

Planet friendly jobs for Disabled people

A report on how to get more Disabled people into jobs that are good for the planet and nature

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Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership
Climate and Disability

Community Climate Action
Let's make change in Bristol

COMMUNITY FUND

Summary

Words that might not be **accessible** for everyone are in bold. This shows that an explaination can be found in the **jargon buster** at the end of the document.

Introduction
The introduction explains that this report looks at how and why jobs that look after the planet and nature could be made good for Disabled people. It explains that ideas came from an event with disaility organisations and job experts in Bristol in 2025.

Disability and Jobs
This section explains the difficulties Disabled people experience around jobs at the moment. It explains that many Disabled people face **discrimation** at work and that many more Disabled people than non-disabled people are out of work. It also explains that the government projects to make jobs better for Disabled people don't work well enough and the government is making difficult cuts to support for Disabled people.

Existing Work
This section explains that people at the event were only aware of two projects on jobs for Disabled people that are about looking after the planet or nature. Both of these projects were only for young people.

Barriers
This section listed some of the barriers Disabled people face getting jobs that are good for the planet and nature. These include:

- A lack of **accessible** training,
- **Inaccessible** hiring processes,
- **Inaccessible** language,
- **Inaccessible** workplaces,
- Laws to protect Disabled people who work aren't good enough,
- The projects to support Disabled people in work aren't good enough,
- A lack of data on Disabled people and jobs that are good for the planet and nature.

Solutions
This section suggests ways that the barriers could be fixed. These include:

- Making paths for Disabled people to get training,
- Funding to help Disabled people get jobs,
- **Accessible** interviews,
- Companies working together to do better for Disabled people,
- Companies doing more of the work that has to be done for a job to be made **accessible** for someone,
- Ways to reward companiees that are doing well,
- Celebrating Disabled staff,
- Making goverment law and projects better,
- More money being put into making jobs in this area better for Disabled people.

Quick wins
This section gives some simple ideas that companies could do to better for Disabled people. These include:

- Being flexible around **access needs**,
- Being more positive about Disabled people and spending time learning about how to do better,
- Using **accessible** language,
- Working with staff to meet their **access needs**,
- Also include Disabled people when designing projects and roles.

Projects
This section gives 10 ideas for projects that could be made to do more work in this area. These include:

- Guide for companies on how to do better,
- Guides for Disabled people who work for themselves and want to work in this area,
- Projects companies can follow to do better and then show Disabled people that they care about this work,
- Videos of Disabled people already working in this area,
- Guides to show young Disabled people they can work in this area,
- Ways for businesses to support each other to do better.
- Guides to help government understand how to give projects to groups that will do work in ways that are good for Disabled people.

Introduction

Green jobs are jobs that help to look after nature and the planet. They include jobs like looking after nature spaces and putting **solar panels** on houses. But they also include jobs like caring.

It is important that the **climate change** movement has more people working in **green jobs** as there is a lot that it could learn from Disabled people. If more Disabled people work on **climate change** then action will be done in a more **accessible** way. **Green jobs** could also be a great way to get jobs for more Disabled people.

This report explains:

1. What work exists to help Disabled people get **green jobs**.
2. Work needed to help Disabled people get and keep **green job**s.
3. Some quick things that workplaces can do to be better for Disabled people.
4. Some ideas of future projects in this area.

This report is a write up of ideas gathered at a **green job**s and disability event held in Bristol, UK on 13 June 2025.

The event looked at 3 areas:

1. Training,
2. Hiring processes,
3. Workplaces and staying in work for Disabled people.

The people who joined the event came from Disabled people's organisations, a **caregiver** organisation and researchers and people who work on making **green jobs**.

The event was part of Bristol Climate & Nature Partnership's Climate & Disability programme. This is part of the Lottery funded Community Climate Action project that supports communities in Bristol to take action on **climate change**. The Climate & Disability programme works

to get the voices of Disabled people listened to in action on **climate change** in Bristol.

