

# Disability Newsletter

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## Government Announces Mandatory Pay Gap Reporting

### Government Publishes Response on Mandatory Ethnicity and Disability Pay Gap Reporting

The government has published its long-awaited response to the consultation on mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting.

On **25 March 2026**, it confirmed that all large employers will be required to report the pay gaps within their organisations relating to both ethnicity and disability. This new requirement will mirror the existing gender pay gap reporting framework already in place.

All reports must be submitted **annually by 5 April**, accompanied by mandatory action plans outlining how organisations intend to address any gaps identified. Enforcement mechanisms will apply to employers who fail to meet their obligations.

#### What Does This Mean for Employers?

All large employers will be required to collect specific data from their workforce in line with Government Statistical Service standards.

**Disability Data**—Employers must use the **Equality Act 2010** definition of disability to determine whether an employee is considered disabled.

**Ethnicity Data**—Ethnicity must be reported across the following groups:

White, Asian or Asian British, Black, Black British, Caribbean or African, Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

#### How Will Reporting Work?

The pay of **disabled employees** will be compared with that of **non-disabled employees**. Whereas the pay of each **ethnic group** will be compared with the **White** ethnic group.

Employers must also report **declaration rates**—the percentage of employees who choose not to disclose their disability status or ethnicity. High non-disclosure rates can significantly affect the accuracy and interpretation of pay gap data.

#### Does This Go Far Enough?

This development is undeniably a positive step towards improving transparency and reducing inequality in the workplace. However, its scope remains limited.

The “large employer” classification applies only to organisations with **250 or more employees**. As of early 2025, the UK had approximately **5.7 million private sector businesses**, yet only **8,335** of these employed 250 or more people. This means that **just 0.15%** of private sector businesses will be covered by the new reporting requirements.

Additionally, reporting comparisons can only be made where there are at least **10 employees** within each relevant category. Given that many individuals choose not to disclose a disability—often due to fears of unfair treatment—there is a risk that the data may under-represent disabled employees and limit the effectiveness of the reporting.

While the commitment is firm, no specific date for the legislation to come into force has been set. It is widely anticipated that mandatory reporting will not be required until 2027 or 2028, following the passage of the Equality (race and Disability) bill.

# Also in the News...

## Exploitation Disguised as “Opportunity”

Another disturbing case has hit the headlines: yet again, a disabled person has been deemed “good enough” to work for free, but somehow not good enough to be paid.

Bryan , 21, who has Myotonic Dystrophy and ADHD, spent **nine months** working unpaid as a waste-management loader at Southampton City Council through a supported internship. For the entire placement he received glowing feedback. He met every expectation. He enjoyed the work. He caused no issues. He proved—day after day—that he could do the job.

But when the internship ended and he applied for a paid position, not once but twice, the council refused to hire him. After months of loyal service, he was left heartbroken.

Bryan’s story follows that of **Tom**, 28, an autistic man from Manchester who volunteered **600 hours** stacking shelves at Waitrose. When his mother asked if he could be paid, he was suddenly told not to return. Only after national outrage—and Asda stepping in with a paid job—did the company backtrack.

## A Pattern We Can’t Pretend Not to See

These are not isolated incidents. They expose a systemic problem: disabled people being used as free labour under the banner of “experience,” “training,” or “opportunity.”

- If someone is capable enough to do the job for free, they are capable enough to be paid.
- If an organisation benefits from a person’s labour, that labour has value.

If disabled workers are consistently denied paid roles after proving themselves, that is discrimination—not misfortune.

## The Question That Should Shame Those in Power

How many more disabled people has this happened to that we never hear about? How many are quietly exploited, dismissed, or pushed aside once they ask for the basic dignity of a wage?

And the question that must now be asked loudly and publicly:

### **When are the government going to stop this?**

When will they step in, close the loopholes, and end a system that allows disabled people to be used, undervalued, and discarded?

### **Do you know any Disabled Unite Members?**

**We need your help!**

**We need your help to get the message out, if someone is legally classed as disabled, they must inform their local Unite the Union office!**

**Why?**

**It is important for Unite to know this information because of legal protections you are entitled to and ballots that you can take part in and getting the right information to you, etc etc....**

**WE WILL NOT INFORM YOUR EMPLOYER**

## Disability Seminar and scanning pen demonstration

The Disability Campaign and C pen seminar was a big success.

We had an overview of the campaign so far and then Scanning pens did a presentation and a demonstration.

The Pens—There are two types of pen. A Secure pen for NHS, Military and other secure applications and the reader 3 which can connect via Wi-Fi and Bluetooth and can record what it reads.

More information can we found at [www.scanningpens.com](http://www.scanningpens.com)

Each branch is able to get a discounted model.

If you wish to trial a pen at a union course or a at a unite office please contact your regional equalities department.

If you require assistance to obtain a pen please contact your branch for assistance.



### ARE YOU A CARER?

#### YOUR VOICE MATTERS.

We want to share the lived experiences of carers in our community.

Your story can help others feel seen and understood.

What does caring look like for you each day?  
Where do you find support?  
What barriers do you face?

If you'd like to contribute a story for our newsletter, please contact Heidi.

Email address on the bottom of the newsletter.

You can stay anonymous if you prefer.

## 1 IN 8 MEN WILL GET PROSTATE CANCER UNITE THE UNION, HELPING TO RAISE AWARENESS

Prostate cancer in the workplace - A negotiating guide for reps



UNITE: FIGHTING FOR JOBS ■ PAY ■ CONDITIONS

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Prostate Cancer UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1005541) and in Scotland (SC039332). Registered company number 02653887.

Get your Rep Toolkit [here](#)

To find out more about the campaign or to get involved.

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