Department for Work & Pensions

Disability Confident Scheme

Disability Confident Reform at a glance

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Introduction

Disability Confident has helped thousands of employers take positive action since 2016 and remains an important part of the Government's ambition to improve employment opportunities for disabled people. However, employers, disabled people and stakeholders have told us that the scheme now needs to do more to demonstrate what membership means in practice, support continuous improvement and provide greater confidence that employers are taking meaningful action.

Our Ambition

The ambition for the reformed Disability Confident scheme is simple:

> **We want Disability Confident to help more employers create inclusive workplaces, give disabled people confidence in what the scheme stands for, and demonstrate the positive difference that disability inclusion can make.**

The reforms are designed to make participation in the scheme more valuable by providing clearer expectations, stronger support, greater recognition of progress and increased confidence in what Disability Confident membership represents.

What Employers, Disabled People and Stakeholders Told Us

Through extensive engagement with employers, disabled people and representative organisations, alongside independent research and evaluation, several consistent themes emerged:

- Employers value practical guidance and want clearer support on what good disability inclusion looks like in practice.
- Disabled people want to know what being Disability Confident actually means when they see an employer displaying the Disability Confident badge.
- Small and medium-sized employers want a pathway that is achievable and proportionate to their size and resources.
- Smaller employers told us that expectations should reflect the realities of running a small organisation. Many might recruit infrequently, or only occasionally need to implement workplace adjustments or absences. They want a scheme that recognises preparedness and confidence as well as evidence from past activity.
- People want to see evidence that Disability Confident leads to real action and positive change.
- Employers want greater clarity about progression between levels and how they can improve.

- Members value recognition but also want access to tools, resources and support that help them succeed.

What is Changing?

The reformed Disability Confident scheme will:

- Introduce a straightforward progression journey, with clearer expectations at each level.
- Support employers of all sizes, recognising that outcomes may be achieved and evidenced differently depending on the size and structure of the organisation.
- Encourage continuous improvement through time-limited membership periods – Level 1 is an entry level membership with a maximum of 2 years at this level.
- Strengthen assurance and verification arrangements at higher levels.
- Ask employers at Level 2 to complete an annual Progress Statement.
- Ask Level 3 Verifiers to complete an action-based Verification Report for each organisation they work with.
- Provide more guidance, tools and support to help employers succeed.
- Increase confidence among disabled people, employers and stakeholders about what Disability Confident membership represents.

- Introduce an annual Disability Confident Performance Report to provide greater transparency, accountability and insight into how the scheme is performing and evolving over time.

What Will Stay the Same

The core purpose of Disability confident remains unchanged:

- Encouraging employers to recruit and retain disabled people.
- Supporting workplace inclusion and progression.
- Sharing good practice across employer networks.
- Showing disabled people that employers are committed to inclusion.
- Helping create a more inclusive labour market for everyone.

What Happens Next

Changes to the scheme will not be introduced immediately. Employers will continue using existing Disability Confident arrangements while implementation preparations are completed and further guidance is published.

For current members:

- Continue meeting your Disability Confident commitments.

- Maintain your current membership status.
- Look out for future communications explaining transition arrangements and key implementation milestones.
- Begin familiarising yourself with the reformed scheme and the support and information available.

For employers considering joining:

- Continue to join Disability Confident through the current route.
- Further information on the reformed scheme will be provided before changes are implemented.

Reform Timeline

Reform will be introduced gradually to allow employers time to understand the changes, prepare for transition and access new guidance and support as it becomes available.

November 2026

- Publication of reform package and early guidance

December 2026 to March 2027

- Further guidance/tools and products released in support of the reformed scheme.

1 April 2027

- Phased introduction of reform arrangements begins.

2027/2030

- Existing members transition to the reformed scheme.

Supporting Existing Members

Existing Disability Confident members will not be required to rejoin the scheme because of reform, nor will memberships end automatically when the reforms come into effect.

Transition arrangements will be phased and communicated in advance, with support available to help employers move successfully into the reformed scheme. Where organisations choose not to continue their membership, they will be supported with information and resources they can use outside the scheme to help them continue building inclusive workplaces and supporting disabled people in work.

Find out more

This document provides an overview of the reforms. Further documents in the Disability Confident launch pack explain:

- the detailed changes being introduced;
- transition arrangements for existing members;
- how the future Disability Confident levels will operate