

Getting on Keeping On

Finding the barriers faced by employers when employing and retaining disabled people

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Thanks

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Funding Background

In June 2017 Disability Sheffield, SOHAS and an independent consultant, identified an opportunity to undertake original research in to the barriers for employers when employing and retaining disabled people. Little evidence was found suggesting that employers had been engaged directly by disabled people or asked about their perception of the barriers to employing and recruiting them.

The UK has a decent track record on disability rights, however the disability employment rate is unfortunately quite low. In 2012 just 46.3% of working age disabled people were in employment, compared to 76.4% of working-age non-disabled people.¹ Employment and meaningful activity is not only useful for promoting independence for disabled people, but also promotes equality and inclusion within the wider world of work.

Given the key role played by employers in shaping the world of work, it is disappointing to see that only 8% of employers report that they have recruited a person with a disability or long-term health condition for more than a year.²

There are many potential advantages for employers who are positive about disability. By creating and enforcing policies which support disability awareness, employers can open their organisations up to the wide pool of talent, skills and life experience offered by employees with a disability. Policies which specifically work towards supporting disabled employees throughout their time at the organisation, including through the application process and progression through the organisation, can make an organisation much more accessible, but also more attractive to the millions of disabled people throughout the UK.

The stigmas around disability is still ingrained in current society and there is a perception that disabled people aren't as productive as the rest of the population, of which there is no evidence. An example of this perception came from 2017, when Chancellor Philip Hammond suggested that the current economic slowdown in the UK may be due to there now being more disabled people in work. Hammond claimed that "It is almost certainly the case that by increasing participation in the workforce,

¹ **DWP/DHSC, 2017** - 'Work, Health and Disability Green Paper: Improving Lives,'

² **DWP/DHSC, 2017** - 'Work, Health and Disability Green Paper: Improving Lives,'

including far higher levels of participation by marginal groups and very high levels of engagement in the workforce, for example of disabled people... may have had an impact on overall productivity measurements.”³

The Research Process

The main objective of this research was to survey employer’s views on the barriers they face when recruiting and retaining disabled people. The researchers used several methods of collecting data. Researchers used face to face interviews, telephone interviews and an online survey which included the same questions as used in the previously mentioned interviews. Given the size of the research team, it was hoped that increasing the methods of collecting data would lead to a greater number of participants, and therefore could result in a more detailed, and more valid research.

As part of the preparation for the research, five days of training were delivered to the researchers as a basic introduction to what research is and why it is carried out.

The intention of the management team was to use an Action Learning process; meaning, a process where team members "learn on the job". The Action Learning process was used as it is thought that it enables individuals to grow through learning from experience; and then act on that learning, whilst producing something that is useful.

From the researcher's perspective and experience of the Action Learning approach, several issues were noted:

- Different learning styles and disability needs should have been considered and supported.
- If an Action Learning Process is to be used, there should be a good communication flow between all members of the team, as well as the opportunity for repeated review meetings throughout the process.

³ **Slawson, N** - 2017, 'Philip Hammond causes storm with remarks about disabled workers' - The Guardian

The project got a good response from face to face interviews. However, as this method is relatively time consuming, we decided early on to widen the response rate by reaching out to more companies, inviting them to complete telephone interviews or an online survey made up of the interview questions.

44.8% of the employers we asked said that they are signed up to the Disability Confident scheme. The reason why the percentage was relatively high was because we wanted to collect data from organisations who were signed up to the scheme and compare that with data from organisations who were not in the scheme.

When asked about the barriers to recruiting disabled people the question received a varied response, many saying that there were few or no barriers, whilst others clearly identified barriers that were either real or perceived. Many of those who identified barriers quoted costs, time and a lack of other resources. There was also a general lack of awareness around reasonable adjustments. Respondents were aware of legislation but not sure how it applied, and for some there was clearly a lack of clarity around the law and what it might mean for their organisation. Physical access issues were also mentioned, with some employers expressing their inability to make changes to the rented or listed buildings they work in. One employer also expressed a concern about whether disabled people would be able to adequately cope with the stress associated with employment.

When questioned, some organisations said they offer guaranteed interviews to disabled applicants who meet the job requirements; like the Job Centre Plus' Two Tick Scheme.⁴ We received a wide range of responses from employers regarding their general feeling about the barriers to them employing disabled people, with some employers being more positive about resolving any potential barriers than others.

When asked specifically 'What do you think barriers are for employers when *retaining* disabled people?' the responses were again quite varied, and there seemed to be a lot less certainty here. Mental health was significant along with other fluctuating conditions. Among those who identified barriers, many of the issues were

⁴ **CivvyStreet.org** - 2017, 'Jobcentre Plus disability two ticks scheme'

not disability specific, for example, 'burnout', especially in the voluntary sector was a factor.

Some respondents suggested that the prospect of retention varied according to disability.

Training was identified as a reasonable adjustment by several organisations, but many employers were unaware of the support available. This included the costs of reasonable adjustments, many of which can be delivered at a relatively low cost and could be part of good management practice.

Context

In June 2017 colleagues from Disability Sheffield, SOHAS and an independent consultant identified an opportunity to compete for resources to do original research around employer's attitudes to recruiting and retaining disabled people. Having considered previous research, we found little evidence that employers had been engaged directly by disabled people and asked about their perception of the barriers to employing them. Bandura's social contact theory suggests that direct contact, especially in a working environment, enables organisations to better see the person.⁵ The assumption was that the research would positively help improve employer perceptions, producing various benefits.

The UK has a good track record on disability rights, and the employment rate is comparably, relatively high. Things continue to improve with hundreds of thousands more disabled people in work. However, despite that progress, there are significant differences between disabled people's life chances, especially for people with learning disability, mental health conditions and autism, and many people are not enabled to fulfil their ambition and potential. The government has committed, through

⁵ **Bandura, Albert. 1989** – Human Agency in Social Cognitive Theory – Stanford University

the Work Disability and Health Green paper, to halving the disability employment gap and to share this commitment with many others in society.⁶

In a 2009 research paper, Lisa Schur found that 'employment can be an important factor of livelihood and self-esteem. It provides income security, but also helps to overcome social isolation, [and a] feeling of unequal status.'⁷ It is also true that encouraging a workplace focus on health benefits employers. In 2016 research firm ERS published their 'Health at Work: Economic Evidence Report' which explained how 'employers that invest in workplace health can expect to see improvements in productivity and employee performance. Furthermore, additional benefits could include staff retention, improved employee engagement, cost control and reduce absenteeism.'⁸

The Government has set out an aspiration to help employers take action to create a workforce that reflects society as a whole and where employers are equipped to take a long-term view on the skills and capability of their workforce.⁹ However, the government appear to provide mixed and often negative messages about disability, to despite the fact that there is evidence to the contrary.¹⁰

Both Disability Rights UK (DRUK)¹¹ and SCOPE¹² have published concerning statistics regarding public perceptions of disabled people, including:

- Over three quarters (77%) of respondents to a DRUK survey cited negative press articles about disabled people; only a third (35%) named a positive story;

⁶ **DWP/DHSC, 2017** - 'Work, Health and Disability Green Paper: Improving Lives,' 2017

⁷ **Schur, L. et al, 2009** - 'Is Disability Disabling in All Workplaces?'

