

Institution: City, University of London		
Unit of Assessment: Business & Management		
Title of case study: Influencing government policies to increase disability employment.		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 - ongoing.		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Prof Nick Bacon	Professor of Human Resource Management	2012 – current
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 - ongoing.		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The academic work produced by Professor Nick Bacon, in collaboration with the three other co-founders of Disability@work (Kim Hoque (Warwick Business School) and Melanie Jones and Vicki Wass (Cardiff Business School)), has helped change government policies relating to the employment of 7.9m working age disabled people in the UK, including 3.7m not currently in employment. Their research has influenced the following: apprenticeship targets for disabled people in the Industrial Strategy White Paper (2017); the Disability Confident scheme (covering 15,000 employers); government targets for disability employment; disability employment criteria in revising the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (covering £284 billion of public sector contracts); the government's framework for Voluntary Reporting on Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing (2018) and mandatory employer reporting; a disability-inclusive response by government to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Disabled people face severe challenges in the labour market [3.5], 81% of non-disabled people are in employment compared with 52% of disabled people and there is a 15.2% disability pay gap. Bacon and colleagues' research [3.1-3.6] shows:</p> <p>[A] The employment and retention of disabled people may be negatively affected by a range of HR practices (including selective recruitment and selection, incentive pay systems, teamworking and functional flexibility), but these effects are mitigated where organisations adopt a range of disability equality practices (monitoring and reviewing of recruitment, promotion and pay by disability; specific targeting of disabled people during recruitment and formal assessments of whether the workplace is accessible to disabled employees or job applicants) [3.1].</p> <p>[B] Employers signing up to the government's 'Two Ticks' scheme (recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to employers in the UK who agreed to take action to meet commitments designed to help disabled employees) did not adhere to expected commitments and 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 [3.2,3.3].</p> <p>[C] Trade unions have a sizeable positive influence on employer disability equality practices, particularly where negotiation or consultation takes place with unions over equality [3.4].</p> <p>[D] The government's 2015 manifesto commitment to halve the disability employment gap by 2020 will, on current trends, not be met until 2065 [3.5], but this will be assisted via government schemes to encourage employers to adopt disability equality practices 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</p>		

flagship schemes such as Disability Confident; better training and development provision for disabled people [3.5].

[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 [6].

The academic research in [A]–[C] [3.1-3.4], along with primary evidence collected during a Parliamentary inquiry conducted by the report's authors, provided much of the basis for the 'Ahead of the Arc' report ([D]; [3.5]). 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 prolonged collaboration between Disability@work and the APPG.

3. References to the research

[3.1] Hoque, K., **Bacon**, N., Wass, V. & 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): 499-513.

[3.2] Hoque, K., **Bacon**, N. & 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): 430-451.

[3.3] **Bacon**, N. & Hoque, K. (2019) Two Ticks or No Ticks? An Assessment of Two Ticks 'Positive About Disabled People' certification. A Disability@work briefing paper available at <https://www.disabilityatwork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Disability@Work-Two-Ticks-Briefing-Paper-4.pdf>. This summarises findings from two academic conference papers: Hoque, K., Bacon, N., & Allen, D. (2019) Do non-competitive voluntary employment certifications have credible signalling effects? The UK government's Two Ticks 'Positive About Disabled People' certification. Presented at the 34th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Washington, USA; Bacon, N., Hoque, K., & Allen, D. (2019) Assessing the credibility of diversity branding: The relationship between Two Ticks 'Positive About Disabled People' certification and disability equality practices in the private and public sectors. Paper presented at the 79th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Boston, USA.

[3.4] Hoque, K. & **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): 265-284.

[3.5] 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 [1-4] above, 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.

[3.6] Jones, M., Hoque, K., Wass, V. and **Bacon**, N. (2016) *Disabled Employees' Experience of the Great Recession: Evidence from the 2011 British Workplace Employment Relations Study*. Presented at the Work, Employment & Society conference, University of Leeds.

