the labour market. This analysis has found that:

- Disabled women face a dual disadvantage and are approximately 2.2 times more likely to be in severely insecure work than disabled men
- Disabled workers from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to be in severely insecure work relative to white disabled workers (29% vs 26%)
- One in three autistic workers (38%) and a quarter of people with mental health conditions (28%) are in severely insecure work compared to 20% with other disabilities and conditions.

Barriers to progression could limit access to flexibility for disabled workers

Across the UK, disabled workers are more likely to be in routine and semi-routine occupations such as cashiers, bricklayers and waiters, and are less likely to be in professional and managerial work relative to non-disabled workers. This is concerning because access to flexible working arrangements – such as flexible hours or remote working – can be particularly valuable for disabled people managing long-term health conditions and is much less common in routine occupations.

Disabled people's experience of insecure work matter more than ever

In the 2017 General Election, the Conservative Party manifesto pledged to get “one million more people with disabilities into employment over the next ten years” and this was achieved in 2022.⁴ Despite this achievement, the employment disability gap remains stubbornly high.

The UK is in the grips of a cost of a living crisis and the cloud of a recession still hangs over the economy. The cost of living disproportionately affects disabled people as they spend a higher proportion of their budget on energy bills, food and drink. Recent research by Scope has highlighted that disabled people face a “disability price tag” because disabled households need an additional £1,122 a month to have the same standard of living as a non-disabled household.⁵

The labour market has not recovered to 2019 levels and the OECD has labelled the UK the ‘worst performer’ in the G7 for workforce participation since the Covid-19 pandemic.⁶ Businesses are struggling to recruit and – against the backdrop of record levels of economic inactivity, vacancies and long-term sickness – the Government is under pressure.

In recent years, the Government has opted to increase the threat of welfare sanctions to move people in receipt of benefits into ‘any job’. In this environment, those with disabilities can face particular risks. Our analysis shows that if disabled people do join the labour market, they are more likely to be in severely insecure work, which could discourage disabled workers from participating in the labour market, worsen their existing conditions, and heighten the risk of unemployment or leaving the labour market altogether.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Making secure work the default for disabled workers

Instead of pushing disabled people into any insecure job, we need an ambitious and transformative approach to tackle the disability insecurity gap. Alongside the vision to help more disabled people to start, stay and succeed in work set out in the Health and Disability White Paper 2023,⁷ there is an opportunity to truly tackle structural inequalities faced by disabled people in the labour market.

To that end, we include recommendations for short-term change before the next General Election, due by January 2025, and long-term transformation to improve the working experience of disabled workers by removing the barriers to more secure employment.

The next Parliament: Transformative, long-term changes

- 1. Increase job security and flexibility for all workers:** Government should aim to improve contractual and employment rights for all workers. Doing so will have a disproportionately positive impact on disabled workers' lives.

UK Government should:

- Bring forward an Employment Bill within the first 100 days of the next Parliament that strengthens the tests for employment status, and shifts the onus to organisations to prove a worker is not eligible for employment rights and protections
- Mandate that employers embed flexibility in all roles to all workers and make it available from their first day at work
- Work with employers and employer bodies to actively promote flexible working, especially targeting take-up among disabled people and those with long-term health conditions.

- 2. Reform Personal Independence Payments (PIP):** The Government's plan to scrap the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) means that the PIP assessment will be used as a gateway to sickness benefit. The PIP eligibility criteria must be widened alongside other reforms to the assessment to ensure that those with disabilities as well as short-term sickness get the financial support they need.

The Department for Work and Pensions should:

- Widen the PIP eligibility criteria to include those with short-term and recently acquired health conditions
- Give people the choice to undergo in-person or remote assessments
- Grant PIP for an indefinite period to those with permanent conditions.

3. Improve enforcement of labour market regulations: Better state enforcement of anti-discrimination laws like the Equality Act 2010 is vital to support disabled workers.

UK Government should:

- Create a single body for labour market enforcement
- Increase funding for labour market enforcement to bring the number of labour market inspectors per worker to the International Labour Organisation benchmark.

Before the next Parliament: Short-term practical proposals

4. Scale up the Access to Work Programme to support disabled workers to stay in employment and progress to more secure work

The Department for Work and Pensions should:

- Intensify its outreach efforts to make sure employers and disabled people are aware of the scheme
- Ensure that the scheme is properly resourced to reduce the current waitlist
- Expand the trials of the Access to Work Adjustment Passports to disabled people who are looking for work.

5. Strengthen Statutory Sick Pay to improve chances of disabled workers returning to work

The Department for Work and Pensions should:

- Eliminate the lower earnings threshold for Statutory Sick Pay
- Remove the waiting period of four consecutive days to receive sick pay
- Statutory Sick Pay rates should be raised to the equivalent of the National Minimum Wage pro-rated by the usual number of hours worked.