⁸ **ERS** - 2016, Health at Work: Economic Evidence Report, 1.27. Economic Research Service.

⁹ **DWP/DHSC, 2017** - 'Work, Health and Disability Green Paper: Improving Lives,' 2017

¹⁰ **Adams, L. 2012** - 'Opening Up work: The views of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions'

¹¹ **Disability Rights UK, Aug 2012** – 'Press Portrayal of Disabled People: A rise in hostility fuelled by austerity?'

¹² **Scope, 2011** – 'Deteriorating attitudes towards disabled people'

- 94% of respondents to the DRUK survey suggested press portrayal of disability equality issues was 'unfair' and 76% said the volume of negativity was 'significantly increasing';
- Half of disabled people questioned by SCOPE say they experience discrimination on either a daily or weekly basis;

Statistics such as these add context to the issues surrounding disability employment. Questions may be raised around how willing organisations may be to make the changes necessary to encourage disability employment in an environment of increasing negativity towards disabled people. This environment may also make it more difficult for disabled people to feel as confident as is needed when either applying for jobs, or when attempting to further progress their career.

Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service (SOHAS) experience demonstrates that there is an ambivalent attitude from employers to employing and retaining disabled people. SOHAS also found that around 40% of the organisations in Sheffield who were signed up to the Disability Confident scheme (a scheme designed to help employers recruit and retain disabled people or people with long term health conditions) had employees who had been referred by their GP to SOHAS, because their employers had not been helpful in supporting them to manage their long-term health condition or disability.

SOHAS also has evidence that some employers would rather dismiss someone with a disability than help them manage their disability. This is particularly concerning where the disability of the employee has been caused at the workplace and is the result of poor job design. SOHAS have found that there is a general lack of awareness with employers on what issues disabled people face in maintaining their employment.

Disabled people employment rates

Disability employment is an area we believe raises several concerns. As mentioned previously in this report, in 2012 just 46.3% of working age disabled people were in employment, compared to 76.4% of working-age non-disabled people.¹³ This is particularly concerning given that people who are unemployed have mortality rates three times higher than the general working age population.¹⁴ Furthermore, there are now more than 7 million disabled people of working age in the UK, which has increased by 400,000 since 2013.¹⁵ These figures show that there is a large, and growing, number of disabled people who are out of employment, and as a result have a lower life expectancy than their employed counterparts.

In December 2015, Sonali Heera and Arti Devi conducted a review of 25 years' worth of literature published around employers' perspectives towards people with disabilities. The review found:

- Employers who have successful previous experience with people with disabilities find it easier to integrate and accommodate people with disabilities.
- Previous experiences lessen employers' concerns and fear
- Employers' having experience of working with disabled people helps to remove the stigma and negative stereotypes that are attached to people with disabilities.
- Employers with prior experience are more likely to come up with benefits of employing people with disabilities.
- During recruitment people with visible disabilities are more likely to receive positive reactions to the employers than those with hidden disabilities such as deafness or psychiatric disabilities.
- People with more severe disabilities are at a greater disadvantage.

Similar studies have found that employers' prefer to hire people with disabilities mostly in routine or monotonous jobs and not in positions requiring career

¹³ **Gov.uk** - 2017, 'UK Disability Employment Statistics'

¹⁴ **DWP**, 2015 - Mortality Statistics: Out-of-work working age benefit claimants

¹⁵ **DWP/DHSC**, 2017 - 'Work, Health and Disability Green Paper: Improving Lives,' 2017

development¹⁶ and that employers exhibit reserved attitudes about employing people with disabilities at supervisory and management positions.¹⁷ Employers also feel that hiring people with disabilities brings the need for expensive workplace accommodation and necessary equipment;¹⁸ despite employers who have made such accommodations reporting them to be actually low or reasonable in cost.¹⁹

In their review of literature around disability employment, Heera, S. and Devi, A. also found that:

- Co-worker and customer concerns
- The fear of unknown faced by co-workers and customers on behaving and communicating with people with disabilities has an impact on employers' perspective
- Employers in the public sector are more receptive and comfortable in interacting with people with disabilities than those in the private sector.
- Employers from larger business organisations hire people with disabilities from a view- point of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in comparison to smaller organisations
- Employer of smaller organizations is more likely to hire a person with disability if they have positive experience along with control over the hiring process.²⁰

Design of the project.

A joint decision was made to employ people with a disability or long-term health condition, with limited job experience, and through the project these employees would be trained in several areas, leaving them able to confidently carry out this

¹⁶ **Gustafsson, J. et al.** 2013 - 'The employers perspective: employment of people with disabilities in wage subsidized employments'

¹⁷ **Schur, L. et al, 2009** - 'Is Disability Disabling in All Workplaces?'

¹⁸ **Kulkarni, M. et al.** 2010 – 'Don't ask, don't tell: Two views on human resource practices for people with disabilities

¹⁹ **Robert, P. M., & Harlan, S. L.,** 2006 – 'Mechanisms of disability discrimination in large bureaucratic organisations: Ascriptive inequalities in the workplace.'

²⁰ **Heera, S. et al.** - 'Employers' Perspective Towards People with Disabilities: A review of the literature'

research project. It was also hoped that by participating in this project, these employees would leave the project with vital workplace experience, skills, and confidence, leaving them better positioned for future employment.

We believe that it is important that this project has been co-produced with disabled people, from inception to the research, development of the methodology, designing the questions and overall governance, and delivery.

We considered the following measures:

1. The number and proportion of employers who commit to employing disabled people because of the research or commit to a change in their work practice. Measured before and after survey data, and employer satisfaction.
2. Disabled people developing their confidence, research, team-work and other employability skills through being part of the project.
3. The success of the Action Learning Set will be measured by client satisfaction measures and personal journals.
4. We will measure the number of disabled people who go on and undertake work-related activity because of this project

Self-efficacy and “want to work” are established proxy measures of who gets a job, and so we were keen to include this although we were unable to measure it, because of the relative size of the project. The majority of our resources went into training individuals, the action learning set, and employer engagement.

We considered a range of different methods for evaluating this project and after speaking with partners agreed that a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, plus action learning was the best option.

Methodology

The main objective of this research was a survey of employer’s views on the recruitment and retention of disabled people; therefore before the research proper started the project team were keen that the researchers were fully equipped in

research methodology to boost confidence and prepare them for the research. The training comprised five days and included background to methods, bias, sampling, questionnaires, analysis and a final session on the contents of a research paper.

Throughout the project we used an Action Learning Process (ALP), which we believed would be best suited for people likely to face challenges at work. ALPs are particularly appropriate in the development context where the challenge is often complex and multi-layered, and in an environment where there is pressure for change. The ALP approach is important in enabling individuals to grow through learning from experience and then acting on that learning.