Green jobs were not part of this project. But it became clear that it's a really important area for Disabled people. So the event was run so that ideas about what should happen next could be made.

How to use this report

Our hope is that this report will lead to more projects being made to help Disabled people get and keep **green jobs**. It explains what problems need to be worked on and suggests some ideas for projects. Any organisation is welcome to use it to help them work on this. Please also use it to help you get funding. Please credit this report when it is used so that other people can also find and use it. If you have any questions please email: contact@Bristolclimatenature.org.uk



Credit: ShamPhat photography

Disability and jobs

There are lots of difficulties around getting and staying in work for Disabled people. And this is only getting more hard. Difficulties Disabled people might face include:

1. **Ableism**,
2. **Discrimination,**
3. **inaccessible** training and hiring processes,
4. **inaccessible** workplaces,
5. Challenges to getting changes made in the workplace,
6. Lack of **flexibility** in the workplace,
7. Getting experience needed for jobs,
8. Gaps in CVs due to poor health,
9. **inaccessible** government projects,
10. Action that is unfriendly to Disabled people from organisations and the government.

These difficulties mean that many more Disabled people (81.6%) can't get jobs than non-disabled people (53.1%).

Disabled people are also paid less. On average Disabled people are paid £3,700 less a year. For Disabled women the average is £7,000 less a year.

The projects and laws made to try and make work more **accessible** for Disabled people aren't good enough. The **Disability Confident Scheme** is a project that is meant to help make organisations more **accessible** for their staff. However, no one checks how it is used and lots of disability organisations think that there is no point to the Level 1 and 2 of the **Disability Confident Scheme**. For example, organisations that have level 1 and 3 of the **Disability Confident Scheme** are no more likely to hire disabled people.

Access to Work is another government project that is meant to help Disabled people by paying for equipment or support to get into work and stay in work. However, Disabled people say it takes too long to apply to and get money from, and that advisors aren't trained well

enough make poor decisions. Money is also being quietly cut from the project. This has led to some people having their support money cut by 80%.

In March 2025 the UK government said it was going to cut some disability benefits. This was supposed to be a move that would get more Disabled people into work but the changes will only make it harder for most Disabled people to get work. Changes were made to the plan cuts in June 2025 that meant they wouldn't affect people who already have disability benefits but will still be place for people who apply in the future.

The government said it would put money into getting more Disabled people into work but this money isn't enough and it isn't being spent in the right ways. Most Disabled people can't get work because of problems with how workplaces work and the laws around work. So in October 2025 job centres said that they were struggling to find **accessible** jobs that they could point Disabled people towards.

All of this means it is a very difficult time for Disabled people seeking jobs. But it also means that making **green jobs accessible** is more important than ever.



Existing work

The event started by asking people what projects about **green jobs** for Disabled people they knew of. Only two projects came up:

1. Groundwork UK and Disability Rights UK's 'New to Nature'. This project helped young people to get **work placements** in **green jobs**. **Work placements** are short term jobs for people studying. Disabled people were one of three communities the project supported.
2. National Lottery Community Fund's 'Sustainable Steps Wales - Green Careers' scheme. This projects gave money to projects that aimed to help young people into **green job**s in Wales. It worked with Disabled people and people from **global majority backgrounds**. The funded project all offered training or work placements.

Both projects are important but not good enough on their own. Both only worked with young people but most Disabled people are older. Disabled people of all ages need to be supported to get **green jobs**. Getting to try **green jobs** is important but people can't stay in those jobs if the wider difficulties talked about above aren't fixed.

Much more work is needed.



Credit: ShamPhat photography

Difficulties

The event listed lots of difficulties Disabled people face getting **green jobs**. These are split into themes but when a difficult is shared by all themes we have put it in the 'cross theme' list.

Green training

1. Not enough projects are made for Disabled people.
2. There aren't enough **accessible** training resources. For example, training needs to be in **BSL**, **Plain English** and **Easy Read**.

