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Thousands of young disabled people and those with long-term health conditions are set to be offered a fast-tracked job under the government's Jobs Guarantee.

- Young people set to benefit from fully funded jobs as government continues to tackle UK's persistently high disability employment gap.
- Number of NEET young people who report having a disability has doubled in the past decade.
- New fast track for those on health benefits part of £2.5 billion investment to support almost a million young people towards employment.

Under the scheme, eligible young people on health benefits will be offered a guaranteed job on a voluntary basis from week 13 after their Work Capability Assessment.

They will receive mentoring and tailored support with their mental health, finances and housing to prepare them for work, while employers will be supported with onboarding costs.

The government will also cover 100% of wage costs up to 25 hours a week for six months.

The move marks a significant expansion of the Jobs Guarantee, a government scheme launched earlier this year for long-term unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 who have been claiming Universal Credit for 18 months.

The expansion to young people on health benefits will start from April 2027 and comes as part of the government's £3.5 billion investment to deliver the most significant employment reforms in a generation to tackle the UK's persistently high disability employment gap.

These reforms include the 'right to try' guarantee announced earlier this year, which will enable those on sickness benefits to try to work without the immediate fear of losing their benefits.

Earlier this year, Alan Milburn's interim report found that nearly half of young people who are NEET in the UK (45%) report having a disability - more than doubling from 21.1% in 2013/14.

Widening eligibility for the scheme to young disabled people means thousands will have the chance to join the scheme which is intended to help up to 90,000 young people into work by the end of the Parliament.

This comes as part of the government's efforts to tackle the UK's persistently high disability employment gap, including the 'right to try' announced earlier this year, which will enable those on sickness benefits to try work without the immediate fear of losing their benefits.

The government believes every young person should have the opportunity to earn or learn, with £2.5 billion committed over the next three years to Youth Guarantee schemes including £3,000 payments for businesses who hire a young person out of work for six months, and an expansion of youth apprenticeships.

Emma Taylor, Chief People Officer at Tesco, said:

We welcome the Government's expansion of the Jobs Guarantee, which will help more young people with disabilities and long-term health conditions access the opportunities, experience and support they need to get started in the world of work.

At Tesco, we've always been committed to helping young people develop the skills and confidence required for a long-term career, and we recognise that creating more ways into employment for those facing additional barriers is vital if every young person is to have the chance to fulfil their potential.

As a Disability Confident Leader, inclusion is a long-standing priority for Tesco and we're proud to support initiatives that help widen access to work while creating meaningful opportunities for more young people to succeed.

Harriet Edwards, Director of Influencing at the national disability charity Sense, said:

We welcome investment that gives more young disabled people the opportunity to get into work. Too many who want to work are still locked out by barriers, including a lack of appropriate support, inaccessible workplaces and negative attitudes.

These jobs must be accessible, work for the individual and lead to lasting opportunities. Young disabled people need tailored support and inclusive workplaces, and success should be measured not just by how many start a job, but whether they have the support and opportunities to build the future they choose.

Dr Sarah Hughes, CEO of Mind, said:

Many young people with mental health problems tell us that they'd love to work but can't find the right support or opportunities in order to do so. If delivered in a genuinely supportive way, this offer could be life changing for a young person struggling with their mental health.

For far too long young people have been let down, with less opportunities and support than previous generations. Focussing on providing genuine opportunity to harness their motivations and ambitions is a really positive step forward, and we look forward to seeing the full detail.

Jon Sparkes OBE, Chief Executive of Mencap, said:

This is very welcome news. Young people with a learning disability are

disproportionately likely to be out of work and not in education, employment or training. Earlier access to paid work, tailored support and mentoring could help prevent them from becoming trapped in long-term unemployment.

The voluntary nature of the scheme will give young people with a learning disability the confidence to explore work opportunities and show what they can do, without losing the support they need. If delivered well, with backing from employers and vital support like Access to Work, this could help tackle the NEETs crisis and get more young people with a learning disability into work.

Brian Dow, Chief Executive, Mental Health UK:

Expanding access to the Jobs Guarantee for young disabled people is welcome news. Fast-tracking access to these opportunities has the potential to make a hugely positive difference to young people's morale, allowing them to gain paid work experience and develop new skills that can make a real difference to their confidence, wellbeing and future employment prospects. Making this support easier to access could help more young people to take those important first steps into work.

James Taylor, Executive Director at disability equality charity Scope:

This scheme could give many young disabled people a much-needed foot in the door. For too long, disabled young people have been locked out of work by barriers beyond their control. They have been overlooked when they apply for jobs, denied the support they need at work, and too often left without the opportunities they deserve.

Young disabled people have a wealth of talent and skills, and it's positive to see the government putting money behind them to unlock their potential. That means the right adjustments, tailored support and opportunities to move into accessible, secure, and lasting jobs.

Laura Davis, Chief Executive of British Association for Supported Employment/Inclusive Trading

It is hugely encouraging to see the government recognising the significant barriers that many young disabled, neurodivergent people and those with long-term health conditions face in accessing good careers, by extending the Jobs Guarantee to include young people on health benefits. We hope to see strong alignment with evidence-based programmes, with the right join-up, young people with the most complex support needs will not have to choose between receiving the support they need and accessing opportunities to build a meaningful career.

Helen Dickinson, Chief Executive of the British Retail Consortium, said:

Retail has a proud history of providing accessible first routes into the workforce. The expansion of the Jobs Guarantee gives more young disabled people a fair shot at building a career without the risk of losing vital safeguards. Retailers welcome this investment and look forward to playing a central role in delivering these opportunities from 2027.

Retail is already stepping up to support anybody not in employment, education or training through the Opening Shift programme, a new, national retail work experience initiative in partnership with DWP, which is already offering more than 11,000 work experience placements to young people furthest from the labour market.

Sarah Yong, Deputy CEO at Youth Futures Foundation, the What Works Centre for Youth Employment, said:

We welcome the news that the Jobs Guarantee will be widened to include young people with disabilities and health barriers who feel they would be able to enter employment with support. We know that these young people are disproportionately represented in the NEET statistics and are finding their pathway into suitable work increasingly challenging; they need to be given a chance and the right support to take this chance.

The Jobs Guarantee to date has been informed by the evidence of what works and it will be important for this to continue as it expands and evolves. Evidence in our Youth Employment Toolkit tells us that targeted wage subsidy interventions with wrap around support, which enable young people to gain real employment experience, can be most effective when targeted well for young people facing the greatest barriers to work.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-of-young-disabled-people-to-be-offered-guaranteed-jobs>