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## Roll-out apprenticeship programme for young disabled people, Mayor of London told

- New report by Gareth Bacon AM says that Mayor should take a variety of measures to close the disability employment gap, including an apprenticeship programme and online campaign.
- The disability employment gap in London currently stands at 27 percent.
- The gap is bad for the individual, bad for business and economically damaging.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan should take a series of measures to close the 'gaping' disability employment gap in the capital, according to a new report written by GLA Conservatives Leader Gareth Bacon AM.

The report, *Employ-ability: The Disability Employment Gap in London*, says that the gap, which is the difference between the employment rate of working age non-disabled people and working age disabled people, currently stands at a shocking 27 percent.

But Gareth Bacon says that the Mayor could help to narrow the gap by adopting several simple proposals designed to help disabled people into work and raise awareness amongst employers of the benefits of a more inclusive workforce.

The report recommends that the Mayor should:

- Roll-out an apprenticeship programme pilot for young people with disabilities, using money from the Adult Education Budget. Only 0.8 percent of disabled 16-64 year olds in London started an apprenticeship in 2015/16.
- Run an online campaign to promote the advantages of employing people with disabilities. This would be specifically targeted at businesses across the city.
- Incorporate advice and information about the disability employment gap into the London Healthy Workplace Charter, which offers advice to employers on how to make their workplaces healthier and happier.
- Set-up a working group on the disability employment gap, which would be tasked with assessing the current nature and scale of the gap in London and put forward further proposals to close the gap.

The report also suggests that the Mayor should take steps to improve the experience and uptake of disabled employees at the GLA.

Commenting, Gareth Bacon AM said:

“This gaping disability employment gap not only has a detrimental impact on people with disabilities, but it is also bad for business and economically damaging. Studies show that the gap costs Londoners up to £1 billion per year in lost tax revenues, increased pressures on the NHS, and care costs.

“By taking the simple steps set out in this report, the Mayor could help disabled people into work earlier and combat the pervading misconception that hiring a disabled person is an unproductive drag on a business.

“London is a progressive, inclusive and forward-looking city. Having a dogged determination to close the disability employment gap would chime with the spirit of London. But we need our capital’s senior politicians to lead the way”.

## **Notes**

*Employ-ability: The Disability Employment Gap in London* is available [here](#).

Gareth Bacon in the Leader of the GLA Conservatives and Assembly Member for Bexley and Bromley.