

Witness Name: Frank McKillop

Statement No.:

Exhibits: FM

Dated: 12 May 2025

UK COVID-19 INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF FRANK MCKILLOP

In relation to the issues raised by the Rule 9 request dated 04/03/2025 in connection with Module 9, I, Frank McKillop, will say as follows: -

Introduction

- 1) My name is Frank McKillop. I have worked for Enable since August 2017 and was appointed Director of Governance and Policy in December 2023. During the relevant period of the pandemic from March 2020 to June 2022, I worked in Policy, Public Affairs and Charity Development roles for Enable, closely supporting our CEO, out frontline workforce and the colleagues supporting them to keep up to date with changing Government guidance and to help ensure Enable was following best practice across our projects and services to prioritise the health and wellbeing of the people we worked for and with throughout this uniquely challenging time.
- 2) This statement from Enable is in response to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry's Request for Evidence under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, dated 4th March 2025, in relation to Module 9 of the Inquiry. The views expressed regarding the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are drawn from Enable staff who supported or directly delivered the charity's services during the Covid pandemic, and from Enable's members who have a learning disability and who shared their views on the issues referenced in this statement during the pandemic period.
- 3) Enable is a charity that supports people, employers and communities across its three pillars – Enable Cares, Enable Works and Enable Communities. We believe in an equal society where everyone has the right to live, work and participate as active and respected citizens in the communities of their choice.

- 4) The charity that would become Enable was founded in Glasgow in 1954 by five sets of parents of children who had a learning disability who believed that their children had the same rights as everyone else to live the life they choose. More than 70 years later, this remains what Enable believes and fights for today.
- 5) Across the organisation, we deliver self-directed health and social care (Enable Cares), employability and training services (Enable Works), and community projects and campaigns (Enable Communities) for people across Scotland.
- 6) Employing around 2,800 staff and with 12,000 members and supporters, Enable actively supports over 13,000 people to live independently as active citizens in their local communities.

Pre-existing Economic Vulnerabilities

- 7) Prior to the pandemic, people who have a learning disability faced a number of economic vulnerabilities in employment, financial inclusion and in social care support. Employment rates for people who have a learning disability are particularly low, with the Scottish Government's Learning/intellectual disability and autism: transformation plan [FM/01 - INQ000546937] estimating the employment rate to be 7%. Those people who have a learning disability who are in paid employment tend to be in jobs paying low wages, and may have either zero-hour contracts or limited part-time positions, with low availability of working hours having a financial impact. Furthermore, a number of people who have a learning disability who want to work find themselves working in an unpaid volunteer capacity in roles for which non-disabled people generally would be paid. As a result, many people who have a learning disability are reliant on benefits as their sole source of income. The UK Poverty 2019/20 report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation [FM/02 - INQ000546942] highlighted that 31% of adults with a disability lived in poverty compared to 20% of non-disabled adults.
- 8) In Scotland, it is hard to accurately assess the economic inequality faced by people who have a learning disability due to a lack of data and reporting requirements. The Scottish Government does not require local authorities to collect data regarding people who have a learning disability. Without accurate and reliable data, it is hard to assess the financial instability or extent of the economic disadvantage people who have a learning disability face.
- 9) Inclusion Scotland's Survey in April 2020 found that disabled people – whether a physical or a learning disability – were more likely to struggle financially from the impact of Covid (as reported in the Scottish Government's research paper *COVID-19 and Disabled People in Scotland* -

Health, Social and Economic Harms). The survey also found that 53% of disabled adults struggled to get food for themselves and those that they cared for [FM/03 - INQ000182797].

