

# The Government's response to the specialist disability employment programme consultation

## Quick summary

The Government believes that an important part of achieving our potential comes from being in fulfilling employment. Disability should not mean there are barriers to this.

Liz Sayce's independent review – *Getting in, staying in and getting on* – contained a wide range of recommendations for reforming specialist disability employment programmes. A public consultation about these programmes was launched during July 2011 and ended in October 2011. Responses were received from disabled people, organisations of and for disabled people, and employment service providers.

There was an overwhelming consensus behind the central theme that resources for supporting disabled people into employment should be focused on disabled people themselves rather than institutions. There was widespread support for greater choice and control for disabled people.

Maria Miller, Minister for Disabled People, has repeatedly confirmed that the budget for specialist disability employment support is protected. The Government wants to ensure that specialist employment support is used efficiently, effectively and equitably to support more disabled people into mainstream jobs with the available resources than ever before.

The Government supports the principle of moving towards funding the needs of individuals and away from funding specific workplaces or facilities. We are already working with employers, employment programme providers, disabled people, user-led organisations and representative organisations to ensure that services meet this aspiration.

The Government has announced that it will implement the Sayce recommendations on reforming Remploy. Remploy will begin collective consultation on the proposed closure of factories that the Remploy Board considers (subject to consultation with employee representatives) are unlikely to be able to achieve independent financial viability. Remploy employees will, during the consultation, be able to put forward proposals in relation to any viable aspects of non-viable businesses, along with proposals for avoiding any compulsory redundancies which may follow.

Any Remploy employees affected by potential change will be guaranteed a package of personalised support.

The Government will recycle available resources freed from Remploy to improve programmes such as Access to Work. This increased funding will enable more disabled people to enter and remain in work. The next stage of these reforms will be a period of co-production with disabled people to enable the Government to establish priorities for future delivery.

The Government will introduce some immediate measures in response to the consultation. These will include, for example, targeted marketing in Access to Work so that under represented groups are better able to participate. We will target small employers and young people – those leaving education and those already seeking work – to ensure they are more aware of the support available.

The Government will fully explore the best way to fund and utilise the expert and specialised services offered by Residential Training Colleges. Whilst the Government considers how to proceed, and to support the colleges through any period of transition, the Minister for Disabled People has committed to funding provision through to the end of the academic year ending summer 2013.

The Government wants to establish a system of specialist employment support that meets the needs and aspirations of disabled people now, and in the future. We look forward to the support of disabled people as we undertake this task.