Hiring

1. Hiring processes are often inaccessible. Guide like **Make Things Accessible guide** already cover a lot of these. We don't want to repeat work that is already out there so we have pulled out problems that are most important for green jobs:
2. Roles often ask for people to have already worked in a similar job. This can leave out who have been unable to work because of poor health. It makes it hard for Disabled people to change into working in **green jobs** from other areas.
3. **Inaccessible** language is often used in hiring. For example, **Plain English** often isn't used. Green jobs are particularly bad at this as they use lots of jargon.
4. Interviews often don't offer the option to interview online or in person. Many green jobs are in cities so can be very hard for some Disabled people to get to.
5. Guides on how to make interviews good for Disabled people aren't widely known about or used in the **climate change** movement.
6. There aren't enough projects about supporting Disabled people into **green jobs**. The projects that do exist are only for young people.

Places of work and staying in work

1. Workplaces are often **inaccessible**. For example, not many jobs offer **flexible** working hours or **job shares.** (**Job shares** are when more than one person shares a job between them.)
2. Organisations aren't doing enough to make workplaces accessible. The support that exists often has to be organised by Disabled staff themselves.
3. Many workplaces are unfriendly to Disabled people. Disabled people often do not feel valued or understood.
4. Laws to stop Disabled people being treated unfairly in work are often not backed up by action.

Cross theme

1. Disabled people are often left out of conversations on **climate change**. This makes it hard for Disabled people to get **green jobs**.
2. **Green job** space uses complicated language and jargon even when it doesn't have to.
3. Government action means that Disabled people and **caregivers** are being pushed into low paid work. **Green jobs** for Disabled people must be well paid and meaningful.
4. **The Disability Confident Scheme** and **Access to Work** don't work well enough.
5. There is no central place that shares opportunities for Disabled people. This means that Disabled people can struggle to learn about things that could support them.
6. Many Disabled people either have caring needs or need to care for other people. This requires **flexibility** around work.
7. **Climate change** and **accessibility** projects are often the first to be dropped when money is tight. Lack of money is also often used as an excuse to not make things **accessible**.
8. There is no data on Disabled people in **green jobs**. This probably means not many Disabled people work in them. This makes it hard for Disabled people to get **green job**s.
9. Most Disabled people have extra living costs. Scope says houses with at least on Disabled person have costs that are £1095 higher a month on average.

Solutions

After the discussion about difficulties the event discussed **solutions**.

Green training

1. A path to get training should be made for Disabled people.
2. **Solutions** should be made with a local focus. For example, working with schools, community groups, and local businesses.
3. There should be funding set aside for Disabled people. This should include pots of money just for **access needs** and communicating with Disabled people.
4. Learning across the whole of people's lives should be thought about. Some parts of the work should be focussed on older Disabled people.
5. If possible people should get money and support to take the training.

Hiring

1. Companies should work together and encourage each other to do better. They should share what works. And make sure changes are made across the whole company.
2. Hiring process should be **accessible**. Previous guides give good ideas for how to do this. For example, the Make Things Accessible guide.
3. Make sure interviews are in **accessible** spaces. Give the option to choose to interview online or in person.
4. There should be better awareness in companies about how to hire in an **accessible** way. Teaching should be offered to help them do this. They should be helped to lower worries.
5. Company rules should be looked at to make sure they don't treat Disabled people unfairly.
6. Job hiring shouldn't treat people who have to drive unfairly.