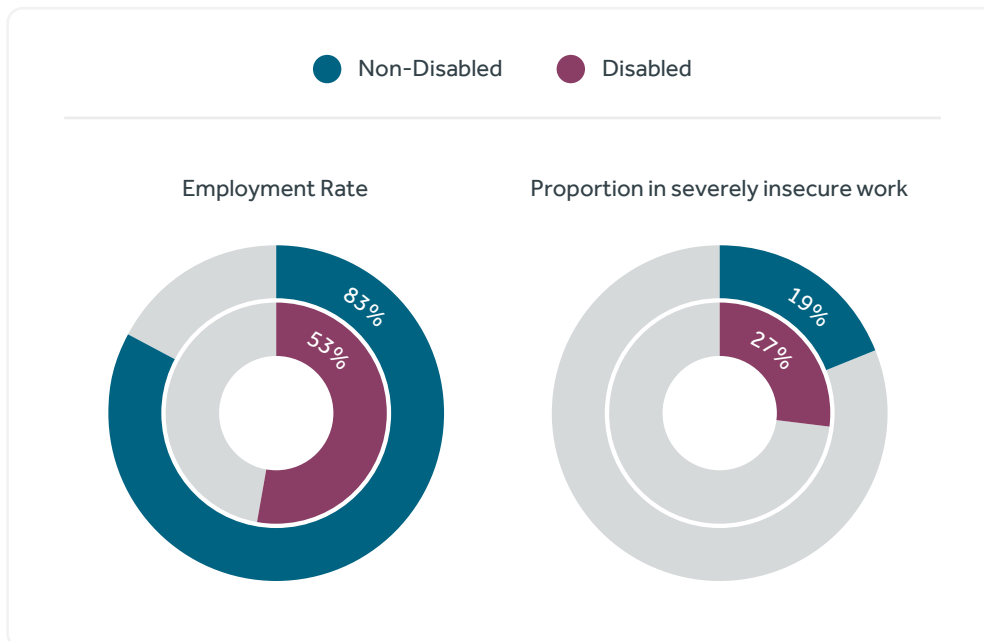
1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the UK Government achieving its goal to see one million more disabled people in work between 2017 and 2027 five years early, the disability employment gap is still stubbornly high. In July-September 2022, disabled workers had an employment rate of 52.6% compared to 82.5% for non-disabled workers.⁸ The number of people who are out of work and not looking for a job, or 'economically inactive' due to illness and long-term health conditions stands at a record 2.55 million in 2023 and has been rising since the pandemic.⁹

This briefing adds new evidence that, in addition to the well-established employment and pay gaps, disabled workers experience a substantial insecurity gap. In 2022, disabled workers were **1.5 times** more likely than non-disabled workers to experience severely insecure work.ⁱⁱ Long periods in insecure work can discourage disabled workers from participating in the labour market, worsen their existing conditions, and heighten the risk of unemployment or leaving the labour market altogether. While support for disabled people to find work is welcome, Government must also address the challenges that disabled workers face in finding *secure* employment.

Improving the working experience of disabled workers by removing the barriers to more secure employment will be vital in reducing economic inactivity and the wider structural disadvantages disabled workers currently face in the labour market.

Figure 2: The disability employment and insecurity gaps



Source: ONS (2023) *The employment of disabled people 2022* and Work Foundations calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey Apr-Jun 2022.

ⁱⁱ We ran a logistic regression model to test the likelihood of disabled workers of being in insecure work relative to disabled workers. We found that when we control for gender, age, ethnicity, and occupational category we find that disabled workers are generally 1.5 times more likely than non-disabled workers to experience severely insecure work. This finding is significant at the 0.000 probability level.

2. DEFINING INSECURE WORK

The Work Foundation defines insecure work through a single holistic measure which combines:

