

# Disabled workforce grows by almost a million since 2014

By Matthew Field

THERE are 930,000 more disabled people in work today than five years ago, according to the latest Government figures, as the rate of employment for them outstripped that for non-disabled people.

Disabled people in work grew by an average of 500 per

day, the Department for Work and Pensions said. The employment rate for those with disabilities increased by 7.4pc over the period, compared to 3.8pc for non-disabled people.

Amber Rudd, the Work and Pensions Secretary, said: "The truth is if you're not recruiting disabled talent then your competitors probably are." Last

month, she said the Government would make its target, of getting 1m more disabled people into work between 2017 and 2027, more ambitious.

However, the Government's approach to getting more disabled people into work has been condemned by Labour MPs and disability charities. In 2017, the Government cut Em-

ployment Support and Allowance (ESA), vital income to hundreds of thousands of people who cannot work, to £30. Labour has called for the cuts to be reversed, accusing the Tories of creating a "hostile environment" for the disabled.

The Government's reforms have also been criticised for botching ESA payments, un-

derpaying 180,000 people and leading to £1.7bn in additional payouts to clear the backlog.

But the Department for Work and Pensions said schemes such as Disability Confident, which has signed up 11,000 businesses to make more opportunities for disabled people, had helped more people into work.

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