- 10) In the 2019/20 financial year, the Scottish Government funded pay for frontline social care workers at the real living wage rate of £9.30 per hour. This meant that in the immediate pre-pandemic era, social care was already one of the lowest paid sectors in the country, with workers at high risk of in-work poverty. This also contributed to staff retention challenges and high turnover rates, often leading to a shortage of skilled and experienced workers. The Scottish Social Services Council's Scottish Social Services Workforce Data Report 2019 [FM/04 - INQ000509918] found the stability index to be 76.8%, which suggested an approximate sector-wide turnover rate of just over 23%, creating instability in the sector with many vacancies to fill.
- 11) The exclusion of people who have a learning disability from the workforce also has wider economic consequences for Scotland. Whilst the exact financial impact is difficult to measure in the absence of consistent data collection, the Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan in 2018 [FM/05 - INQ000546945] stated that increasing employment opportunities for disabled people could create substantial economic benefits, boosting national productivity and reducing reliance on social security. Additionally, the underfunding of social care places a financial strain on local authorities. Rising demand and workforce shortages increase pressure on services, making it harder for people with learning disabilities to access the support they need to access employment and to participate fully in their community and local economy.
- 12) Across the UK, the economic vulnerabilities faced by people who have a learning disability are widely similar. However, there are some vulnerabilities in Scotland which academic research has suggested differ to the rest of the UK. England collects and reports data on learning disability, whereas Scotland does not, and a 2021 report from the University of Strathclyde's Fraser of Allander Institute [FM/06 - INQ000546946] highlighted that the data gap impacts the development of targeted policy solutions, whilst reducing visibility of the true extent of economic exclusion and vulnerability that people with a learning disability face.
- 13) The Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory reported in 2018 that individuals who have a learning disability in Scotland had a lower life expectancy rate and were at greater risk of preventable health conditions than those in England and Wales. England has implemented Learning Disability Mortality Reviews which provide essential insights into the early deaths of people with learning disabilities and which has helped influence policy and strategy decisions. Scotland has yet to implement this, which is adding to the data gap in health outcomes and leads

to increased costs for the NHS and social care sector. The Scottish Government committed that everyone who has a learning disability would be invited for an annual health check by May 2023, but in the 2023/24 financial year, only 5.9% of identified eligible individuals were offered a check [FM/07 - INQ000546947].

- 14) Fuel poverty in Scotland is significantly higher than the rest of the UK, with The Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel estimating that 34% of Scottish households are in fuel poverty, with 19.4% in extreme fuel poverty compared to 13% in England and Wales (from the UK Government Fuel Poverty Statistics). Between the impact of the Covid pandemic and the subsequent cost-of-living crisis, it is shown that since 2019 there has been an increase of 38% in the number of Scottish households living in fuel poverty. The Consumer Scotland report: *Health, Disability and the Energy Crisis* [FM/08 - INQ000546948] published in 2023 highlighted that 52% of disabled adults in Scotland struggled to heat their homes, compared to 44% in England (according to the Resolution Foundation). Scotland has a higher proportion of rural areas than England, which is one cause of higher fuel poverty, as the 2023 Scottish House Condition Survey showed a higher proportion of dwellings in rural areas fall into the lowest Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) bracket. People with a learning disability living in rural areas are impacted by a number of economic factors; however, having homes which were colder and/or more expensive to heat during the time that they had to shield or self-isolate was a significant economic disadvantage.
- 15) The Fraser of Allander Institute and The Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD) published their *Evidence on the Financial Security of People with Learning Disabilities in Scotland* Report in March 2025 [FM/09 - INQ000546949] which showed that 70% of households they interviewed did not meet the minimum income standard, defined as the level of annual income required to meet a decent standard of living in the UK. Elements of social security policy are devolved to Scotland, and so there are some differences in comparison to England. Enable's dedicated Welfare Rights Advisor supports our members with social security claims and appeals, and it is our organisation's experience that Social Security Scotland is more likely to challenge successful appeals by claimants in comparison with the DWP, which in our experience has rarely requested written reasons for a claimant's successful appeal. We have also found there to be some disparities in appeal outcomes in Scotland, creating more risk and uncertainty for a person with a learning disability who has an award in place.

Enable During the Pandemic

- 16) Over the course of the pandemic, we raised a number of economic issues including:
 - a) Data collection on infection and mortality rates of people who have a learning disability;