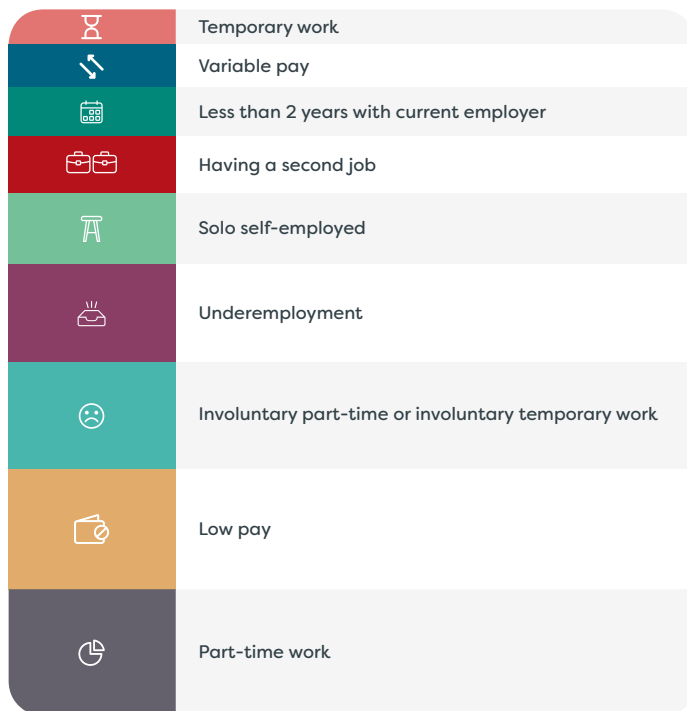
- contractual insecurity, where people are not guaranteed future hours or future work
- financial insecurity, where people have unpredictable pay or their pay is simply too low to get by
- lack of access to employment rights and protections.

Some people experience more than one form of insecurity simultaneously. Using a Principal Component Analysis, our [UK Insecure Work Index](#) weights the experience of insecure work. As a result:

- secure work refers to job situations where there are not any indicators of insecurity
- low to moderately insecure work reflects where one or several forms of lower-weighted insecurity come together
- severely insecure work refers to situations where two or more heavily weighted forms of insecure work come together, or where people are in part-time or temporary work while they want, or need, to work full-time or in a permanent role, also called 'involuntary' temporary or involuntary part-time work.

For some people, these forms of work may have a negative impact on health and wellbeing, their ability to obtain secure work in the future and broader employment outcomes.

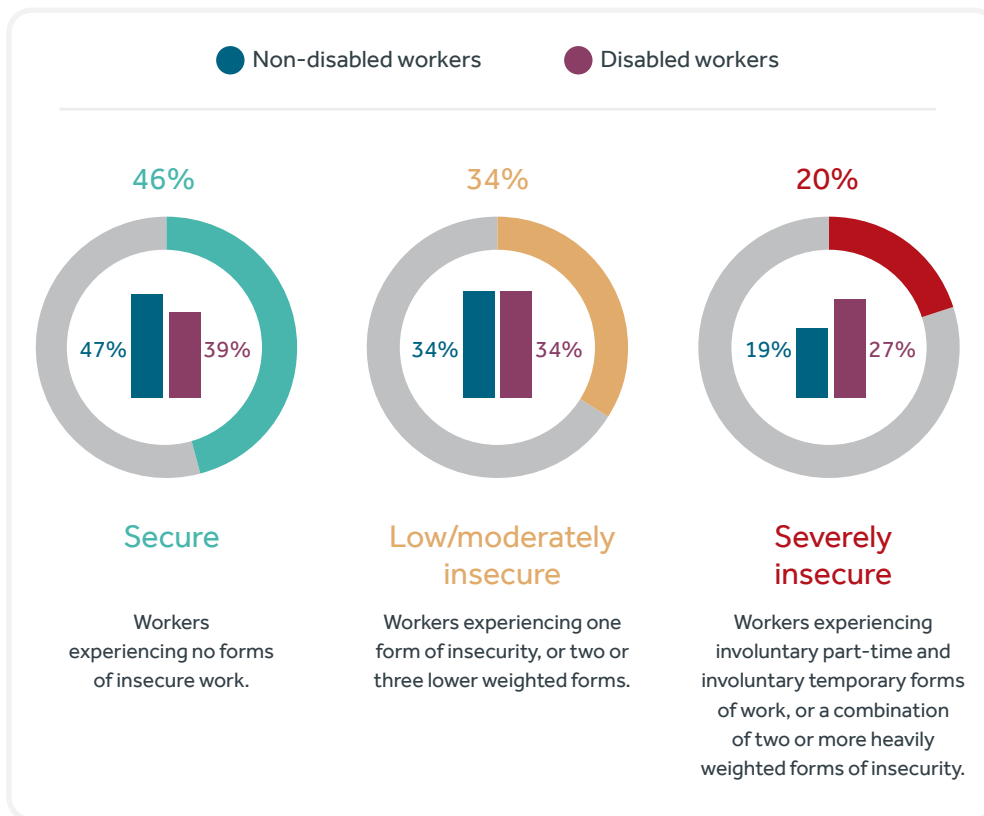
Figure 3: Relative contribution of each job characteristic to overall levels of insecurity, average between 2000-2022



3. THE DISABILITY INSECURITY GAP

The disability insecurity gap is the difference between the proportion of disabled workers and non-disabled workers in insecure work. Our analysis found that in April-June 2022, 27% of disabled workers were in severely insecure work compared with 19% of non-disabled workers.