The personal development of the researchers throughout the project was recorded with the use of personal diaries, as well as a questionnaire which recorded lessons learned, feelings, what went well and any other issues that arose; a summary of which is in the results section.

In line with the ALP the project managers were keen to promote a hands-off approach to promote independence and team work. We aimed to give the researchers long lasting problem-solving skills which would benefit the project allowing for more flexibility throughout the research process if problems arose.

One of the key issues facing the project was how best to engage with hard to reach employers. We believed it would be particularly important to talk to employers who had not considered employing disabled people or who were reluctant to consider disabled people as viable employees. This was likely to be difficult given the resources available to the project, and the need for the team to ensure that the employers interviewed in the research were a representative sample of the Sheffield employer population.

A similar, albeit larger piece of research, in USA faced issues early on during their process concerning social desirability bias. Social desirability bias is found when "respondents essentially report what they think the interviewer wants to hear rather than expressing their true attitudes, which are socially unacceptable and may run

counter to legal requirements."²¹ The research team in the USA found that when questioned participants became defensive and answered disingenuously, according to the interviewers' perceptions.²²

We were keen to learn from what that research team found, and so took care to try and reduce the possibility of social desirability bias as much as possible. One method used was to take care when constructing the questions, we would ask the employers, making sure not to sound accusatory or leading for example. Interview diary sheets were also kept which recorded the researchers' views on the general demeanour of the interviewees and their physical responses to the questions. We also believe that having an online questionnaire available to employers taking part in our research, may have encouraged those using it to be more truthful in their answers, as they were not face to face being questioned by disabled people. However, given the nature of social desirability bias, and the problems with identifying if it is affecting participants' response, we believe we may not have fully eliminated its' effects on our participants.

During our initial planning we decided to carry out six pilot interviews in preparation for our main research interviews. We found these pilot interviews to be particularly useful, having a positive impact on both the preparation of the questions used during interviews, and in preparing our team to carry out and record the interviews.

We had several aims when carrying out the pilot interviews. Firstly, we wanted our team of researchers to use the interviews to become accustomed to the process of carrying out interviews. Given the researcher's general lack of direct experience of carrying out face to face interviews, we believed they would also benefit from learning how to efficiently record an interview. We also believed that having a small number of pilot interviews to carry out early in the project would be useful as it meant that the team could learn how to put in to place the systems to deal with the general logistics of carrying out numerous face to face interviews.

²¹ **Kaye, H.S., Jans, L.H. and Jones, E.C.** (2011) - 'Why don't employers hire and retain workers with disabilities?'

²² **Kaye, H.S., Jans, L.H. and Jones, E.C.** (2011) - 'Why don't employers hire and retain workers with disabilities?'

These 'general logistics' include things such as organising travel, being able to accurately and efficiently record interviews, ensuring that consent forms are created, creating Participant Information sheets and giving interviewees contact details for complaints and general enquiries. Furthermore, the team had to become familiar with how to collect the data gathered from numerous interviews in one place, in a manner that makes accessing, understanding and analysing the data easy.

The research team also had to come together to discuss what they wanted to ask the interviewees during the pilot interviews; we had to question what we wanted to know from the interviews, and how best we could get to that information through the questions we asked.

The companies and organisations that were chosen to interview for the main research were selected randomly, with the team trying to make sure they had a representative number of organisations and companies from various sectors and of various sizes and whether they had signed up the Disability Confident scheme. The organisations which were asked to take part during the Pilot stage were thought of as "friendly" organisations. It was believed that given these organisation's friendly relationship with Disability Sheffield (The organisation at which the researchers were based and who was heading up the research alongside SOHAS) they would not only be willing to carry out a face to face interview with a short lead time but would also be willing to give useful feedback on the process as a whole. This request for reliable, useful and timely feedback on all things from the questions that were asked, the researcher's tone, interview techniques, consent forms and more was a driving factor in why the team chose the organisations that they did.

This resulted in the team working to create their own CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system, which was referred to as the "Employer Framework." Having a single document that any member of the team could turn to detailing every contact with every potential interviewee was extremely useful.

One of the most important reasons for carrying out Pilot interviews was to find out if the chosen questions effectively got to the information that was required. A lot of discussion took place around the questions, particularly directly after interviews, when the team discussed whether the questions worked, whether they could be worded differently to more efficiently get to the required data, or whether specific

questions were needed at all. After the Pilot Interviews a good deal of discussion went in to editing, changing and refining the set of questions we would use for our main research. Given the fact that once the main set of interviews had begun they would not be able to change the interview questions for the data to be valid, a lot of thought and discussion went in to this evaluation of the questions. The data collected throughout these pilot interviews was not included in the main data set as there was a significant difference in the number and wording of the questions asked.

The six initial pilot interviews were useful for the researchers and resulted in them making a lot of changes to their processes before, during and after interviews. After the pilot interviews several changes were made to the questions asked during interviews, and refinements were made to how interviews were recorded. Changes were also made to the information given to interviewees prior to the interviews, to make them more informed and comfortable during the interview process. Furthermore, refinements to the consent forms were made, making them easier to understand for the interviewees.

Having the time to discover, discuss and resolve the issues faced during the pilot interviews also resulted in the team being better positioned to tackle issues if they came about during the main research. One of the challenges of the project was that the people who were employed to carry out the research, had very little experience of carrying out research and had limited experience of employment and team working. This meant that the time working together on the pilot interviews was a useful way for the team to get used to both each other and the work they would be carrying out later in the project.

Following the pilot interviews, the first task for the research team was to create a list of organisations and companies which we could contact and request to take part in our research. This document formed the start of the 'Employer Framework.' The process of choosing organisations to ask for an interview was particularly important as we wanted to ensure we not only interviewed a representative selection of the Sheffield employer population, but also include hard to reach employers, along with employers who were and were not signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme. The team first created a list of organisations and then set about assessing these organisations by finding out several key facts about them to divide them in to general

categories. For instance, we researched which sector (Public, Private, Third) each organisation or company was a part of, how many people they employed, their location and so on.

The aim was to try and get a balanced number of organisations participating in the research. We did this for size (so we had an equal number of organisations from the four size categories we used), location (so all areas of Sheffield were adequately represented) ready to contact.

Once we had our list of organisations and companies to contact, and the contact details had been collected, we set about getting in touch with these organisations. The researchers created a telephone script, which every member of the team could follow when ringing an organisation to request an interview. The script was useful for several reasons, including working to reduce any potential nervousness felt by the researchers during their initial phone calls. The script also proved useful in ensuring that researchers were able to consistently come away with the required information. We also believed that using a script would be useful as it meant that each organisations' experience of being contacted by us was similar.

During this time the researchers also worked to create a website, which detailed the project, included access to the online version of our survey and included positive feedback from willing participants of the pilot project, to make potential participants enthusiastic about the project. As well as creating the numerous graphic design elements associated with the project, social media accounts promoting the project were created and maintained by the researchers, helping to spread word of the project to potential participants. At this time researchers also worked to create easy read versions of required documents and refine participant information sheets and consent forms.

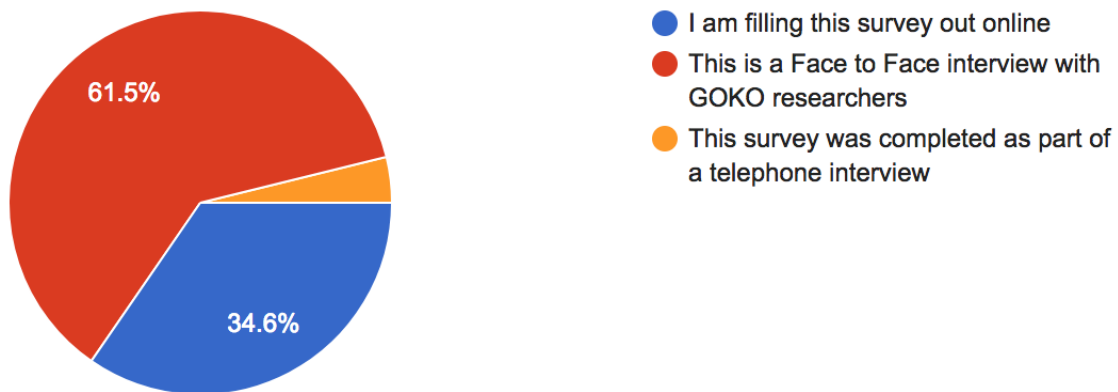
Results

The research collected a great deal of data, both qualitative and quantitative. The main aim of the project, discovering the barriers for employers when employing and retaining disabled people, resulted in one large set of data: the respondents responses to our survey questions. This data set is accompanied by the interview diaries created by the researchers, which add context and added information to the main set of responses. For the benefit of those running and funding the research project, the researchers' themselves also answered several questions at the end of the project in questionnaire form, to help evaluate the success of the project, for the benefit of those running the project.

The main data set is presented below, accompanied by analysis.

The problems associated with the general logistical aspects of carrying out interviews were useful for us to experience early on as we could quite quickly work towards 'small victories,' that is, smaller problems that are quite quickly overcome, building a sense of comradery and giving the research process a general feeling of momentum. Some of the logistical problems the team faced were not particularly small however. e.g. we had to quickly research and plan the various methods of travel that would be used to attend the interviews. Whilst arranging travel for a research team may seem like a trivial problem, it was in fact both a difficult and extremely useful experience for us as researchers, each living with a disability, to have at this stage of the project.

RESPONSE TYPE



The Pie Chart above details the break-down of how the research was gathered. The majority of data was collected through face to face interviews with members of our research team. Around a third of the data was collected through employers filling in an online survey, whilst a very small amount of data was collected as part of a telephone interview. In order to make the collected data as valid as possible, and to allow for the comparing and contrasting of data, all three methods of data collection used the same questions, in exactly the same order, with exactly the same supporting materials provided.

The project received a good response from employers willing to take part in face to face interviews. However, carrying out these interviews proved to be a time-consuming process for both the employers taking part, and the researchers. As a result, the research team found that some employers not willing to agree to a face-to-face interview because of the time it would take out of their working day but would often agree to take part in the research process by answering the questions through the online form. However, this method of collecting data did have its own unique set of problems. When carrying out a face-to-face interview, interviewers have a great deal of other data they can be recording which may be useful in the research; such as facial expressions, tone of voice, speed of response, enthusiasm, general demeanor etc. None of this data is available when the interviewee is answering questions online and not in the company of an interviewer. Furthermore, this method

of data collection also gives the interviewee the time to ask their employees, managers, or 'Google' the answers to any questions that they may be unsure of.

- The project got a good response from face to face interviews. However, this is a time-consuming process and a decision was made try and reach more companies to widen the response rate, including telephone interviews. However, the response rate to telephone interviews was poor. The researchers then considered doing an online survey to supplement the data, in order to compare and contrast responses from all three contact methods, but this proved problematic due to the low response rate to telephone interviews.
- People may have not completed the online survey because they're easier to get out of and they may forget.
- Telephone interviews: were the least preferred method of carrying out interviews because they were the hardest to carry out given our resources. For example, a quiet space was not available to carry out the interviews and recording telephone interviews was particularly difficult.

Reasons for No responses

“That's not something we do.”

“No sorry.”

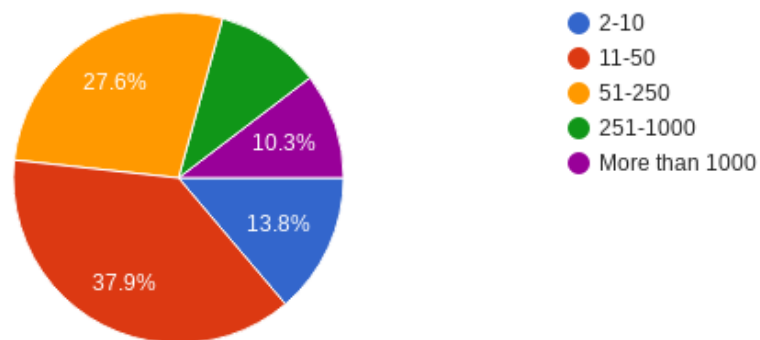
“No, we're very busy.”

“We would not be locally equipped to answer those types of questions at the local level.”

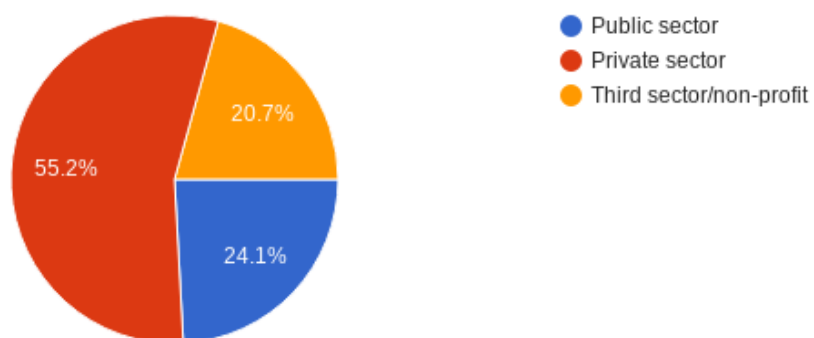
Other reasons

- Phone interview arranged but then not available at time of appointment
- Changed mind no reason given, no reason given, Cancelled interview.
- Local branches of large companies didn't have the authority to answer questions about employment

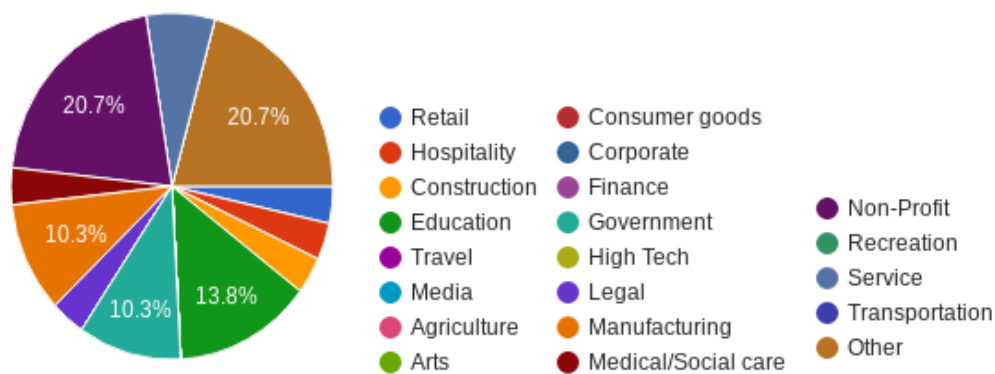
HOW MANY EMPLOYEES WORK FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?



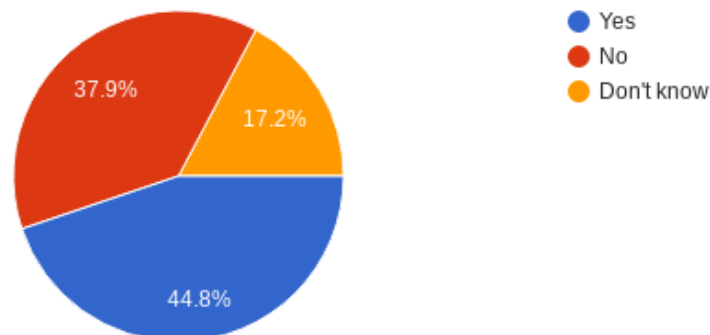
WHAT SECTOR WOULD YOU SAY YOUR ORGANISATION IS A PART OF?



HOW WOULD YOU CLASSIFY YOUR ORGANISATION?



AS FAR AS YOU ARE AWARE IS YOUR COMPANY SIGNED UP TO THE DISABILITY CONFIDENT SCHEME?



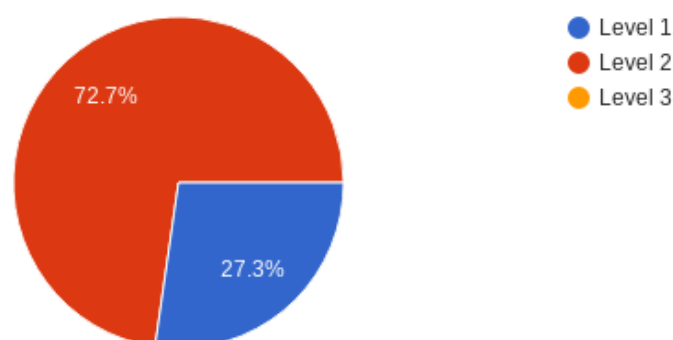
A high proportion of employees in the DRILL research suggest that they have signed up to the Disability Confident scheme. However, it is unlikely that 44% of those companies that we spoke with in Sheffield are disability confident, when weighed against national take up, and arguably points to social desirability bias. This is important for future disability employment research, especially given relatively low national take up.

Whilst we looked to avoid selection bias, it may be that those organizations that chose to participate were the most likely to be Disability Confident.

Arguably this is not a representative sample for the purposes of this question.

Ideally, we would need to do a deeper dig of national data.

IF YOUR COMPANY IS SIGNED UP TO THE DISABILITY CONFIDENT SCHEME, WHICH LEVEL ARE YOU?



DO YOU HAVE ANY EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY? FOR EXAMPLE, WORKING WITH SOMEONE WITH A DISABILITY?

Where respondent didn't answer the question, N/A is used

No	Responses	Themes
1	No personal. never worked for anyone. no colleagues. been in his role for 6 years.	No
2		N/A
3	Yes all - they provide support for students	Yes work
4	Deaf and blind people. Mum disabled.	Yes family
5	Yes, I have worked with many disabled people in my previous jobs at other schools.	Yes work
6	BOTH NHS / Social care & family	Yes both
7	Yes, my brother is disabled and older relatives of course. Substantial for 30 years. Presently we have an employee who had a stroke. We have 20 employees who have defined themselves as disabled, e.g. autistic.	Yes family
8	Yes, I work alongside disabled people.	Yes work
9	Have a number of disabled staff, some not always obvious disabilities	Yes work
10		N/A
11	Yes, employees	Yes work
12	Yes, I have experience	Yes
13	Yes, I am Type 1 Diabetic and have worked with disabled people throughout my career.	Yes work
14	Yes	Yes
		N/A
16	Yes	Yes

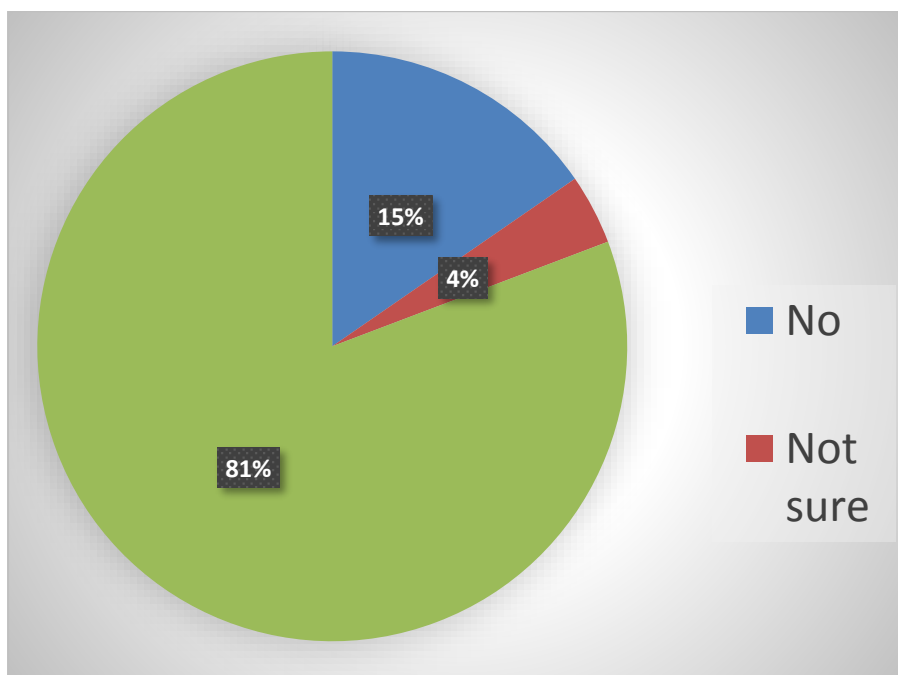
17	We have disabled patients visit the practice	Yes work
18	Yes, but not in the work place (personal experience: Son has a disability)	Yes family
19	I have direct experience working with a child with ASD. I also have first-hand experience of dyslexia and dyspraxia.	Yes family
20	Yes, I have experience of disability	Yes
21	Yes	Yes
22	No	No
23	I have experience in past jobs working with disabled people	Yes work
24	Yes, both in my current and previous jobs.	Yes work
25	yes	Yes
26	My cousin is in a wheelchair	Yes family
27	Our Charity finds paid work and work placement for adults with autism, Asperger's and learning disabilities. I have over 20 years' experience of working with children and adults with autism.	Yes work
28	Support managers to e.g. Occupational health	Yes work
29	Yes	Yes

DO YOU THINK THAT YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY HAS INFLUENCED HOW YOU APPROACH EMPLOYING OR WORKING ALONGSIDE DISABLED PEOPLE?

No	Responses	Themes
1		N/A
2		N/A
3	Yes	Yes
4	Yes, more understanding	Yes

5	Yes, but I think you learn something from every person you support.	Yes
6	Subconsciously, yes. Its why we are here. Expectations, yes.	Yes
7	yes	Yes
8	Yes	Yes
9	No	No
10	yes	Yes
11	Not really	No
12	yes	Yes
13	Yes	Yes
14	Yes	Yes
15		N/A
16	No because I have known disabled people in the past, so I don't have a problem	No
17	Probably	Yes
18	I attend Sheffield City Council's Disability Hub and my son has a disability, so I think I have a better understanding of disability than most.	Yes
19	Yes	Yes
20	Yes, I guess	Yes
21	It makes you realise that everyone has specific needs.	Yes
22	Honesty, not sure here.	Not sure
23	Yes, people are not the same	Yes
24	Yes, it's given me a better understanding. It helps break misconceptions.	Yes
25	Yes	Yes

26	No, we all have a voice. Sometimes some people, need more help than others	No
27	Working with adults every day with ASD and LD does influence how I do my job.	Yes
28	Yes, as a job role specialist	Yes
29	Yes	Yes



“Yes, but I think you learn something from every person you support.”

“It makes you realise that everyone has specific needs.”

“To be honest, I am not sure.”

DO YOU THINK THAT EMPLOYERS WHO HAVE NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY WOULD BENEFIT FROM MEETING WITH IMPARTIAL DISABLED PEOPLE WHO CAN DISCUSS ANY CONCERNS THEY HAVE ABOUT EMPLOYING DISABLED PEOPLE?

No	Responses	Themes
1	value in greater understanding. as an employer we work under equal opportunities act, normal recruitment process.	Yes
2		N/A
3	Yes, good idea	Yes
4	Yes	Yes
5	Yes	Yes
6	Yes, definitely mental health particularly	Yes
7	Yes of course.	Yes
8	We already have that experience.	Yes
9	Yes	Yes
10	Yes	Yes
11	Yes	Yes
12	Possibly, yes	Yes
13	Possibly, although the person talking to employers doesn't have to be disabled as long as they know the information they are talking about.	Yes
14	Yes	Yes
15		N/A
16	Yes, we went to an event at Burton Street that sounds like what you're describing. I think people should have that experience because it helps break down barriers	Yes
17	Possibly	Possibly
18	Yes, a lot of people can be cautious about hiring disabled people, even though the actual support required might be quite minimal.	Yes
19	Yes	Yes

20	Maybe its difficult to me to say because I only work with company who hire disability people and so I am not aware of thinking people who don't	Possibly
21	Yes. It's good being able to discuss how your actions will affect someone.	Yes
22	Yes, absolutely. I worked for a small team at the Home Office and we had a visitor in a wheelchair who we weren't really prepared for. We got everything sorted in the end and it went okay but a person to talk to would have really helped as we were second guesses the person's needed by reading guidance. This was a group of people who were keen to help but would have liked to have been better prepared. It might also put the interviewers mind at ease about employment disable staff, especially with unconscious bias.	Yes
23	Yes, I do, some people judge	Yes
24	Yes, this would benefit employers because disability is such an individual thing, the more experience employers have the better.	Yes
25	Yes	Yes
26	Yes	Yes
27	Yes	Yes
28	Yes	Yes
29	Yes	Yes

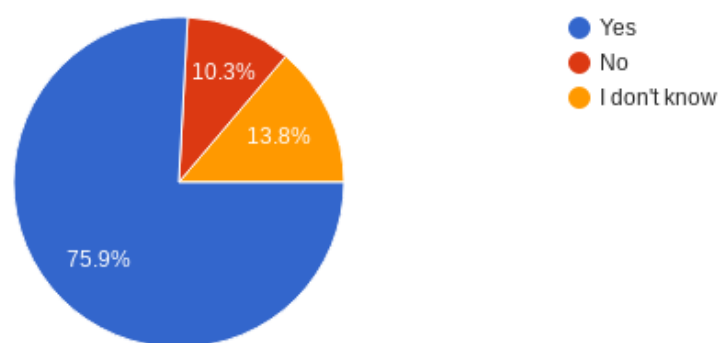
Most agreed that meeting disabled people would help quell some of the nervousness in recruiting and retaining disabled people. This backs up our initial assumptions about social contact theory. Many companies are almost certainly employing many disabled people but because their disability is hidden, they are probably unaware that they are doing so. This doesn't matter especially if the employee is functioning well. The issue arises when things are going so well, and support is needed.

“Yes, we went to an event that sounds like what you're describing. I think people should have that experience because it helps break down barriers.”

“A person to talk to would have really helped us once as we were just guessing the person's needs”

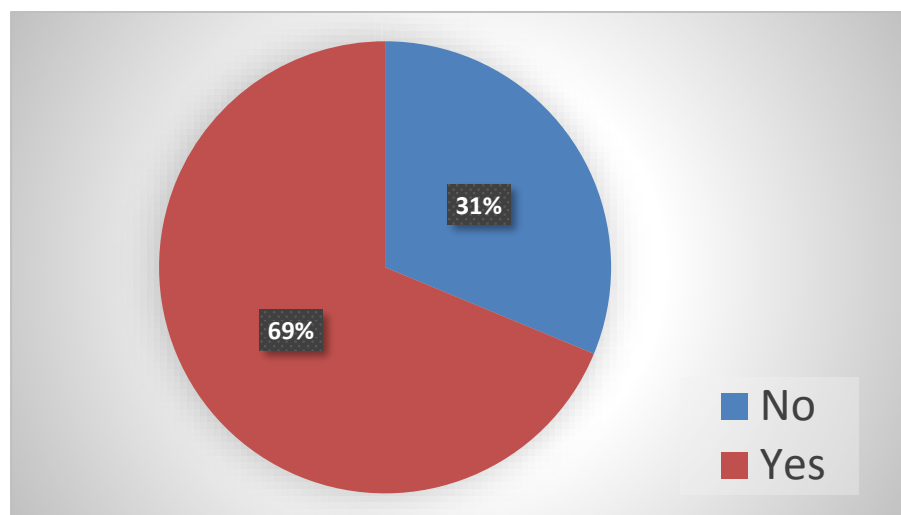
“Yes, this would benefit employers because disability is such an individual thing the more experience employers have the better. “

As far as you are aware has your company ever employed a disabled person?



The proportion is high and contrasts with local data, and again suggests social desirability bias. Only one organisation gave us actual figures, so the response is not fully evidenced. And we get no insight into undisclosed disabilities. Perhaps the only way to do this would be to speak with staff. Unlikely that many would disclose though, given some of the stigma associated with some hidden disability. The point about measuring what we value is worth reiterating. If companies value disabled employees, they might benefit from recording the numbers of disabled employees.

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION, WERE THERE ANY BARRIERS TO YOUR ORGANSATION EMPLOYING THIS DISABLED PERSON THAT HAD TO BE OVERCOME?



No	Responses	Themes
1		N/A
2		N/A
3	Used to bring a colleague to work	Yes
4	Yes	Yes
5	I wouldn't describe them as barriers, more like 'mindful adjustments.'	
6	Lots of pressure, more on work, small organisation	Yes
7	Not enough hours for management	Yes
8	Yes, some issues those people have but we've endeavoured to become more systematic. Personally, it's slightly ad-hoc	Yes
9	Yes, there were barriers that were resolved.	Yes
10	No	No
11		N/A

12	Not particularly	No
13	Everyone faces barriers even the none disabled	Everyone faces barriers
14	Yes - some significant, e.g. autism and dyslexia can be hard because employees don't tell us they are dyslexic until they are employed here and are protected by the equality act. 7% of new recruits to the police force are dyslexic - when we are made aware we pay for an assessment and any reasonable adjustments they may need.	Yes
15		N/A
16		N/A
17	Barriers seems a strong term, we've never struggled to accommodate people, we've never had to go outside for help	Never
18		N/A
19	I don't think so, we have quite a long recruitment process. Barriers may be our processes.	No
20	Not really. Areas of high and low ability needed consideration. (e.g. a person with dyslexia who struggled with taking phone numbers down correctly.)	Not really
21	Yes, there are barriers where ever you employer everyone is in individual different needs and support and need to go home and kids, whatever depends on the nature of disability if someone has condition of using the toilet regular that different to someone sit wheelchair and can't reach on the top shelves	Yes, toilets and wheelchairs
22		N/A
23	Volunteer had a large wheelchair, we had to cancel an event because they couldn't get in the toilet.	Yes wheelchairs
24		N/A
25		N/A

26	It's been more making adjustments, wheelchairs. P.C adjustments. We have an occupational health team to help with finding out what adjustments people need.	Yes wheelchairs
27		N/A
28	We must adhere to regulations.	Yes
29	Reasonable adjustments were put within the work place. This is something we do for all our clients, so it was automatic for our employee	Yes

Many of the organisations had experienced and indeed overcame the barriers. A couple of organisations thought barriers was quite a strong term. Hidden disability was thought to be significant, for example autism and dyslexia. For example, some applicants hadn't mentioned that they were dyslexic until they were employed and are protected by the equality act. This makes it hard for employers. Time and other management pressures were cited as potential barriers to making adjustments.

Out of the respondents who answered 'Yes', three of them referred specifically to wheelchair access, one to "high and low functioning", one to dyslexia and one to "regular toilet visits".

No other specific disabilities were mentioned.

"I wouldn't describe them as barriers, more like 'mindful adjustments.'"

"Everyone faces barriers even none disabled."

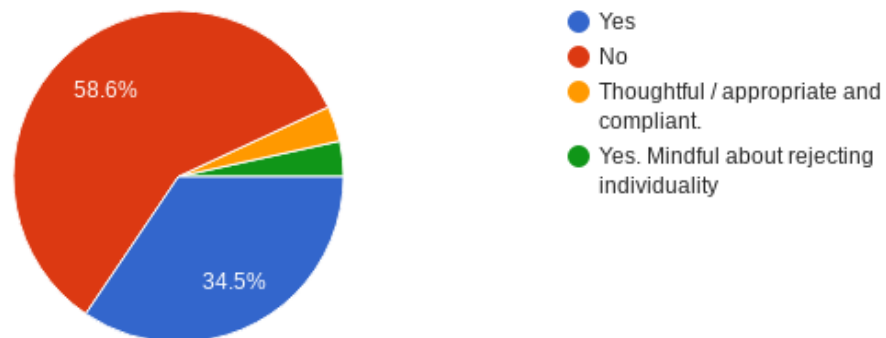
"Barriers seems a strong term, we've never struggled to accommodate people, we've never had to go outside for help."

IF YOU ANSWERED 'YES' TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION WERE THE BARRIERS YOUR ORGANISATION FACED RESOLVED IN A SATISFACTORY MANNER, AND IF NOT, WHY NOT?

No	Responses
1	N/A
2	Employment tribunals are often about failing to find adjustments
3	I can't say for sure just because of the time period I've been in the role.
4	Long time ago. Equipment for deaf person. Before computers widely used. Getting funding for text phone difficult.
5	N/A
6	No barriers
7	Ongoing – across team / keep eye on both
8	N/A
9	
10	We believe so, broadly speaking.
11	yes
12	yes
13	yes
14	Yes, we managed
15	Yes
16	Yes
17	When we're asked to put adjustments in place we can do it, given they're "reasonable" requests.

18	Yes
19	Yes.
20	Yes, I think they were resolved in an acceptable way
21	N/A
22	N/A
23	N/A
24	N/A
25	N/A
26	N/A
27	N/A
28	N/A
29	N/A

HAVE YOU EVER FELT UNSURE ABOUT COMMUNICATING WITH A DISABLED PERSON?



DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT EMPLOYING DISABLED PEOPLE? (IF YES, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS)

No	Responses	Themes
1	No concerns. only thing is issues with our buildings. look at reasonable adjustments because we rent the building, talk to landlord etc. smaller office is disabled accessible.	Yes
2		N/A
3	No	No
4	No, as long as we can accommodate. Access here difficult because listed building. Limited access difficult. I don't know how they'd feel about getting into building every day / emergencies, fire etc. with limited mobility	Yes
5	No	No
6	Yes, for example learning / certain circles	Yes
7	Not separate from being an employer.	No
8	No, we don't	No
9	No	No

10	No	No
11	No but there are restrictions with home care, depends on disability	No
12	People have no concerns for disabled people no not where people come under health and safety, someone with say brittle bones would worry that they may be injured	No
13	I'm concerned about our processes and making sure they're accessible.	Yes
14	Due to the potentially dangerous machinery, access issues especially emergency evacuation	Yes
15		N/A
16	Hearing/eyesight problems would probably be an issue here.	Yes
17	Reasonable changes have been made to improve access, but practice is still not fully accessible.	Yes
18	No	No
19	It depends upon the specific disability, for example as a business with a highly physical side to it with lots of site work and workshop work, someone with severe physical disabilities might not work for the business, safety might also be a factor in this.	Yes
20		N/A
21	No	No
22	We recently moved to a more established building which has systems in place to be much more disabled friendly, so I wouldn't have too many concerns here. However, in a small start-up office where the team was self-managing, I would have been more concerned about being inclusive here. Especially about what we were expected to do here - again, the team I work for would want to be really accommodating here.	Yes

23	No, I find it easy to talk with anyone, I have no concern with the company	No
24	No, we do a lot of work around recruitment, there are limitations with the firefighter role in our service that some disabled people may not be able to do given the very physical aspect of that specific role.	No
25	No	No
26	No	No
27	The only concern I have is that staff must be reasonable fit and able to travel because within our role we have to travel between client and when job coaching a client the role could be manual and physically demanding.	Yes
28	No	No
29	No	No

Some respondents reverted to the barriers issues at this point and referred to accessibility, which was weighted more as a concern (18%), than not (7%).