- b) Access to the vaccination programme, including support for people to access vaccinations via Learning Disability Nursing Teams, which was crucial for people who have a learning disability to reduce their risk from Covid in the workplace in order to safely return to paid employment;
- c) Highlighting the lack of records available to identify the population who have a learning disability for targeted vaccination or shielding support;
 - o Data relating to the number of people who have a learning disability was not routinely collected by the Scottish Government. The annual Learning Disability Statistics Scotland collated by SCLD was last published in 2019, and identified 23,584 adults “known to local authorities across Scotland”. However, it is acknowledged, including by SCLD, that this is not a full measure of the population with learning disabilities as a significant number do not receive formal support through local authorities. In 2020, the University of Strathclyde’s Fraser of Allander Institute estimated that there are in fact 175,000 people with learning disabilities in Scotland [FM/10 - INQ000176348]. It was not clear whether GP surgeries had clear records of which of their own patients had a learning disability, which required some people to proactively approach their GP to request referral for the vaccine when this was rolled out. During the pandemic, some employers required people to be vaccinated in order to enter the workplace as well as a vaccination requirement for foreign travel, and incomplete data and delays to vaccination impacted on the capacity of people who have a learning disability to seek or return to work.
- d) Connecting in with programmes to support individuals to become digitally connected;
 - o The focus of these programmes was on social connection and access to communities of support which could no longer meet in person, as well as supporting people to shop online and access other services digitally to address financial and economic exclusion.
- e) The creation and provision of accessible information about the changing restrictions, which was particularly important to support people who have a learning disability to make informed decisions about risks associated with social interaction, including going to work;
- f) Pressures on family carers and the availability of support.
 - o As many family carers took on additional caring responsibilities to support family members who were vulnerable and/or shielding, and many chose to cancel formal support to reduce the risk of care workers potentially infecting their loved one, this reduced the capacity of family carers to work, especially in sectors which required in-person working throughout lockdown.

- 17) Enable continued to provide the secretariat to the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Learning Disability throughout the pandemic, and was instrumental in securing an ongoing dialogue with Scottish Government officials and Ministers at that time. The Group's significant concerns about the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on people with a learning disability was based on the evidence published by the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory in February 2021 [FM/11 - INQ000417458], which showed that people who have a learning disability were twice as likely as the general population to contract Covid-19, twice as likely to be hospitalised, and three times more likely to die from Covid-19 infection.
- 18) Enable works for an equal society where everyone has the right to live, work and participate in the communities of their choice, and so sought to address a number of economic inequalities related to the pandemic, such as access to health and social care, employability and community engagement.
- 19) Enable's primary engagement with the Scottish Government during the Covid-19 pandemic was focused on the health and wellbeing of people who have a learning disability, their families and the workforce who support them. The charity's main representations on the economic response were around fair pay and conditions for the social care workforce in order to maintain the high levels of care and support to which people are entitled.
- 20) Enable has strong relationships with a number of MPs representing constituencies across Scotland and from all political parties. As the vast majority of key decisions affecting the work of Enable and the people we support are devolved to the Scottish Parliament, including health and social care policy and the distribution of UK employability funds, we have tended to have relatively limited direct contact with UK Government officials or Ministers.
- 21) Enable's service delivery is currently in Scotland only, and so the charity's engagement on economic matters is focused on the Scottish Government. Funding for Enable's essential programmes and services that actively work to combat economic barriers faced by people who have a learning disability through health and social care support, employability support and community engagement tend to originate with the Scottish Government, even where these funds are distributed by local commissioners or national foundations.
- 22) Enable engages with Scottish Ministers collaboratively, seeking solutions on how best to address some of the economic issues that are prevalent for people with a learning disability. For example, we engage with the Scottish Government with a view to making progress with

deinstitutionalisation and to enhance pay and conditions for the social care workforce to address the sector's recruitment and retention crisis.

- 23) Enable's engagement with the UK and Scottish Governments remained consistent during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our engagement with Parliamentarians continued alongside our role as Secretariat of the Cross-Party Group on Learning Disability.
- 24) From approximately April 2020 until March 2021, Enable met weekly with the Scottish Government Mental Health and Learning Disability team, alongside the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD), Promoting a More Inclusive Society (PAMIS), National Autistic Society Scotland, Scottish Autism and Alzheimer Scotland, to reflect on the changing landscape and to feed in live issues impacting on the population of people who have learning disabilities, autism, and dementia whom we respectively supported.
- 25) Through the Connecting Scotland Project, which was funded by the Scottish Government, Enable was able to purchase and distribute iPads to ensure people with a learning disability were not digitally excluded and could remain in contact with friends and family during lockdown, as well as being able to shop and access services digitally.
- 26) Throughout the pandemic, Enable's priority was to ensure our staff were safe with the appropriate PPE and paid appropriately, and that the people we work for had continuous care and minimal risk of exposure to the virus. We did not contact the UK or Scottish Government directly in relation to the economic response to the pandemic.
- 27) Enable did not participate in any consultations or receive requests to advise on the design of national economic interventions in response to the pandemic. Our focus was on advocating for full funding for at least the real living wage for every hour worked by the frontline social care workforce, although this was not unique to the economic response to the pandemic, but an existing and continuing challenge to recruit and retain the staff who will deliver high quality care and support.
- 28) Enable was a member of representative bodies, the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS) and the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (The ALLIANCE), during the Covid pandemic. These membership organisations may have been consulted by Government, but Enable was not consulted directly.