Figure 1: Insecure work in the UK and the disability insecurity gap, 2022



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey – April-June 2022.

Disabled workers face a higher level of insecurity than non-disabled workers across all three dimensions of the Work Foundation’s insecure work index: contractual insecurity, financial insecurity and access to worker rights and protections.

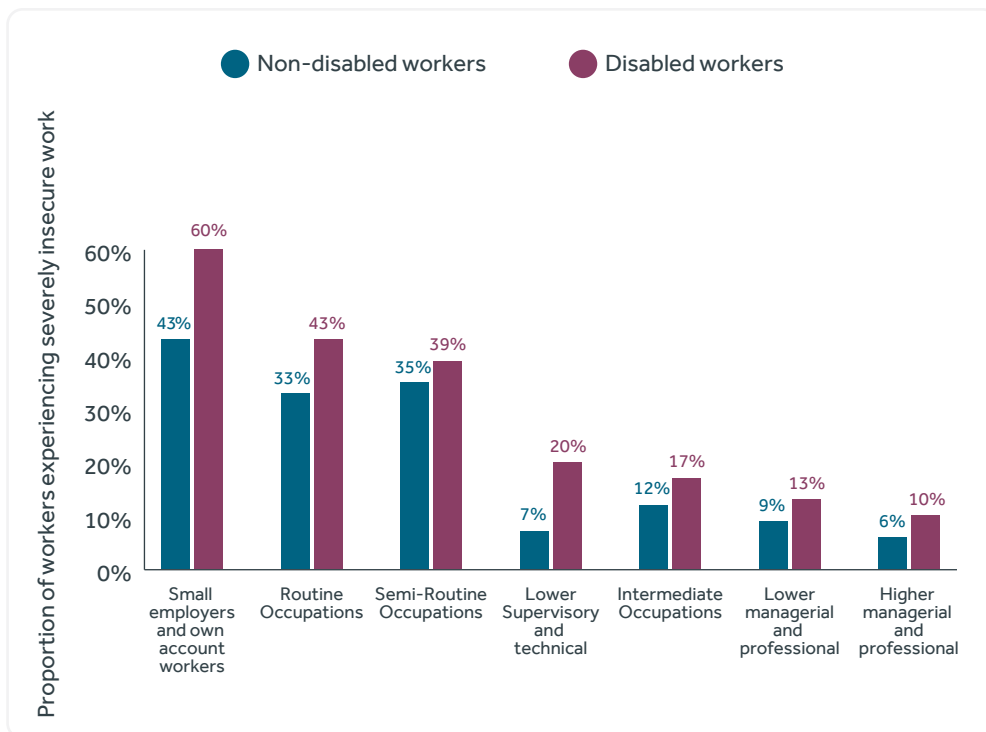
- **Underemployment:** Underemployment and involuntary temporary work are more prevalent amongst disabled workers than non-disabled workers. This suggests that some disabled workers would like to work more hours or work in a permanent job if they could but are unable to obtain this.
- **Rights and protections:** Disabled workers are less likely than non-disabled workers to work for the same employer for more than two years. This limits access to key protections like redundancy pay, which are linked to the length of service. In addition, gaps in employment history and frequent job changes can affect lifetime earnings and career progression.¹⁰
- **Self-employment:** Disabled workers are more likely than non-disabled workers to be self-employed. Previous research has linked this to barriers to entry in the wider labour market, with self-employment presenting a route to work for some disabled workers who may not otherwise have secured a paid job.¹¹ While being self-employed may give some disabled people flexibility to manage their condition, it can mean they lack access to basic worker protections that are afforded to employees.

In this briefing, we explore some of the barriers to secure work that disabled workers face and recommend what policymakers and employers could do to tackle the disability insecurity gap.

3.1 The disability insecurity gap within occupations

As Figure 4 below shows, insecurity is concentrated in routine and semi-routine occupations such as cleaners, waiters, and hairdressers, as well as amongst small employers and own account workers. These occupations are also where disabled workers are over-represented relative to non-disabled workers. However, even within these occupations, disabled workers are more likely than non-disabled workers to experience insecure work. At the same time, disabled workers are less likely to obtain senior roles in managerial and professional occupations and even when they do, they are still more likely to experience severely insecure work in these roles.

Figure 4: The disability insecurity gap across occupations, 2022



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey – April-June 2022.

