

<b>Institution: University of Warwick</b>		
<b>Unit of Assessment: C17 Business and Management Studies</b>		
<b>Title of case study: Reducing the disability employment gap in Britain</b>		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 - 31 December 2020</b>		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Kim Hoque	Professor	01/08/2012 - Present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 - 31 December 2020</b>		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Research by Professor Kim Hoque of Warwick Business School (WBS) has changed government policies relating to the employment of 7,900,000 working age disabled people in the UK, including 3,700,000 not currently in employment. This research has influenced:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The introduction of apprenticeship targets for disabled people in the Industrial Strategy White Paper (2017)</li> <li>2. Reform of the Disability Confident scheme (covering 18,000 employers) and government targets for disability employment</li> <li>3. Revision of the disability employment criteria within the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (covering GBP284,000,000,000 of public sector contracts)</li> <li>4. Reform of the government's framework for Voluntary Reporting on Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing (2018) and mandatory disability employment and pay gap reporting</li> <li>5. Disability-inclusive response by government to the Covid-19 pandemic.</li> </ol>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>People with disabilities face severe challenges in the labour market <b>(3.1)</b> with only 52% of disabled people in employment, compared with 81% of non-disabled people, and a disability pay gap of 15.2%. To encourage government and practitioner engagement with their research, Professor Kim Hoque, along with colleagues Nick Bacon of Cass Business School and Melanie Jones and Vicki Wass of Cardiff Business School, co-founded disability@work, which presents their research in an accessible format. Drawing on Prof. Hoque's extensive body of research on employer disability practice in Britain, his disability@work research <b>(3.1-6)</b> shows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The employment and retention of disabled people may be negatively affected by a range of HR practices including: recruitment and selection, incentive pay systems, team working, and functional flexibility. However, these effects are mitigated where organisations adopt a range of disability equality practices including: monitoring and reviewing of recruitment, promotion and pay by disability, specific targeting of disabled people during recruitment, and formal assessments of workplace accessibility to disabled employees or job applicants <b>(3.2)</b>.</li> <li>b) Employers signing up to the government's 'Two Ticks' scheme (recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to UK employers who agreed to take action to meet commitments designed to help disabled employees) did not adhere to expected commitments. Employers who have signed up to the successor Disability Confident scheme (the government's main policy in encouraging employers to adopt disability equality practices) are unlikely to employ a higher proportion of disabled people in their workforce, or be more likely to have implemented disability equality practices, than non-Disability Confident employers <b>(3.3, 3.4)</b>.</li> </ol>		

- c) Trade unions have a sizeable positive influence on employer disability equality practices, particularly where negotiation or consultation takes place with unions over equality **(3.5)**.
- d) The government's 2015 manifesto commitment to halve the disability employment gap by 2020 will, on current trends, not be met until 2065 **(3.1)**. However, this will be assisted via government schemes to encourage employers to improve their treatment of disabled job seekers and employees, such as: leveraging public procurement (via an emphasis on disability employment outcomes in social value criteria), better support for unions, better and more comprehensive reporting of disability employment outcomes at both national and organisational level, a review and revision of flagship schemes such as Disability Confident and better apprenticeship training provision for disabled people **(3.1)**.
- e) During economic downturns, disabled employees are more likely than non-disabled employees to experience a wage freeze or cut, reduced access to paid overtime, reductions to training, reorganisation of work roles, and an increase in workload **(3.6)**.