Places of work and staying in work

1. There should be the option to work from home or from the office. Neither is **accessible** for all Disabled people. **Flexibility** is needed.
2. There should be guides for organisations to help them understand what they have to offer on **reasonable adjustments** by law. (**Reasonable adjustments** are changes to a workplace so that they are fair for Disabled people. For example, having a desk that is **accessible** to the person that needs it.)
3. There should be guides for staff on how they can get **reasonable adjustments** put in place.
4. There should be **green job** projects aimed just at Disabled people.
5. Examples of work being done well and **solutions** should be celebrated and shared.
6. Disabled employees should be celebrated.
7. Disabled people should be invited to help shape roles.
8. Disabled people should be able to keep benefits when taking on new jobs. At the moment some people are nervous about starting work in case it leaves them less well off. If a job doesn't work out then the person might struggle to get back on the same benefits as they were on before.
9. The use of the Disabled person's bus pass before 9am should be in place across the country for the long-term.
10. **Accessible** travel to work must be possible. Disabled people should not be made to feel shame for driving to work. Plenty of blue badge spaces should be offered and only used by Disabled people. There should also be accessible options for Disabled people who want to cycle. For example, bike sheds for **adapted bikes**.
11. Organisations should be rewarded for making their places of work more **accessible**. For example, by saving on tax or **business rates**. (**Business rates** are taxes that have to be paid to the local council on buildings that aren't houses.)
12. An **accessible green charter** should be made. A **green charter** is a path organisations can follow to support them to do work in a way that is friendly to the planet. Green Star charter could be used as an example. It needs to be made with Disabled people and checked to make sure organisations are following it.

Cross theme

1. The law supporting Disabled people around jobs needs to be improved. These changes should be made with Disabled people. Politicians should support this work.
2. Punishing people who break the law around work for Disabled people should be improved. For example, proving that **discrimination** has happened should be made easier and more **accessible**.
3. More money should be put into **green jobs** for Disabled people.
4. There needs to be better awareness among organisations. Organisations fears about meeting **access need**s should be addressed. This work is often cheaper than thought.
5. More Disabled people should be invited onto **boards**. This will help by improving **accessibility** from the top. (**Boards** are the people at the top of a company.)
6. Organisations should work together and share best practice to encourage each other to do better.
7. **Access to Work** needs to be improved. Applying should be more **accessible**. The company should do the forms. There should be lower wait time and more **flexibility** about what support can be given.
8. There should be better training for organisations to understand the needs of Disabled staff and how to support them.
9. There should be better communication with Disabled staff and Disabled people applying for jobs. This includes using more **accessible** language and providing **accessible** translations.
10. **Accessibility** should be thought about when saying what skills, education and experience people need to have to apply for a job.
11. Monitoring should be **accessible**.
12. All projects should work in the following way:

- No one size fits all for Disabled people. Any new jobs and projects need to think about the range of needs of disabled people.
- Any projects should be made with Disabled people and Disabled People's Organisations.

15. Design of projects should use an **intersectional** approach. (**Intersectional** means thinking about how different types of unfairness interact and can make even bigger difficulties. For example, some who is Disabled and Black faces two types of unfairness that make things even more difficult for them.)
16. The strengths of Disabled staff and wins in the area should be focussed on. This will make more Disabled people want to work in green jobs.
17. Keeping Disabled people in the organisation and their wellbeing should be seen as important.
18. Making jobs more accessible needs changes outside of areas of life that are focussed on jobs. For example, making public transport and housing more **accessible** would make it easier for Disabled people to get and stay in work. Bristol's **community climate action plan** by and for Disabled people can be read to better understand some of these wider changes. (A **community climate action plan** is a plan for how a community want to take actions that are good for people and the planet.)



Credit: Evoke Pictures

Quick wins

The event also made a list of the **quick wins** they want to share. (**Quick wins** are things that are quick and easy to do. They make things better quickly but aren't perfect.) We hope that organisations with **green jobs** will use these ideas. However the quick wins should be seen as the first step in **accessibility** improvements.

Green training

1. Offer funding for travel to training. It should be possible to join training online.
2. Making training for older people.
3. Make sure training is **flexible** around people's **access needs**.
4. Check projects for **accessibility**.