Disabled self-employed workers can face insecurity

Disabled workers are more likely to be self-employed because of the barriers they face in finding employment.¹² They may view self-employment as the only viable option not only to increase their income but also to exert greater control of their work environment and working patterns which may help them to manage their condition. While being self-employed is an inherently insecure employment status, disabled entrepreneurs face distinct challenges in setting up and running their businesses. They may face challenges accessing start-up capital due to inconsistent work histories and many with fluctuating health conditions can find themselves unable to work for long periods of time which affects their ability to earn a steady income.¹³

Self-employed workers do not have the same protections and rights as full-time permanent employees. The 'solo' self-employed, who work as contractors or freelancers without employees, do not have access to statutory sick pay, maternity or paternity leave and pay and holiday pay. Our previous research found that there were an estimated 282,000 solo

self-employed workers on Universal Credit in the fourth quarter of 2021,¹⁴ which was more than double the number in the same quarter of 2019. This points to the impact of the pandemic and associated lockdowns on workers and how precarious the livelihoods of the self-employed are.

In 2022, there was a large disability insecurity gap among “small employers and own account workers” who either run small businesses or who work as freelancers. As Figure 4 highlights, nearly 60% of disabled workers in this category experience insecure work compared to 43% of non-disabled workers.

Disabled workers in senior roles are still more likely to experience insecurity

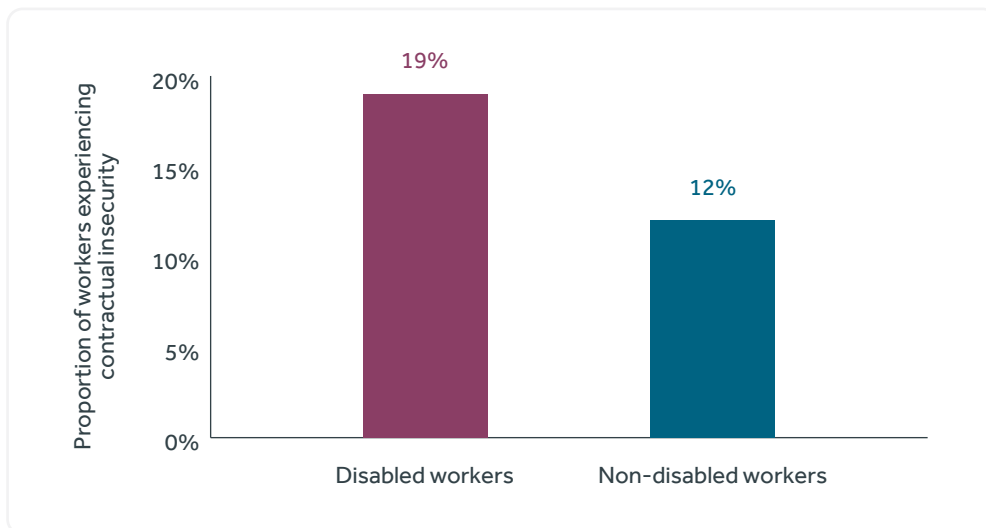
Overall, disabled workers are less likely to work in managerial and professional occupations. Only 14% of disabled workers are employed in senior roles like Director and Chief Executive compared to 21.7% of the wider workforce.

There are some factors which may be limiting progression among disabled workers. These range from the widely evidenced scarcity of part-time or flexible roles at these levels¹⁵ to the scepticism of managers about the ability of disabled workers to take on more responsibilities, which in turn inhibits their promotion prospects.¹⁶

Furthermore, as Figure 4 above illustrates, the disability insecurity gap persists even in these occupations. These are relatively secure and senior roles, but even when disabled workers have obtained these roles, they are still more likely than non-disabled workers to be in severely insecure work.

More analysis is needed to be done to investigate why the disability insecurity gap persists at senior levels, but our initial analysis indicates that it is driven by disabled workers experiencing contractual insecurity and underemployment. Disabled workers in these roles are twice as likely as non-disabled workers to be underemployed, that is they would prefer to work more hours, or to be on a permanent rather than a fixed-term contract.

Figure 5: Contractual insecurity in senior roles, 2022



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey – April-June 2022.

Insecurity in routine and semi-routine occupations

Our analysis found that nearly 30% of disabled workers are employed in semi-routine and routine occupations compared to 22% of non-disabled workers. This occupational grouping includes routine manual work, and lower-skilled service sector occupations, which include jobs such as cleaners, cashiers, bricklayers, and waiters.

While these occupations are more likely to be insecure even for non-disabled workers, the disability insecurity gap in these occupations is also quite large. This may in part be because some routine and semi-routine service occupations cannot be carried out at home which removes an important aspect of workplace flexibility. The widespread acceptance of working from home has benefited disabled workers. For example, our previous research found that around 70% of disabled people surveyed stated that inflexible working practices would prevent them from taking up a job offer.¹⁷

However, the nature of some routine service occupations that many disabled workers find themselves in may preclude them from accessing important forms of flexibility, such as working from home. Nevertheless, there are many other important, and underused forms of flexibility that can greatly support disabled workers in accessing and remaining in work, such as flexitime working, or a job share.