Research was published in journals that apply a stringent peer-review process prior to accepting articles for publication and have been consistently rated 4* by the Chartered Association of Business Schools such as Human Resource Management (4* AJG2018) and Work, Employment & Society (4* AJG2018)

4. Details of the impact

Lisa Cameron MP, Chair of the APPG for Disability, raised the 'Ahead of the Arc' report [D] in Prime Minister's Questions in January 2017 [5.1], asking whether the Prime Minister would ensure that ministers engage with the report and its recommendations. The Prime Minister responded that the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions would consider the recommendations [5.1]. Since then, Nick Bacon and colleagues have held over 80 meetings across Westminster and Whitehall with politicians (including with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions), senior civil servants (e.g. Head of Policy for Work and Pensions and Chief Executive of Infrastructure and Major Projects) and government officials (e.g. the Prime Minister's Special Advisor for Disability) to seek the implementation of the recommendations in 'Ahead of the Arc' [D] and their wider research [A-C, E]. The result of this engagement drive had substantial policy and practical impacts:

Achieved the inclusion of apprenticeship targets in the Industrial Strategy White Paper 2017.

Bacon and colleagues brought evidence in 'Ahead of the Arc' [D] regarding the under-representation of disabled people in apprenticeships to the attention of the BEIS industrial Strategy team. [text removed for publication] [5.2]. This led to the introduction of apprenticeship targets for disabled people (to increase the proportion of apprenticeships going to disabled people by 20% by 2020) in the Industrial Strategy White Paper 2017 [5.3]. Disability Rights UK note: *"I doubt very much that the white paper would have included a commitment to increase the proportion of apprenticeships started by disabled people in the absence of our [Bacon and colleagues'] representations to the BEIS Industrial Strategy team"* [5.4]. The House of Commons recognised "the invaluable contribution" of Bacon and colleagues' research in "ensuring the inclusion of disabled people's employment in the Industrial Strategy" [5.5].

Prompted the review and reform of Disability Confident This is the government's flagship scheme to encourage employers to recruit and retain more disabled people and adopt disability equality practices to achieve this. Disability Rights UK explain Bacon and colleagues' research [B, D] has established *"the view across government that Disability Confident is not fit for purpose and requires revision"* [d]. In November 2019, the government announced Disability Confident would be reformed to require Disability Confident level 3 employers to employ at least one disabled individual, and to report on their disability employment using the government's framework for Voluntary Reporting on Disability, Mental Health and Wellbeing. The Prime Minister's special advisor for disability and DWP's Head of Employer Engagement have both stated (in conversation with Bacon and colleagues) this was in part due to the concerns raised by their research [B, D]. Lord Shinkwin similarly stated *"I have no doubt that the research conducted on Disability Confident was instrumental in encouraging the government to introduce the reforms to the scheme that it announced in November 2019"* [5.6]. The House of Commons also recognised Bacon and colleagues' *"invaluable contribution ... evaluating the impact and required reform of Disability Confident"* [5.5], and the government also acknowledged their *"useful contribution to the debate about the future policy development of Disability Confident"* [5.7].

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

Only approximately 50% of disabled people are in work in the UK in comparison with 80% of non-disabled people. In response to Bacon and colleagues' research showing it would take until 2065 to halve this disability employment gap [D], the Minister for Disabled People in late 2016 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 million more disabled people into employment by 2027. In meetings with senior civil servants, Bacon and colleagues argued successfully that this is a less ambitious target, given increases in the number of people in employment coupled with rising levels of recorded disability prevalence meant the government would likely meet its 1 million target without substantively reducing the disability employment gap. Supporting this, Lisa Cameron MP highlights Bacon and colleagues' success in securing *"acceptance of the weaknesses of the government's current commitment on disability employment which aims to get 1 million more disabled people into work by 2027"* [5.8]. The 2019 Conservative election manifesto subsequently acknowledged this argument by reinstating a commitment to reduce the disability employment gap, rather than just to increase the number of disabled people in employment. The government has since confirmed it will explore *"the case for a target as part of our work on the new National Disability Strategy which we have committed to publish by the end of 2020"* [5.3]. A House of Commons motion in 2019 commended the impact of Bacon and colleague's *"critical reflection on, and evaluation of, government disability employment commitments"* [5.5].

Successfully led to the 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 well-being in allocating £284 billion of public contracts. Bacon and colleagues' research [B, D] on

organisational reporting of disability employment, and the ineffectiveness of Disability Confident, was presented in meetings at the Cabinet Office (including with the government's Chief Commercial Officer). As a result, the initial proposal to include Disability Confident as the main disability employment measure in the revised social value delivery model was replaced by a measure of workforce disability prevalence. As Lisa Cameron MP states, Bacon and colleagues ensured *"the inclusion of the employment of disabled people (and the exclusion of Disability Confident) within the Cabinet Office's definition of Social Value in procurement"* [5.8]. The House of Commons recognises the *"invaluable contribution" of Bacon and colleagues' research* on the potential for public sector procurement to improve disabled people's employment outcomes" [5.5].

