

## Disability no excuse for lower wages

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By Telegraph & Argus

SIR – Although I like to count myself as among his most loyal of supporters, this does not mean that I agree with Philip Davies MP on every issue. I do, however, defend his right to express his views.

While he raises the issue of employment of people with disabilities in a mature, calm and sincere manner, I know that people with disabilities seeking employment will not want a job offered to them on the basis they are cheaper to employ. Race, class, age, sex, creed or disability must not be a factor in selection.

Philip does raise, perhaps inadvertently, the challenge we all face: how to provide jobs and support people to gain the skills and experience they need for the world-of-work, whether it is through supported employment, apprenticeships, work experience or self-employment.

While inexperience and training needs are valid reasons for paying an individual a lower wage than their skilled colleagues, having a disability certainly isn't.

Meanwhile, as a member of the Bradford District Strategic Disability Partnership, I will continue campaigning to ensure the needs of all are fairly yet specifically met and that everyone is treated with equal respect and valued as people.

**Dale Smith, co-chairman of the Bradford District Strategic Disability Partnership and Conservative Councillor for Wharfedale Ward, c/o City Hall, Bradford**

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