Lincoln MP urges employers to recruit more disabled workers

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Employers across Lincolnshire joined Karl McCartney, Member of Parliament for Lincoln, at a key summit in Lincoln on increasing disability employment in the region. Since 2010, over 32,000 disabled people have entered work through Work Choice – a government supported employment programme that helps people who due to their disability, may find it difficult to find or keep a job. The summit was one of a number of events hosted by Members of Parliament on a cross-party basis across the country to promote the Disability Confident campaign.

Statistics show that disabled people are highly productive and loyal employees who take less time off sick and have fewer accidents at work than their non-disabled colleagues. Disabled people also represent 20% of the potential national workforce and have a combined household spending power of over £212 billion – not something employers can afford to miss out on.

Sponsored by national employment, learning and skills charity, Shaw Trust, the summit in Lincoln provided employers with the opportunity to speak about their experience of recruiting disabled employees. The employers heard from Clare Gray, Shaw Trust's Specialist Disability Co-ordinator, who spoke about the Trust's support services and how the charity already helps employers eager to increase the diversity of their workforce. Clare Gray is a wheelchair user with spinal muscular atrophy and has worked for Shaw Trust for over 10 years.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) also discussed the Access to Work scheme which pays for practical support when disabled people need help to start and stay in work or set up a new business.

The Disability Confident campaign was launched by DWP in 2013 to encourage employers to become more confident about recruiting disabled people. There has been strong support from major national employers which needs to be translated at a local level, encouraging small and medium sized businesses to sign up to the principles of the campaign. Businesses are also asked to come up with a pledge that complements the work of the Disability Confident campaign. The pledge helps employers focus on how they can make a small change that will make a big difference to the opportunities available for disabled people working in their business. By making a pledge, businesses join the growing list of Disability Confident employers.

Karl McCartney JP MP, Member of Parliament for Lincoln, said:

"It was great to learn more about how Lincolnshire employers are working closely with disabled people to offer them employment opportunities. All of the employers who attended the event signed the Disability Confident pledge, a commitment to employing more disabled people. I would urge all local businesses to do the same.

"Tackling unemployment is a Government priority and I welcome the targeted specialist support offered to disabled people so they can find work. We should never be complacent about reducing unemployment and the support we offer disabled people to fulfil their career ambitions. The Disability Confident campaign is helping to break down traditional barriers that have held progress in this area back. It is clear to me that employers are increasingly aware of the talents disabled workers possess."

Minister for Disabled People, Mark Harper, said:

"It's great that Karl McCartney MP is leading the way in supporting disabled people to find work in Lincoln.

"With record employment and almost 700,000 vacancies in the economy today, employers should be making the most of the talent that exists amongst disabled people in this country.

"This isn't just about doing what's right, it's about recognising that diverse workplaces are stronger workplaces and that means more dynamic and stronger businesses to drive forward our economic recovery."

Roy O'Shaughnessy, Chief Executive of Shaw Trust, added:

"Shaw Trust was delighted to sponsor the Disability Confident event in Lincoln. Through our work with employers across the United Kingdom we are seeing an increasing number of businesses who are committed to recruiting more disabled workers. There has been a positive culture shift among employers who recognise the benefit of a diverse workforce. The Disability Confident campaign continues to make significant progress towards ensuring the job market is open and fair for all."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

To find out more about the Disability Confident campaign, please visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign

For Shaw Trust media enquiries please contact Leke Sanusi on 07825 512 264 or odeleke.sanusi@shaw-trust.org.uk. Alternatively, please email pressoffice@shaw-trust.org.uk

Please find a photograph attached with the following caption:

"Lincoln MP urges employers to recruit more disabled workers" – from left to right – Karl McCartney JP MP; Julie Williams DWP; Lorraine Cockrell Access to Work; Angela Sharp Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust ; Adrian Donner Interserve; Keith Halsall GTI Consultancy; Claire Gray Shaw Trust

About Shaw Trust:

Shaw Trust is a national employment, learning and skills charity that helps people facing disadvantage into work, gain skills and take control of their futures. Over the past thirty years, the Trust has striven to combine its charitable heart with its commercial brain to provide the very best support to the people it was set up to serve.

Shaw Trust is the largest third sector contractor for Department for Work and Pensions. We deliver both mainstream (Work Programme) and specialist (Work Choice) employment support schemes across Britain and help over 50,000 people per year. As well as being a subcontractor in six contract package areas, Shaw Trust, through its merger with Careers Development Group (CDG) is a prime provider in London East has now supported 11,150 people into long-term jobs since the Work Programme began, ranking 12th out of 40 contracts nationally in Year 4 so far.

With regards to Work Choice, Shaw Trust is a prime provider of 16 Work Choice contracts, and a subcontractor in seven Work Choice contract package areas. The latest official statistics from November 2014 show that nationally 78,750 people have started the programme since it started in 2010, with 29,520 of these having found a job. Shaw Trust has supported 18,310 people into work, representing 39.7% of the people starting on the programme.

The Trust also helps people gain skills and into work via a wide range of other activities including education and skills contracts, 50 shops and a national volunteering programme as well as health and social enterprise projects.

Shaw Trust, an approved academy sponsor, created Shaw Education Trust, a multi-academy trust, to manage and run the academies - serving young people with special educational needs or those in disadvantaged communities.

Shaw Trust has a turnover of over £107m a year and employs over 1,438 people across over 200-plus locations. We are supported by over 600 volunteers and deliver contracts for eight major funding agencies including the European Social Fund, the Department of Work and Pensions and the Big Lottery Fund. It has a range of international partners in Australia (Interwork), Poland (Intergracja Foundation) and Romania (Motivation Romania).

Watch the latest Shaw Trust corporate video showcasing who we are and what we do here: http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk/about-us/corporate-video/. For more information, please visit the Shaw Trust website: http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk

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