The research in a) to c) **(3.2-5)**, along with primary evidence collected during a Parliamentary inquiry conducted by the authors, provided much of the basis for the Ahead of the Arc report **(3.1)**. This report was produced for, and endorsed by, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Disability, and forms the basis of much of the subsequent collaboration between disability@work and the APPG. In 2019, WBS was invited to become a formal co-provider of the APPG for Disability's secretariat, in part in recognition of the ongoing impact of Prof. Hoque's research (a-e; **3.1-6**) on government disability equality policy.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1 Connolly, P., Wass, V., Bacon, N., **Hoque**, K. & Jones, M. (2016) Ahead of the Arc: a contribution to halving the disability employment gap. All Party Parliamentary Group for Disability. As well as drawing heavily on 3.3 & 3.5 below, this also drew on primary evidence from a Parliamentary inquiry led by Hoque and colleagues involving over 80 charities, disabled people's organisations, academics and disabled people.
- 3.2 **Hoque**, K., Bacon, N., Wass, V. and Jones, M. (2018) [\*Are High Performance Work Practices \(HPWPs\) enabling or disabling? Exploring the relationship between selected HPWPs and work-related disability disadvantage\*](#). Human Resource Management, 57 (2). pp. 499-513. doi:[10.1002/hrm.21881](#)
- 3.3 **Hoque**, K., Bacon, N. and Parr, D. (2014) [\*Employer disability practice in Britain: assessing the impact of the positive about disabled people 'two ticks' symbol\*](#). Work, Employment & Society, 28 (3). pp. 430-451. doi:[10.1177/0950017012472757](#)
- 3.4 **Hoque**, K. & Bacon, N. (2019) Response to the government's reforms of Disability Confident Level 3. disability@work [briefing paper](#).
- 3.5 **Hoque**, K. and Bacon, N. (2014) [\*Unions, joint regulation and workplace equality policy and practice in Britain: evidence from the 2004 workplace employment relations survey\*](#). Work, Employment & Society, 28 (2). pp. 265-284. doi:[10.1177/0950017012460320](#)
- 3.6 Jones, M., **Hoque**, K., Wass, V. and Bacon, N. (2020) [\*Inequality and the economic cycle: disabled employees' experience of work during the great recession in Britain\*](#). British Journal of Industrial Relations. doi:[10.1111/bjir.12577](#)

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Disability Rights UK describe Professor Hoque and colleagues as "key influencers", whose research **(3.1-6)** has resulted in "far greater policy focus within government on disabled people, and greater awareness across government, Parliamentarians, and senior civil servants of the scale of the disadvantage disabled people suffer, the limitations of existing government policy, and the potential policy levers needed to address this disadvantage" **(5.1)**.

Expanding on this, Lisa Cameron MP, Chair of the APPG for Disability, believes that Prof. Hoque and colleague's research "has had a profound impact on the political agenda" and has helped "shift the narrative within government circles and with key government officials away from viewing disabled people as passive benefit recipients towards viewing them as an important

*resource within the economy" (5.2).* Cameron raised Prof. Hoque and colleagues' Ahead of the Arc report (3.1) in *Prime Minister's Questions* in January 2017, asking if the Prime Minister (PM) would ensure that ministers engage with the report and its recommendations. The PM responded that the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions would consider the recommendations (5.3).

Since then, Prof. Hoque and colleagues have held over 80 meetings across Westminster and Whitehall with politicians to seek the implementation of the recommendations in 'Ahead of the Arc' (3.1) and their wider research (3.2-6). This includes meetings with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Minister for Disabled People, senior civil servants such as the Head of Policy for Work and Pensions, and Chief Executive of Infrastructure and Major Projects, and key government officials including the PM's Special Advisor for Disability. This has resulted in the following benefits:

#### **Inclusion of apprenticeship targets for disabled people in the *Industrial Strategy White Paper 2017***

In their Ahead of the Arc report (3.1), Prof. Hoque and colleagues' evidence the under-representation of disabled people in apprenticeships. These findings were brought to the attention of the BEIS Senior Policy Advisor (Industrial Strategy Team), resulting in the introduction of apprenticeship targets for disabled people in the *Industrial Strategy White Paper 2017* with the aim of increasing the proportion of apprenticeships going to disabled people by 20% by 2020. Commenting on the influence of the report (3.1), the BEIS Senior Policy Advisor said that they had been aware that "*disabled people in apprenticeships tripled over the course of 10 years from 12,960 in 2002/03 to 42,850 in 2012/13*" but before the report they "*did not have the story on proportionate comparisons with non-disabled people*" (5.4).

The House of Commons recognised "*the invaluable contribution*" of the research in "*ensuring the inclusion of disabled people's employment in the Industrial Strategy*" (5.5) and Disability Rights UK stated their doubt that the white paper "*would have included a commitment to increase the proportion of apprenticeships started by disabled people in the absence of our [Prof. Hoque and colleagues' research] representations to the BEIS Industrial Strategy team*" (5.6).

#### **Revised disability employment targets for government and the Conservative Party 2017 and 2019 manifestos**

Prof. Hoque and colleagues' research, showing that it would take until 2065 to halve the disability employment gap (3.1), has substantially influenced the government's national disability targets. In late 2016, the Minister for Disabled People distanced the government from its 2015 manifesto commitment to halve the gap by 2020, and in 2017 the government changed its manifesto commitment to a target of getting 1,000,000 more disabled people into employment by 2027.