Reconvened the Voluntary Reporting Framework for Employers and increased 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. In line with research in [D] concerning the need for accurate employer reporting and measurement of disability employment, Bacon and colleagues have successfully persuaded the DWP that the framework (particularly the question employers are recommended to use to measure disability prevalence; the method by which employers are required to collect data; and the lack of a requirement for employers engaging with the framework to report the number of disabled people they employ) requires revision, and they 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"* [5.7] on the basis that [text removed for publication] [5.9]. Bacon and colleagues have been invited to join the group and nominate others.

Bacon and colleagues have also helped build consensus for their recommendation based on research in [D] for disability employment reporting to be placed on a mandatory footing, in order to encourage increased employer adoption of the disability equality practices identified as important in improving workplace-level outcomes for disabled people [A]. They have assisted Lord Shinkwin in writing a Workforce Information Bill [HL Bill 82] introduced in the House of Lords to extend gender pay gap reporting provisions to disability and require employers to report the disability prevalence in their workforce [f]. In addition, Bacon conceived and played a pivotal role in organising 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 meeting demonstrated for the first time the widespread consensus for the introduction of mandatory reporting. Lord Shinkwin, vice-Chair of the APPG, said the meeting 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 in bringing it about. I would like to thank Professor Bacon for the central role he played in organising the meeting..."* [5.6]. Via their research on unions and disability [C], Bacon and colleagues have facilitated support from the TUC's disability policy lead for Lord Shinkwin's Bill, with Lord Shinkwin commenting *Disability@work has facilitated dialogue between myself and the Trades Union Congress's disability policy lead, to further establish a shared agenda on mandatory disability employment and pay gap reporting. This seeks to incorporate the valuable role of unions in supporting disabled people in the workplace identified in the research conducted by Disability@work.* [5.6]

Impacted on the government's response to COVID-19. Bacon and colleagues' research on the effects of the economic cycle on disabled people [E] has significantly influenced the APPG for Disability's approach to protecting disabled people in the pandemic-induced economic downturn. A Disability@work briefing paper authored by Bacon and colleagues based on [3.6] has been officially endorsed by the APPG for Disability and forwarded to the Minister for Disabled People. The APPG awaits a response to the brief from the government. Bacon and colleagues have presented the research [E] and policy proposals [3.6] to the Cabinet Office's Disability Unit, trade union national equality officers at the TUC and the Prime Minister's

special adviser for disability.

Summarising the above, Disability Rights UK describe Bacon and colleagues as “key influencers”, whose research [A-E] 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.” [5.4].

Similarly, Lisa Cameron MP (Chair of the APPG for Disability) commented on the research [A-E] and highlights Bacon and colleagues’ success in helping “*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 that has the potential to make a significant contribution to productivity and economic growth*”. She added that the APPG’s collaboration with Bacon and colleagues has “*massively enhanced the influence of the APPG and, in doing so, has pushed issues relating to disability inequality in the labour market far higher up the political agenda in the UK than otherwise have been the case ... In my opinion, the quality of the research ... has had a profound impact on the political agenda*”. [5.8]

Confirming this, Lord Shinkwin stated “*The insights from the group’s research have proved highly valuable in engendering positive change to government policy. In supporting disabled people to gain work and achieve financial independence, Disability@work will have had a significant and lasting impact on the wellbeing and social inclusion of disabled people in the UK*”. [5.6]

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5.1] Prime Minister's Questions, Vol. 620, Column 269 [908377].

[5.2] [text removed for publication]

[5.3] HM Government. Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future. (November 2017)

[5.4] Testimonial - Policy and Development Manager, Disability Rights UK.

[5.5] House of Commons Early Day Motion, Recognition of the Disability at Work Academics, EDM #92 (30 October 2019)

[5.6] Testimonial letter from Lord Shinkwin, vice-chair APPG for Disability

[5.7] Disability Confident and workplace reporting: Parliamentary Questions (07 January 2020) & government responses to Lord Shinkwin. (14 January 2020)

[5.8] Testimonial - Dr Lisa Cameron MP, chair of the APPG for Disability

[5.9] [text removed for publication]