3.2 The impact of invisible and fluctuating conditions

Fluctuating conditions and flexibility

Some impairments and conditions can fluctuate. Research suggests that employees with conditions that fluctuate and flare up intermittently face additional stigma at work.¹⁸

Despite being legally obliged under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments, the support and willingness to do so among employers and managers often depends on disabled workers having pre-existing relationships with them.¹⁹ Disabled workers who have started working for a new employer are unlikely to have the close working relationships often needed to facilitate conversations about workplace adjustments and support.

The autism insecurity gap

Autistic people face distinct disadvantages in the UK labour market, with an estimated employment rate of 29%. A recent survey by the Institute of Leadership and Management found that 50% of managers surveyed expressed discomfort with the idea of hiring autistic people.²⁰ Our research finds that when autistic people do find employment, they are much more likely than other disabled workers to experience severely insecure work. Nearly four in ten autistic workers (38%) experience severely insecure work. Increased awareness and education about autism and increased contact with autistic individuals can help break down some of the negative stereotypes and discrimination that these workers experience in the workplace.

The UK Government has recently announced that Sir Robert Buckland KC MP will lead an Autism Employment Review,²¹ which will focus on barriers to entering into and retaining work. However, our results suggest that the review must also consider how to ensure that autistic workers have access to secure, rewarding and high-quality work.

Learning difficulties and insecure work

Four in ten workers with learning difficulties (42%) – such as dyslexia, ADHD or dyspraxia – are in severely insecure work. While the Labour Force Survey data prevents us from separating the effects of learning difficulties and learning disabilities on insecure work, these conditions often co-exist. These individuals are also more likely to suffer from poor mental health. Our analysis is unable to draw substantial conclusions from this initial analysis, however, as nearly one in two people with learning difficulties are in severely insecure work, further research should be undertaken to investigate this relationship.



The association between poor mental health and insecure work

Over a quarter of individuals experiencing a mental health condition (28%) are in severely insecure work. People with mental health conditions are more likely to be underemployed than those with physical disabilities which in turn might make it more difficult for them to obtain more secure work due to their fragmented work histories.

The majority of workers covered by this data have a disability or health condition that is not related to their work. Evidence indicates that working in an insecure job for an extended period can have negative impacts on a worker's wellbeing.²² This makes it difficult to get out of the cycle of insecure work and worsening mental health. Having a supportive workplace environment where employers and co-workers understand the nature of mental health conditions is critical in breaking this pernicious cycle.

Over the course of our insecure work programme, the Work Foundation will deliver further research to build more evidence about the relationship between insecure work and health and wellbeing.

The social security system can limit rather than support disabled workers

Individuals experiencing severely insecure work are more likely to interact with the benefits system than those in secure work. The Work Capability Assessment (WCA) and Personal Independent Payments (PIP) assessment are the two health assessments within the benefits system. The WCA determines whether people are fit or work or carry out work-related activity and the PIP assessment evaluates whether an individual is eligible for a disability benefit due to a long-term health condition. However, both the content and the delivery of two assessments do not adequately consider the severity of mental health conditions or how they might impact someone's ability to search for or take up employment.