In meetings with senior civil servants, Prof. Hoque argued successfully that the 1,000,000 target is a weaker target that will be met simply due to increases in the number of people in employment and rising disability prevalence. Lisa Cameron MP highlights Prof. Hoque's success in securing "*acceptance of the weaknesses of the government's current commitment on disability employment*" (5.2).

The 2019 Conservative manifesto acknowledged Prof. Hoque and colleagues' concerns by reinstating a commitment to reduce the disability employment gap, rather than increasing the number of disabled people in employment. A House of Commons motion in 2019 commended Prof. Hoque and colleagues' "*critical reflection on, and evaluation of, government disability employment commitments*" (5.5).

#### **Review and reform of Disability Confident**

Disability Confident is the government's flagship scheme to encourage employers to recruit and retain more disabled people. Disability Rights UK explain that Prof. Hoque and colleagues' research (3.1; 3.3-4) established "*the view across government that Disability Confident is not fit*

*for purpose and requires revision"* (5.1). In November 2019, the government announced reforms that require Disability Confident level 3 employers to employ at least 1 disabled individual, and report on their disability employment using the government's framework for *Voluntary Reporting on Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing*, echoing recommendations made by the research (3.1; 3.3-4). Lord Shinkwin, Vice Chair of the APPG and Chair of the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) Disability Commission, confirmed that *"I have no doubt that the research conducted on Disability Confident (3.1; 3.3-4) was instrumental in encouraging the government to introduce the reforms to the scheme that it announced in November 2019"* (5.7). The House of Commons also recognised Prof. Hoque's *"invaluable contribution... evaluating the impact and required reform of Disability Confident"* (5.5), and the government acknowledged their research (3.3-4) represents *"useful contribution to the debate about the future policy development of Disability Confident"* (5.8).

### **Revision of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012**

The government has consulted on reforming the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, to require all public sector commissioning to factor in economic, social and environmental wellbeing when allocating GBP284,000,000,000 of public contracts. Prof. Hoque and colleagues presented their research (3.1; 3.3-4) on disability employment reporting and the ineffectiveness of Disability Confident to the Cabinet Office, including the Chief Commercial Officer.

Following this, the proposal to use Disability Confident as the main disability employment measure was dropped, with the reforms (announced in September 2020) instead making direct reference to closing the disability employment gap (5.9). Commenting on this, Lisa Cameron MP stated *"It's great to see the direct reference to closing the disability employment gap in the revisions to the Social Value Act that were announced by the Cabinet Office a little while ago. It is notable that disability is the only equality strand that gets a direct mention. I think there would have been little chance of this happening were it not for the efforts that you and colleagues made in lobbying the Cabinet Office on this matter"* (5.10). The House of Commons recognises the *"invaluable contribution"* of Prof. Hoque research *"on the potential for public sector procurement to improve disabled people's employment outcomes"* (5.5).

### **The Voluntary Reporting Framework for Employers and pressure for mandatory reporting**

The government's framework for *Voluntary Reporting on Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing 2018* encourages employers to report the proportion of disabled people in their workforce and the disability employment practices adopted to support them. Drawing on research concerning the importance of accurate employer reporting of disability employment (3.1), Prof. Hoque and colleagues have successfully persuaded the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) that the framework requires revision and have convinced the DWP to reconvene the Voluntary Reporting Framework Working Group to *"look at the case for alignment with the definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010"* (5.8). Prof. Hoque has been invited to join the group and to nominate others to join.

Prof. Hoque and colleagues have built a consensus for their recommendation, based on research (3.1), to introduce mandatory disability employment reporting. This would encourage employers to adopt the disability equality practices their research shows helps improve outcomes for disabled people (3.2). They assisted Lord Shinkwin in writing his *Workforce Information Bill* [HL Bill 82], which would require employers to report their workforce disability prevalence and disability pay gap (5.7). Through his research on unions and disability (3.5), Prof. Hoque brokered support from the TUC's disability policy lead for the Bill. Lord Shinkwin corroborated that Prof. Hoque *"facilitated dialogue between myself and the Trades Union Congress's disability policy lead...this seeks to incorporate the valuable role of unions in supporting disabled people in the workplace, identified in the research conducted by disability@work"* (5.7).

