**From Advice to Justice: A path well-trodden for disabled employees?**

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Central to participating in society and to creating a sense of self is the ability to work (Stam et al., 2015), yet disabled people face ongoing discrimination in access to and in employment (Barnes and Mercer, 2005; Cunningham and James, 2001; William, 2016). Disabled people are less likely to be employed than non-disabled people (Baumberg et al., 2015) more likely to be employed part-time and earn less than their non-disabled peers (Grammenos, 2014). After securing employment, disadvantage can continue, often disabled people experience discriminatory recruitment and selection procedures, inadequate support in work and problems securing adequate reasonable adjustments (Fevre et al., 2013; William, 2016). In some instances disabled people need to redress discrimination in employment through soliciting advice from civil society organisations and/or through employment tribunals. However, there has been a 54% reduction in disability discrimination claims comparing 2012-13 with 2014-15 (TUC, 2016). Lawson (2011) reports that employers often challenge disability status to pressurise claimants into withdrawing their case. Therefore, in an employment system that disadvantages disabled people and in a justice system that has introduced fees where access to justice is limited, how do disabled workers stand? How do disabled people secure their rights and what happens when they access the legal system? Are there micro level borders that hinder access to justice?

**Outline:**

2 papers:

1. Civil society organisations and disabled graduates (William and Cunningham)
   1. This paper is about where disabled graduates seek support when they encounter problems at work. It then looks at the Activities, Support and Characteristics of Civil Society Organisations that support disabled people. 20 mins plus 10 mins for questioning
2. Employment tribunals and access to justice (William and Corby)
   1. This paper will look at who represents disabled employees at employment tribunals, what claims are commonly made, the rate of success of claims and what the data says about discrimination against disabled employees 20 mins plus 10 mins for questioning

**Interaction 1: 30 mins:**

1. Participants to go into groups to brain storm solutions on the following topics:
   * How can we increase access to justice for disabled people?
   * What are the suggested strategies for CSOs to further engage with disabled people?
   * Should there be reforms to Employment Tribunal system, if so what would they look like?
   * What is organisational best practice to avoid grievance case involving disabled people escalating?

**Interaction 2: 30 mins:**

* + We invite people to present “elevator pitches” 3-5 mins on the theme of access to justice.

**Conclusion**

The session would conclude with feedback from each group (20 mins) and the creation of a future research agenda to improve access to justice (10 mins).

**Duration: 2hrs 30 mins**

**References:**

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Fevre R, Robinson A, Lewis D, et al. (2013) The ill-treatment of employees with disabilities in British workplaces. *Work, Employment & Society*.

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Stam K, Sieben I, Verbakel E, et al. (2015) Employment status and subjective well-being: the role of the social norm to work. *Work, employment and society* 30: 309-333.

TUC. (2016) *Discrimination at work allowed to “flourish unchecked” as employment tribunal claims fall by 9,000 a month, says TUC*. Available at: https://www.tuc.org.uk/equality-issues/industrial-issues/discrimination-work-allowed-%E2%80%9Cflourish-unchecked%E2%80%9D-employment.

William LC. (2016) The implementation of equality legislation: the case of disabled graduates and reasonable adjustments. *Industrial Relations Journal* 47: 341-359.