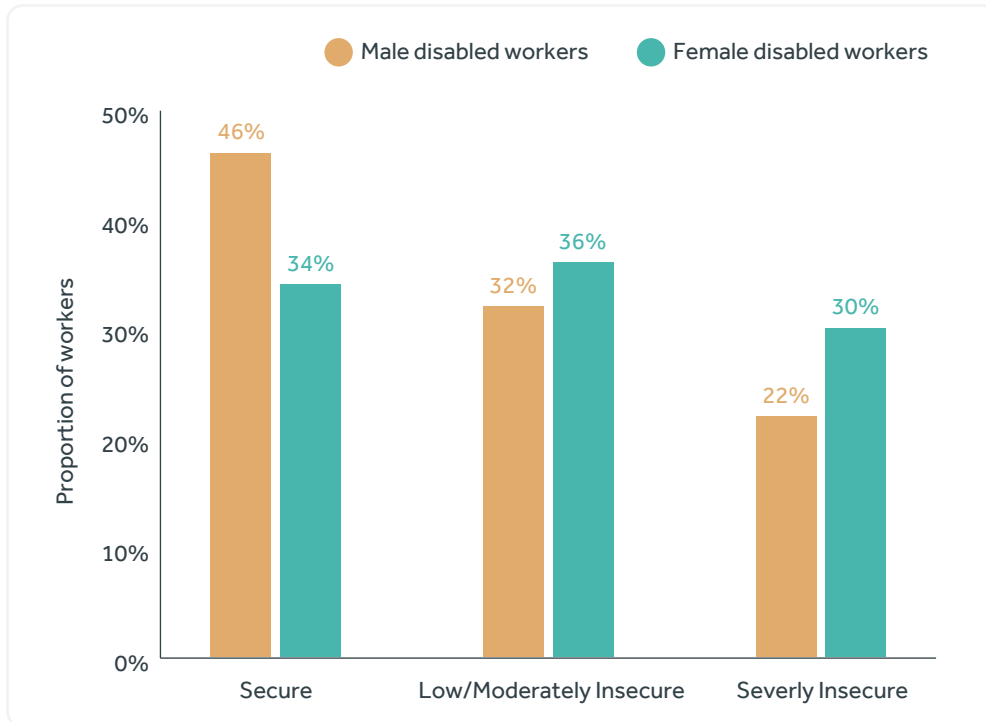
Nine in ten (90%) of those surveyed by the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute indicated that their mental health worsened in the build-up to an assessment while 85% reported their mental health had worsened following an assessment.²³ Assessments are often high-stake events as the outcome of the assessment determines both the generosity of benefits received and whether claimants are subject to a harsh conditionality and sanctions regime.

The proposed scrapping of the WCA announced in the Health and Disability White Paper 2023 presents an opportunity for Government to create a new health assessment that considers the harmful effects of mental ill-health in the world of work.²⁴

3.3 The intersections of gender, ethnicity, and disability

Personal characteristics, such as gender, can also impact the relationship between disability and insecurity. The figure on the next page indicates that disabled women are more likely to be in severely insecure work than disabled men. Our previous research on gender and insecurity found that women are over-represented in sectors where insecure work is concentrated, and that working mothers are particularly likely to experience an additional parenting penalty because of high childcare costs and for some, a need to work close to home.²⁵

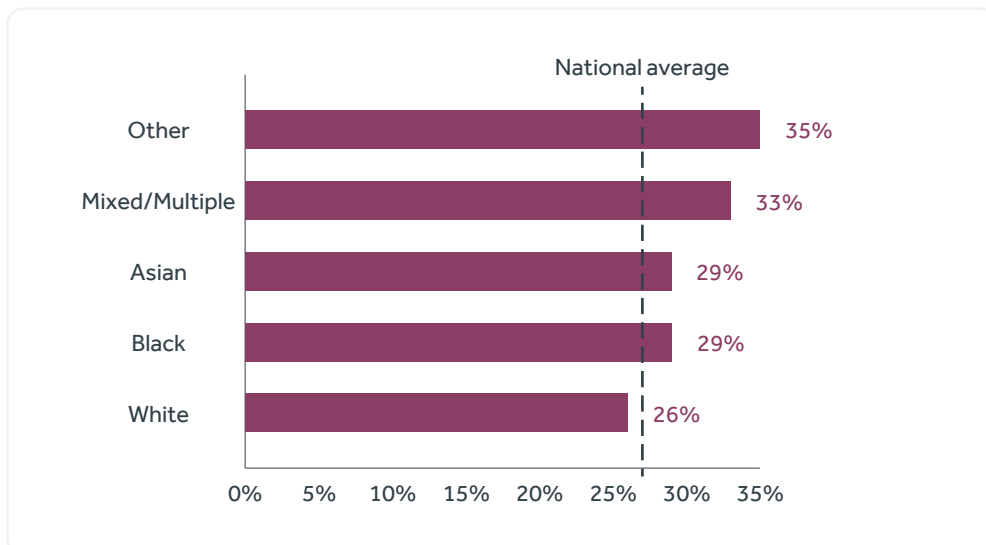
Figure 6: Gender, disability and insecure work, 2022



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey – April-June 2022.

Disabled workers from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to be in severely insecure work relative to white disabled workers. Nearly one in three (29%) Black and Asian disabled workers are in severely insecure work compared to 26% of white disabled workers. Qualitative research suggests disabled workers from an ethnic minority background feel that their job security is based on keeping their disability invisible because of the anticipated discrimination based on their race and disability.²⁶ Some of them go to great lengths to minimise their disability so they will not be seen as a burden, as they do not expect to be supported by colleagues or supervisors.²⁷

Figure 7: Ethnic minority disabled workers in insecure work, 2021-2022



Source: Work Foundation calculations of the Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey – April-June 2021-2022.