Prof. Hoque conceived and organised an APPG for Disability event in February 2020 on mandatory reporting at which Parliamentarians (including Sir Iain Duncan Smith) and the Cabinet Office, DWP, Government Equalities Office, Business Disability Forum, CIPD, ONS and



TUC were present. The event demonstrated for the first time the widespread support for mandatory reporting. Lord Shinkwin confirmed that this provided *"the APPG and myself a solid platform from which to press our case with Ministers. This is an important and substantial step forward, and if we finally see the extension of mandatory pay gap reporting, this meeting will have been a landmark moment...I would like to thank Professor Hoque for the central role he played"* (5.11).

### Impact on the government's response to Covid-19

Prof. Hoque and colleagues' research on the effects of the economic cycle on disabled people (3.6) has significantly influenced the APPG for Disability's proposals on protecting disabled people in the Covid-19 recession. Prof. Hoque and colleagues' disability@work briefing paper based on research (3.6) was endorsed by the APPG and forwarded to the Minister for Disabled People, who has since met with Prof. Hoque and Lisa Cameron MP to discuss the research recommendations and has offered a follow-up meeting with Hoque to discuss the proposals in depth. Prof. Hoque and colleagues have also presented the research (3.6) and policy proposals to the Cabinet Office's Disability Unit, the TUC, and the PM's Special Advisor for Disability. The research briefing was cited in a BBC news article about the open letter the APPG sent to the PM, signed by over 100 Parliamentarians, calling for a disability-inclusive Covid-19 response (5.12). The WBS-funded researcher in Lisa Cameron's office helped (with Prof. Hoque's input) to write this letter and collected the signatures from Parliamentarians. In the PM's response, he signalled his desire for the forthcoming National Strategy for Disabled People to be *"ambitious and transformative"* (5.13). This is the first time he has made this important commitment publicly. In addition, the WBS-funded researcher played a central role in organising a Westminster Hall Debate on 15 October 2020 on disabled people and Covid-19, led by Lisa Cameron MP. Prof. Hoque and colleagues' research (3.6) was cited in her opening address (5.14). The embedded post has been extended (Hoque, GBP15,000, ESRC IAA, 2020-2021) to continue supporting the APPG's work in encouraging a disability inclusive government response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Alongside the impact already achieved and benefits derived, Prof. Hoque will continue to drive further policy change, both through his close collaboration with the APPG for Disability, and also through his role as a Commissioner on the Centre for Social Justice's Disability Commission, chaired by Lord Shinkwin, which will seek to exercise significant influence on the forthcoming *National Strategy for Disabled People*.

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 Letter from Philip Connolly, Disability Rights UK (12 February 2019).
- 5.2 Letter from Dr Lisa Cameron MP, APPG for Disability (23 September 2019).
- 5.3 Prime Minister's Questions, Vol. 620, Column 269 [908377]. Available [here](#).
- 5.4 Email to Kim Hoque from Senior Policy Advisor, Industrial Strategy team, BEIS (6 September 2017).
- 5.5 House of Commons Early Day Motion, Recognition of the Disability at Work Academics, EDM #92, Tabled 30 October 2019, 2019-19 Session. Available [here](#).
- 5.6 Philip Connolly, Disability Rights UK. Quoted in: [New commitments to disabled people in the Industrial Strategy following interventions from Disability@work](#) (20 December 2017).
- 5.7 Letter from Lord Shinkwin, Vice-Chair APPG for Disability (8 May 2020).
- 5.8 Disability Confident and workplace reporting PQ 15 January 2020, Government response to Lord Shinkwin.
- 5.9 Cabinet Office, Social Value Procurement Policy Action Note (PPN 06/20), Sept 2020.
- 5.10 Email from Dr Lisa Cameron MP, APPG for Disability (11 December 2020).
- 5.11 Landmark Parliamentary meeting on disability pay gap. WBS news article (13 March 2020).
- 5.12 BBC News article (1 May 2020).
- 5.13 Letter from the PM to Dr Lisa Cameron MP, Chair of the APPG for Disability (9 July 2020).
- 5.14 Westminster Hall, Covid-19: Disability-inclusive Response, 15 Oct 2020. Available [here](#).