- 29) The Scottish Government's Fair Work in Social Care Group sought a providers' view from Enable and other organisations on the Social Care Support Fund, and on the implementation of pay rises linked to the real living wage uplift. This informal engagement was conducted verbally through telephone and video calls, and so we have no correspondence to present.
- 30) Enable was not directly consulted by the Scottish Government to advise on or monitor economic interventions.
- 31) Enable has a strong, collaborative relationship with local authorities which did not waiver during the pandemic. In many cases, the shared determination to keep people we work for and with safe in this time of crisis led to closer working relationships. Commissioning local authorities ensured that we were supported and adequately funded to deliver services and pay our frontline workforce throughout this exceptionally challenging period. Normally, the local authority would pay us on the 28th of each month for the contracts we provide; however, during Covid this was increased, and the pay cycle became every 10 days. This ensured that we had sufficient funds in the bank, being able to pay overtime promptly to frontline workers who were taking on additional shifts to cover for colleagues who were required to shield or self-isolate, or who were in some cases shielding or self-isolating with the person they support. This also gave us flexibility on a case by case basis to support members of staff who were experiencing particular financial hardship at points during the pandemic with early pay dates.
- 32) Enable commissioned a report from BiGGAR Economics: *Scotland's Care Sector: An Economic Driver* [FM/12 - INQ000546940], analysing the positive economic impact of the social care sector on the Scottish economy. This looked at the benefits which raising pay for frontline social care workers would have on the economy through generating additional tax revenues and reducing in-work poverty and reliance on benefits. The report was published in September 2021, and we encouraged key stakeholders to consider this additional evidence in support of our continuing priority of increased pay for the frontline social care workforce.

Part D: the Economic Impact of the Pandemic

- 33) Research published by the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory in February 2021 [FM/11 - INQ000417458] found that people who have a learning disability were twice as likely as the general population to contract Covid-19, twice as likely to be hospitalised, and three times more likely to die. Having established the evidence of this elevated risk, Enable successfully campaigned for all people who have a learning disability to be offered the Covid-19 vaccine in Priority Group 6; with an announcement made directly by the First Minister within a matter of weeks in February 2021. This made Scotland the only part of the

UK where anyone who has a learning disability – regardless of severity – was entitled to the vaccine at this earlier stage. This meant the vaccine was available to those people who have a learning disability who were in, or sought, employment, reducing the risk associated with entering the workplace and opening opportunities which required vaccination.

- 34) The furlough scheme was a key economic intervention which impacted upon people who have a learning disability in both positive and negative ways. Give the established heightened clinical vulnerability of people who have a learning disability, allowing employers to protect those employees from potential infection in the workplace whilst still paying them the vast majority of their wages helped protect employees who have a learning disability from the significant financial hardship which would have come from an inability to work during lockdown.
- 35) However, there is also a risk that being furloughed increased social isolation for employees who have a learning disability; something which had long been a recognised challenge prior to the pandemic.
- 36) As many employees who have a learning disability were employed in roles which required onsite attendance at work; such as office administration, reception, janitorial, cleaning roles, etc; they did not have the same opportunity to work from home as colleagues in other roles which could be performed remotely. Whilst those colleagues who continued to work from home maintained connections with one another through digital communications and video calls, those colleagues who worked in roles which were not required and furloughed during enforced workplace closures were at risk of disconnection and isolation.
- 37) Where people who have a learning disability were employed in office-based roles which could be performed remotely during lockdown, it was often the case that they ordinarily had support from colleagues to varying degrees so that they could perform those jobs in the office. Physical separation meant that support or job coaching from colleagues proved significantly more challenging, with anecdotal evidence that employers chose to furlough those employees as the easier option.
- 38) At points where lockdown eased and at the end of the pandemic, there is anecdotal evidence from Enable members that employees who have a learning disability were among the last to return to work, with some employers choosing to keep them on furlough for as long as possible before putting the required support in place for them to return to work. Such

inequitable delays further exacerbated isolation, and could impact on individuals' self esteem and perception of how highly they were valued by their employer.