4. TACKLING THE DISABILITY INSECURITY GAP

Despite growth in the number and rate of disabled people in employment, disabled people face multiple forms of labour market disadvantage. Disabled people are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as non-disabled people and three times as likely to be economically inactive.²⁸ While the disability employment gap has narrowed over the last decade,²⁹ it remains worryingly high and disabled workers are still less likely to hold senior roles than non-disabled workers and more likely to find employment in low paid insecure occupations.

Disabled workers in severely insecure work have borne the brunt of the cost of living crisis as they already face extra living costs due to their disability, which is equivalent to 63% of household income after housing costs and disability payments like PIP.³⁰ Delays in processing PIP applications has meant that our social security system has often fallen short of protecting disabled people during the cost of living crisis.

The new evidence outlined in this briefing shows that disabled workers are more likely than non-disabled workers to be in insecure work. For some disabled people, part-time roles or fewer hours can be helpful in managing their condition but our social security system often neglects to consider how punitive conditionality requirements can worsen the health of disabled workers. Simply working more hours is often not a sustainable route into secure work. The latest data shows that more than half a million people who are inactive due to a health condition would like to work.³¹ Extending voluntary employment support to this group of people without the threat of sanctions would be a more effective way to bring them into sustained and secure employment.

Disabled workers are also more likely than non-disabled workers to be underemployed which can often harm their professional advancement. Employers should focus on creating an enabling work environment so that disabled workers can fulfil their potential at work. We have developed a mix of short-term proposals and transformative policy recommendations to tackle the disability insecurity gap.

With a General Election due by January 2025, our recommendations for supporting disabled people into more secure forms of work are focussed on short, practical steps and long-term reforms.

Recommendations

The next Parliament: Transformative, long-term changes

- 1. Increase job security and flexibility for all workers:** Government should aim to improve contractual and employment rights for all workers. Doing so will have a disproportionately positive impact on disabled workers' lives.

UK Government should:

- Bring forward an Employment Bill within the first 100 days of the next Parliament that strengthens the tests for employment status, and shifts the onus to organisations to prove a worker is not eligible for employment rights and protections
- Mandate that employers embed flexibility in all roles to all workers and make it available from their first day at work
- Work with employers and employer bodies to actively promote flexible working, especially targeting take-up among disabled people and those with long-term health conditions.

- 2. Reform Personal Independence Payments (PIP):** The Government's plan to scrap the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) means that the PIP assessment will be used as a gateway to sickness benefit. The PIP eligibility criteria must be widened alongside other reforms to the assessment to ensure that those with disabilities as well as short-term sickness get the financial support they need.

The Department for Work and Pensions should:

- Widen the PIP eligibility criteria to include those with short-term and recently acquired health conditions
- Give people the choice to undergo in-person or remote assessments
- Grant PIP for an indefinite period to those with permanent conditions.

- 3. Improve enforcement of labour market regulations:** Better state enforcement of anti-discrimination laws like the Equality Act 2010 is vital to support disabled workers.

UK Government should:

- Create a single body for labour market enforcement
- Increase funding for labour market enforcement to bring the number of labour market inspectors per worker to the International Labour Organisation benchmark.

Before the next Parliament: Short-term practical proposals

- 4. Scale up the Access to Work Programme to support disabled workers to stay in employment and progress to more secure work**

The Department for Work and Pensions should:

- Intensify its outreach efforts to make sure employers and disabled people are aware of the scheme
- Ensure that the scheme is properly resourced to reduce the current waitlist
- Expand the trials of the Access to Work Adjustment Passports to disabled people who are looking for work.

- 5. Strengthen Statutory Sick Pay to improve chances of disabled workers returning to work**

The Department for Work and Pensions should:

- Eliminate the lower earnings threshold for Statutory Sick Pay
- Remove the waiting period of four consecutive days to receive sick pay
- Statutory Sick Pay rates should be raised to the equivalent of the National Minimum Wage pro-rated by the usual number of hours worked.

METHODS

For this briefing, we analysed the Office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey. This nationally representative quarterly survey of around 80,000 individuals forms a robust and highly trusted source of information on the labour market. We used the April-June quarter of 2022 where we could and pooled the same quarter from different years where we needed to enlarge our sample to obtain meaningful estimates. This is highlighted in the text and in the notes under the graphs.

The UK Insecure Work Index uses three dimensions of labour market insecurity: contractual insecurity, financial insecurity, and workers' rights. These dimensions were used to identify indicators in the Office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey which contribute to overall levels of insecurity. Using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), we determine how the different job characteristics are correlated and summarise these into an index. The score that we derived from this is then divided into three categories of secure work, low/moderately insecure work, and severely insecure work. We have termed this 'severe' because we expect that potential negative impacts of insecure work will be concentrated here.

The methodology is set out in more detail in the [Technical Annex](#) that accompanies the Index.



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