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Productivity And Disabled Workers

Thank you for contacting me about the Chancellor's comments on productivity and disabled workers.

I can assure you that the Chancellor is hugely proud of the Government's efforts and record on getting disabled people back into work, and that he shares my belief that disabled people make a huge contribution to the economy and wider society.

I welcome that there are around 600,000 more disabled people in work than four years ago, and the Government is working hard to ensure that the many more who can and want to work are not prevented from doing so. Ministers are determined to continue to knock down barriers and to work with employers to support and encourage them to build healthy, inclusive workplaces where disabled people and people with health conditions can thrive.

I am also proud of the Government's overall record on jobs. Since 2010 employment has risen by three million, and unemployment is now at a forty-year low. At the Treasury Select Committee the Chancellor made a broad point about the trade-off between this overall increased participation in the workforce and productivity. Both the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Office for Budget Responsibility have suggested that increasing overall employment may have had an effect on measures of productivity.

The Chancellor has been very clear he was not suggesting that increased participation by people with disabilities has had any negative impact on the economy. It has helped to increase economic growth and it is something we can be very proud of as a country.

We know the things that drive our low productivity performance. These are regional differences, low levels of capital investment in private businesses, relatively low levels of public infrastructure investment, and poor skills. These are the areas which the Government will aim to address.

Thank you again for contacting me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP