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# Why improvement in disabled employment participation is an economic positive

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**Slowly improving employment participation for disabled people brings an economic boost—but there is still more that can be done.**

Technological change disrupts labor markets. This can have positive consequences. In recent years, technology and changing working practices have combined to improve the employment and productivity of disabled workers.

The disability employment gap records the difference in employment participation rates between disabled and non-disabled workers. Employment participation for disabled people has always been significantly lower. In recent years, the gap between the two groups has started to narrow in much of Europe, the UK, and the US.

Technological advances and more flexible working practices make it easier for people with disabilities to find employment. Inflexible approaches to working are cited as the biggest employment barrier to people with both physical and mental disabilities. For instance, workers with disabilities have been disproportionately self-employed to avoid working in an unsuitable external environment, even if that means working in less suitable roles. Removing physical constraints on where people work opens opportunities.

The slow improvement in disabled employment participation has increased the working population—an obvious economic positive. In addition, disabled people who were already working, but whose surroundings made them less productive,

can contribute more as physical or mental barriers are lifted. The still wide disability employment gap and an associated disability pay gap indicate that countries have more economic potential to tap into.

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