- 39) It is our view that systemically, the pace with which discussions and decisions around anticipatory care planning were required was overwhelming. Feedback from our frontline social care workforce was that an expectation to consider decisions in the event of severe and/or life-threatening Covid-19 infection, alongside the upheaval of managing Covid-19 restrictions and enhanced infection control and prevention measures, was highly stressful and emotionally draining for care workers and family members alike, not least with the constant fear that those providing care themselves risked being infected and unknowingly transmitting the virus.
- 40) Some family carers made the decision to move their loved one who had a learning disability into their own home and to cancel commissioned care and support in order to minimise the risk of Covid infection from care workers. Where individuals had more complex care needs, family carers were effectively taking responsibility for all elements of assessed care and support, with some essentially becoming full time carers. This meant some family carers were required to quit working during this period. However, anecdotal evidence from carers engaging with Enable's Family Connect project at the time of the pandemic indicated that some had been able to request furlough through the Government scheme and that this allowed them to provide care and support to their loved one whilst protecting their income.
- 41) Enable's Family Connect project also found that family carers had struggled to find and access general support and respite during the pandemic as funding was limited and insufficient information was available about these services. The lack of information may have been intentional because the limited availability could not meet likely demand.
- 42) It is our view that there is an insufficient number of Community Learning Disability Nurses in post to support the population who would benefit from their expertise, and that this pre-dates the Covid pandemic.
- 43) Data relating to the number of people with a learning disability in employment is not maintained and updated in Scotland, which means that there is no reliable way to assess whether there was a reduction in the number of people who have a learning disability in employment before and after the pandemic.

- 44) The Scottish Governments *Review of Supported Employment within Scotland* report published in August 2021 [FM/13 - INQ000546941] has feedback from a focus group of people with lived experience that confirms that: *“Not having data which specifically indicates those with a learning disability received supported employment opportunities is a huge gap.”* This report discusses how employment programmes that were created around the pandemic, such as Kickstart, posed a risk that jobs filled by the broader population eligible for these schemes were those that would have normally been available to people with a learning disability and autistic people. With greater competition for the jobs traditionally open to people with a learning disability, it was even harder than before for them to become economically active.

Analysis and Reflections

- 45) Enable considers that there were a number of strengths in the economic response to the pandemic. The Connecting Scotland grant, Family Fund and associated interventions helped a number of people with learning disabilities to be maintain connections which were at risk of being lost during lockdown. These funds allowed Enable to buy iPads and to share data plans and digital tools which helped reduce digital exclusion.
- 46) Enable worked in partnership with the Scottish Government to produce Easy Read information, which helped people with learning disabilities understand some key information about money and support. These included some awareness-raising of emergency funds to help people who were struggling with money during the pandemic.
- 47) However, the Government did not always make information in Easy Read or accessible formats in a sufficiently timely manner to ensure people who have a learning disability had equal access to information as it was produced. We have a degree of sympathy and note that the Scottish Government acted quickly to work with Enable and other specialist organisations to subsequently produce and circulate accessible information, and also recognise the challenges of the fast-paced and frequently changing environment of the pandemic response. Nevertheless, it is our view that key information should be produced in accessible formats by default to ensure equitable access to the same information for all, regardless of their communication needs.
- 48) Enable members who experienced being furloughed noted the positive and negative aspects of this intervention as outlined above. For the majority who were not in paid employment, hardship during the pandemic came from additional costs associated with food and energy bills as a result of being permanently at home, gaps in social care provision, and barriers to

accessing support. These issues were not fully recognised or addressed in the economic response to the pandemic.