Hiring

1. Have a positive 'can do' attitude. This should include: **Thinking outside the box.** Meeting staff in the middle. Keep on learning about disability. Spend time thinking about why you don't want to fix problems - you might find will be easier to do than you fear.
2. Share the positive things your organisation is doing.
3. Offer funding to travel to interviews.
4. Create a **toolkit** of things you can offer Disabled employees.
5. Have a clear interview process that you tell people about from the start. Share questions and tasks with people before interviews. Only ask people to do tasks that they will have to do on the job.
6. Let people apply with videos and audio recordings.
7. Write job adverts in **Plain English**. Include a **jargon buster**.
8. Make applying as simple as possible. For example, don't make people copy and paste their CV onto your website.
9. Ask how people like to be communicated with and do this. For example, phone calls will be more **accessible** for some people than emails.

Places of work and staying in work

1. Offer **accessible** information around **reasonable adjustments** and how staff can ask for these to be put in place.
2. Ask about **access needs** and caring needs when a Disabled person joins the company. Talk to them about how to best meet these needs.

Cross theme

1. Offer **flexibility**. There is no single thing that is fully **accessible** to everyone. **Accessibility** is about meeting the needs of the people you are training or working with. Understand that **access needs** can also change over time.
2. Always include Disabled people's organisations and Disabled people in the making of projects and laws around jobs.



Project ideas

We hope that this report will lead to more work being done on **green jobs** for Disabled people. So we have taken ideas from the event and turned them into 10 project ideas anyone is welcome to bring to life.

Please make sure to work with Disabled people with a wide range of **impairments** when planning and running these projects.

1. **Guides for organisations**: Much of the work needed to support Disabled people to enter and stay in **green jobs** has to be done by organisations. Guides will help these organisations how to do **accessibility** for their staff well.
2. **Guides for self-employed Disabled people** (self-employed means that a person sets up their own business and works for themself.): Disabled people could be supported by guides on how to set up their own businesses that work on **climate change** and nature.
3. **Employment charter**: Research shows that the **Disability Confident Employer Scheme** isn't good enough. Local councils could help fix this problem by making their own local **charters** with Disabled people. A **charter** is a path organisations can follow to support them to do work in a good way. Organisations that follow the rules of the **charter** should be rewarded with things like having to pay less tax.
4. **Role model videos:** Disabled people have been left out of action and conversations on **climate change** for a long time. Because of this many Disabled people might want to have a **green job** or believe that they could get one. **Accessible** videos about Disabled people sharing their positive experiences of have a **green jobs** will make more Disabled people want to have one too.
5. **Educational guides:** There are a lot of tools for school, college and university students to teach them about **green jobs**. Tools and guides with a disability focus would be very useful to add into the mix.

6. **Job centre guides and training**: Jobs centres are currently failing Disabled people. Job centres need training and guides to help them understand how to work with Disabled people. They should also run workshops for Disabled people. Guides and workshops about **green jobs** would get more Disabled people to apply to those jobs.
7. **Best practice guide**: Many organisations are scared by work on **accessibility**. Case studies of how other organisations have made their workplaces **accessible** will make the work feel less scary to others.
8. **Business breakfasts**: Businesses are less scared about **accessibility** if they can talk about the work with organisations like them that have done it already. There should be events to bring together organisations doing the work or interested in it.
9. **Local accessible green jobs forums.** (A **forum** is a meeting where idea and views can be discussed)**:** A local **accessible** green jobs forum would be made up of local **Disabled people's organisations** and the people with power over how jobs work. It would be a space for them to come together to share knowledge and push for change on **accessible green jobs**.
10. **Public Sector buying guides.** (**Public sector** covers the organisations and services that are paid for by the government.): **Public sector** organisations should put **accessibility** rules into the services and things they buy. For example, they could put the need to meet **accessibility** standards into **contracts**. Guides on how to this this would help organisations have the confidence to do this.



Credit: ShamPhat photography

Closing comments

Disabled people face many challenges around getting and staying in work. This is only getting more difficult at the time of writing this report. Projects to get Disabled people into **green jobs** would help lessen some of these problems. It would also mean that organisations would benefit from the skills, knowledge and wisdom of Disabled people. We hope organisations to use this report to do this work.

