



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Radical and realistic? Will welfare reform create a genuine accessible working environment for disabled people?

Today RADAR, the UK's leading disability network, broadly welcomed the Government's commitment to modernise incapacity benefit as set out in the Welfare Reform Bill. RADAR has long campaigned for a benefits system which does not label disabled people as being incapable of work. Only half of working age disabled people are currently in work.

While welcoming the Bill, Kate Nash, Chief Executive expressed a note of caution:

'The current benefits system reinforces the tendency to see disabled people in terms of their physical functionality, for example blind or wheelchair user. It then uses this tendency to divide people into those who can work and those who cannot. This is outdated, unhelpful and out of sync with current anti-discrimination legislation.

'Whether a disabled person works is often about, the attitudes of employers, the accessibility of their working environment, the support they receive to overcome societal barriers, and finally, their ability to manage their impairment. This last issue is where many get stuck, based on an ill informed medical profession and inadequate personal capability assessment.

'Two further issues need to be addressed: the Government needs to do more work with employers to ensure that they see the business case for employing disabled people. Many disabled people who can and want to work need to have the opportunity to do so.

'Secondly, to achieve a successful new approach to incapacity benefit and to get 1million more disabled people into jobs, the Government must not let the progress outlined in the Bill mask some of the deeper inequalities for disabled people in Britain today –poverty and social exclusion.'

Ends

Notes to editor

1. RADAR is a national non-governmental disability organisation working for the rights of disabled people, from the broadest range of cultural, racial and social backgrounds, irrespective of their impairment. Although RADAR works with organisations of all types (of and for disabled people) RADAR itself is an organisation of disabled people.
2. RADAR's vision is about pushing out the boundaries of the expected; a vision of a world where human difference is routinely anticipated, expertly accommodated and positively celebrated.

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