



The Week that was

As another busy week draws to a close we review the week's news.

The Department for Work and Pensions announced that 36 out of the 54 Remploy factories will close. Sayce which reviewed employment policy for disabled people including the Remploy factories, argued that the £25,000 a year per employee subsidy would be better spent by directly giving money to disabled people through Personal Budgets. Surprisingly the Deputy Prime Minister has been very quiet on the announcement despite his remarks a [few years ago](#).

This week the future of the UK manufacturing sector started to look brighter. During the Geneva motor show the Japanese car giant, Nissan, announced that its new compact model will be built in their Sunderland factory estimated to create around 2,000 jobs in the area.

Finally in the papers this week employment minister Chris Grayling announced a new initiative that will offer greater support to ex-offenders within the Work Programme. Under the new proposal 30,000 prisoners, who leave prison will be immediately referred to the work programme. Providers involved in the scheme, will receive a fee of £5,600 if they place an ex-offender into work and help them stay in employment for two years.

Opposition Position

This week, Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, Liam Byrne, spoke out against the planned closures of the Remploy factories. He argued that the closing of the factories will ***“throw hundreds of disabled people straight on the dole,”*** stating further that ***“Unemployment is going through the roof. Back to work schemes are sinking under the weight of spiralling unemployment. And the Government thinks this is a good time to sack disabled workers”***.

Whilst the Government has made no formal statement on the controversial Beecroft report, the direction of travel suggests it will accept the recommendations therefore making it easier to lay off employees. Shadow Treasury Minister Owen Smith has argued that the proposals are wrong. Stating that ***“with unemployment at a 16 year high, the Government should be making it easier for small businesses to hire people, rather than easier to fire people.”***