- 49) Digital exclusion was the greatest challenge for Enable members as many did not have devices, data allowances or digital skills to enable them to transition smoothly from in-person interaction to digital engagement. Whilst the funding through Connecting Scotland helped people access these devices, the wider economic response assumed people could easily go online to get help, to buy groceries and to connect with family and friends. Whilst Enable was able to access funding to purchase and distribute tablets to digitally excluded individuals who have a learning disability, some told us they had not used the technology as they did not have any training on how to use it.
- 50) Enable believes that the furlough support grant was a significant positive intervention as it allowed employers to continue to pay staff who have a learning disability who, in many cases, were employed in roles that could not be performed from home, or who were not comfortable working from home. The furlough scheme meant those individuals who were particularly at risk from the virus could be safely at home with their income largely protected. Whilst the negative impacts around social isolation and inequitable return to work are noted above, it is our view that as an immediate response to an unprecedented crisis, the furlough scheme helped significantly alleviate both the risk of infection and financial hardship for employees who had a learning disability.
- 51) Covid support funds distributed by local authorities played a significant role in supporting the financial sustainability of social care providers, including their capacity to pay staff who were undertaking additional shifts to cover for colleagues who were shielding or self-isolating, whilst simultaneously paying those staff who were unavoidably absent. These funds also gave certainty to providers at a time when some individuals and families were choosing to cancel commissioned support through fear of infection, meaning it was not required to amend budgets or release staff, even in instances where full commissioned hours of support were not delivered.
- 52) Enable believes it would have been beneficial for the UK and Scottish Governments to work more closely with organisations like Enable from the earliest possible juncture to create accessible information on economic interventions, as well as health and wellbeing guidance. We believe Easy Read versions of all guidance and announcements should have been provided as a standard when that information was first produced, and not some time afterwards. Given how quickly guidance was changing, especially in the early days and

weeks of the pandemic, it was our experience that by the time some Easy Read versions were produced, they were already out of date and needed updated for the latest changes.

- 53) It is our view that more training and investment could have gone to small voluntary organisations like Enable's affiliated branches to support volunteers to adapt services rather than halt them completely during the pandemic. For example, the volunteer-led local Enable branch in South Ayrshire was able to build a Wi-Fi mesh network and outdoor marquee in the garden of their premises, which allowed them to continue to meet with people who have a learning disability and to offer support in a manner which was compliant with Covid restrictions at the time. Had funding and volunteer support been available nationwide, it could have been possible to maintain more of those community-based supports during the pandemic.
- 54) Whilst fully recognising the unique and considerable pressures upon Government and public bodies at the start of the pandemic, it is Enable's view that engagement with organisations representing people who have a learning disability was too late, and that some of the knock-on consequences of various decisions for this demographic had not been fully considered. For example, the extent to which people who have a learning disability would lose all vital social connections due to lockdown, the difficulty some people who have a learning disability have with digital communications, and enhanced anxiety about following strict lockdown rules for people who have a learning disability and autistic or neuro-diverse individuals was not always taken into account. Additionally, whilst reactive measures were taken to reassure people who have a learning disability that personal assistants and commissioned support workers were allowed to enter their home without breaching lockdown rules, that additional time outside was acceptable for autistic people for whom this is an important coping strategy (when there were strict rules about outdoor exercise in the early days of lockdown), and that exemptions from mandatory mask-wearing were available for people for whom facemasks could cause sensory or communication difficulties; the anxiety and need for reassurance may not have been so great had exceptions been clearly outlined from the outset. In planning the response to any future pandemic, we would propose that specialist organisations such as Enable should be engaged at an early stage to feed in key points for consideration and to support with the production and dissemination of accessible information.
- 55) We would also recommend the prioritisation of digital inclusion for people who have a learning disability, both in terms of the availability of devices and data, and also in terms of training and guidance to use the technology. This would help address the inequity driven by

digital exclusion in any future pandemic in terms of options to continue working from home and to remain connected with colleagues and family.

- 56) We consider the furlough scheme to have been a critical intervention to protect the incomes of employees who have a learning disability during lockdown. However, we would urge planning for a future pandemic to consider the importance of post-pandemic employability support for disabled people who are not in work so that they do not find themselves squeezed out by schemes focused on the non-disabled population.

Statement of Truth

- 57) I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

Signed: _____

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Dated: 12 May 2025