

Helping disabled people into work is key to tackling economic inactivity – Eluned Morgan

Merthyr Tydfil Institute for the Blind is a supported workshop where staff make wooden products using precision cutting equipment and buttons for the furniture industry. They also operate a cardboard recycling service.

It employs people from across South Wales who have a disability or health condition that makes it difficult for them to find or keep employment.

Office for National Statistics figures released today show that unemployment and economic inactivity has fallen in Wales compared to the previous quarter but the Welsh Government in its recently published Employability Plan has made it clear that it is determined to work actively go much further to close the economic inactivity gap between Wales and the UK.

The statistics also show that the proportion of disabled people* who are able to work but who are unemployed in Great Britain is 9.2% – more than twice the proportion of those who are not disabled, which is currently 3.6%.

One of the key actions in the Employability Plan is to provide an individualised approach to employability support that is responsive to an individual's needs and takes account of personal circumstances, barriers, aptitudes and ambitions. Ensuring there are opportunities for disabled people to find and stay in work is a key element of this.

Eluned Morgan said:

“The Employability plan recognises that different people have different barriers to work. For disabled people, some of the barriers might be physical but all too often they are the result of employers' reluctance to take on disabled people. I am determined to address this and will be talking to some of our key employers across Wales over the summer to see how we can support them to overcome this reluctance.

“Organisations like Merthyr Tydfil Institute for the Blind are doing excellent work to equip disabled people with skills and experience and the opportunity to show employers they are valuable and reliable members of the workforce.”

* According to the Equality Act 2010 definition of disabled.