You can contact the authors of this report by emailing:
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Thanks

- The event was run by two Disabled people Ruth Nortey and Emma Geen. They were supported by Colin Matthews.
- The report was written by Emma Geen and Ruth Nortey using ideas from the event and Bristol's **community climate action plan** by and for Disabled people.
- A big thank you to organisations that joined the event included: BDEF, BRIL, Bristol City Council, Bristol Older People's Forum, Carer's Support, the Sight Loss Council, the University of Bristol, the University of the West of England, the Watershed, WECIL, and Your Park.
- Thank you also to the Disabled people who put ideas into Bristol's **community climate action plan** by and for Disabled people. Lots of Disabled people put ideas in but these were added to by: Liz Crow, Priyanca D'Souza, James Deane, Elizabeth Edgeworth, Phil Gingell, Ruth Nortey, Lynn Parfitt, Beth Richards, Sam Richards, Layla Taylor.



Credit: ShamPhat photography

Jargon buster

Ableism: When someone acts in a way that puts non-disabled people's needs first. Often people don't even recognise they are doing it.
Access needs: What a Disabled person needs to be able to use something or take part in an event. For example they might need no steps into a building.
Access to Work: A government project that is meant to help Disabled people by paying for equipment or support to get into work and stay in work.
Accessible: When something is made in a way so that it is good for Disabled people.
Adapted bikes: Bikes that are made or changed to meet someone's **access needs**. For example they might be pedalled with the arms instead of the legs.
Benefits: Money people get from the government to support their needs.
BSL/British Sign Language: The language that Deaf people use to talk to each other. It uses hand gestures and expressions.
Business rates: Taxes that have to be paid to the local council on buildings that aren't houses.
Charter: a path organisations can follow to support them to do work in a good way.
Climate change: The planet is getting too hot because of how people are using dirty fuels like petrol. This is leading to lots of problems locally and around the world.
Community climate action plan: A plan on how a community wants to take actions that are good for people and the planet.
Contracts: A piece of paper that agrees someone will do piece of work.
Disability Confident Scheme: A project that is meant to help make organisations more **accessible** for their staff. The organisations signed up get badges to show they've taken part.
Discrimination: When someone is treated unfairly because of the group they are part of. For example, treating someone unfairly because they are a Disabled person.person has worked or volunteered with before to make sure you could do the job well.

Easy Read: A document that uses easy language, not many words and pictures to make something easy to understand.
Flexible/ flexibility: When something can be changed to be done in a better way.
Forum: A meeting where idea and views can be discussed
Global majority backgrounds: A term that describes all the people who are in the world who are not white. This is about 85% of all the people in the world.
Green charter: A path organisations can follow to support them to do work in a way that is friendly to the planet.
Green jobs: Jobs that help to look after nature and the planet.
Inaccessible: When something doesn't meet the needs of Disabled people.
Intersectional: Thinking about how different types of unfairness interact and can make even bigger difficulties. For example, some who is Disabled and Black faces two types of unfairness.
Jargon buster: A list of words like this that gives explanations for words that might not be **accessible** for everyone. This lets people look up words so they can understand them when needed.
Job shares: When two or more people share one job between them.
Living costs: How much it costs to live. For example, the cost of food, heating and things needed for health.
Monitoring: Checking something to see if it is doing what it should.
Plain English: Talking in a way that doesn't use jargon and isn't very complicated so that is accessible to most people.
Public sector: the organisations and services that are paid for by the government.
Reasonable adjustments: Changes to a workplace so that they are fair for Disabled people. For example, having a desk that is **accessible** to the person that needs it.
References: When an organisation checks with someone a person has worked or volunteered with before to make sure you could do the job well.
Solar panels: A technology that turns sunlight into electricity.
Thinking outside the box: A phrase that is about when people think in different and creative ways.
Toolkit: A guide that can be used to help people do something.
Quick wins: things that are quick and easy to do. They make things better quickly but aren't perfect.
Work placements: Short term jobs for people studying.