One interviewee explained that they did not have any concerns, however "access might be an issue and we rent the building." This raises an interesting point as it may be the case that a large number of organisations rent their buildings or office space. This then begs the question as to who's obligation it is to organise and implement adaptations. Furthermore, this response may also be representative of the widely held misconception that disability is mainly physical, and the Reasonable Adjustments made to accommodate them consist of ramps or elevators.

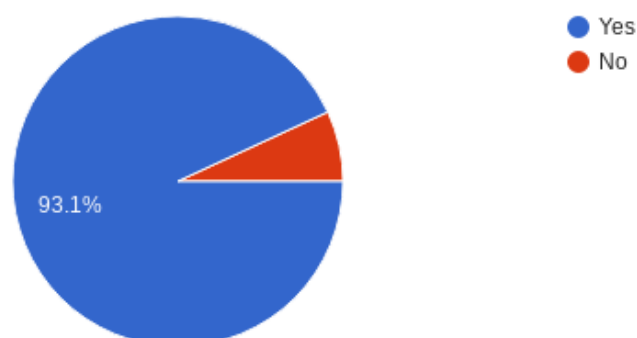
Another concern raised by interviewees, which was also raised in response to several other questions throughout this survey, was expressed by one respondent to this question explaining that they "can't change it as this is a listed building."

One response given by an employer when asked this question was that they would be concerned about employing disabled people because "there may be safety factors." This may again show employers immediate thoughts when asked about disability are focused on the access issues often associated with physical disabilities.

Furthermore, it may be questioned whether disabled people are in fact any more or less safe round the work place, when compared with their non-disabled peers.

“It depends on the disability.”

ARE YOU DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS AT YOUR ORGANISATION?



CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT WHAT YOUR RECRUITMENT PROCESS INVOLVES?

No	Responses	Themes
1	Advertise vacancy on website and other websites, we would ask paper application forms submitted by email. form is anonymised at selection process. disability knowledge is removed at this stage. just assess the persons application on job criteria. draw up a list. if they haven't declared a disability we give them an opportunity to, so we can make adjustments. we've only had one applicant who declared their disability.	Good consideration for disabilities.
2	Standard app – Disability Confident - shortlisting guidelines - tick disabled box RA's accessible software etc.	Some consideration for disabilities.
3	Depends on role available. support apps, arrange for students support in office, Ads on Yorkshire graduates, job centre. Generic form asks if disabled, reasonable adjustments, BSL etc, all declared disabilities guaranteed interview if they fit criteria, 3 step interviews.	Some consideration for disabilities.
4	Advert. Interview. We do not recruit more than one every five years.	No mention of disabilities
5	It always involves establishing a need for the job, then we choose an advert, send out a pack describing the job, then "long list" the applicants making sure there's a balance of	Some consideration for disabilities.

	genders and make sure we're mindful of safeguarding issues. It's rarely just an interview. Then we make an offer.	
6	Typical process needs testing on visual / physical	No consideration for disabilities.
7	Standard. This also raises question about adjustments for the interview.	Some consideration for disabilities.
8	We mostly recruit from a waiting list of people, as such we don't interview very often.	No mention of disabilities
9	Have onsite agency, advertise internally first to see if anyone want to change to new role, then open it up to outside job centre, sometimes colleges, universities, but we mostly find people internally for jobs.	Some consideration for disabilities.
10	Application, informal chat, regular interviews	No mention of disabilities.
11	Online ads (paid & free), email + CV - we make the calls and talk. Interview + app + job description. Formal & all same questions. Phone call acceptance / pass induction + DBS Enhanced + ISA list.	No mention of disabilities.
12	Pharmacy mobility shop, ad internet own websites, options for bigger versions etc	No mention of disabilities.
13	We can recruit 4 types of roles. I'll focus on the police officer role here. You need to pass 3 criteria before you're allowed to apply. 1. Full clean driving licence. 2. Pass fitness test. 3. Have at least one level 3 (A-Level or higher) qualification. So here there may be problems for disabled people because of the fitness test and the driving license requirement. If you have all three then we email you the application form and you use our online recruitment tool.	Good consideration for disabilities.
14	Social Media adverts, application form, interview	No mention of disabilities.
15		N/A

16	Advertise, they apply online, there's a telephone interview, then one to one interview. Some jobs may require an additional interview with management.	No mention of disabilities.
17	Advertising, interviewing and appointing	No mention of disabilities.
18	It's an online process for all our jobs. People see our adverts online, they apply online, they upload a word document and a person specification, some jobs (not all) may require a DBS check. Once submitted candidates are shortlisted, the emailed for an interview, and then have a 40min interview.	No mention of disabilities.
19	Draw up job and person specification, advertise, short list, video interview, interview.	No mention of disabilities.
20	2 sides of pharmacy and mobility advert on internet and own websites, options for bigger versions etc, tweet about it	No mention of disabilities.
21	We have always only recruited with a tap on the shoulder. Recently we have advertised internally.	No mention of disabilities.
22	Confirming job adverts, arranging interviews and if a candidate is successful doing all the checks to allow them to start i.e. clearance, equipment etc	No mention of disabilities.
23	Advert, gumtree, indeed, interview work trail if there handling this job	No mention of disabilities.
24	We have website ads with various agencies (we could probably broaden this out?) We ask for a C.V, applicants apply online. There are physical test for certain roles. We could probably offer different ways of filling out the forms we ask to be filled in if disabled people struggled with computers for example. We do want to improve our recruitment process for people with disabilities.	Expresses need for consideration for disabilities.
25	We have a robust recruitment process where we involve our clients to help with the process	Good consideration for disabilities.
26	We use Applications, interviews and second interview assessments.	No mention of disabilities.

27	Application form and interview	No mention of disabilities.
28	Managers budgetary sign-off vacancies HR opportunities, advice website apps (anonymous) (disability at this point) Scoring system with 2 managers.	Good consideration for disabilities.
29		N/A

When asked organisations whether their job application process specifically accommodated disabled people, we found that they focused on reasonable adjustments being made at the interview stage, rather than throughout the entire process.

Only around 18% of organisations specifically mentioned disabilities at this point in the interview

ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY WAYS IN WHICH YOUR RECRUITMENT PROCESS SPECIFICALLY ACCOMODATES DISABLED PEOPLE?

No	Responses	Themes
1	Maybe not. I guess we basically inherited the hospital HR procedures, standard NHS hospital, we're standalone employer now so we used theirs	No
2	As above	Yes
3	Accessible application form - will adapt to suit e.g. parking, BSL, stereo typist	Yes
4	No	No
5	That's a good question. We definitely could be better. We have opportunities to come and look around the school, and we have a nice reception staff to welcome people and make asking questions about the school a bit easier/nicer. At a previous school I worked at	We could improve

	we made the website easier to use and had a visual impairment unit. At High Storrs we have a hearing impairment unit.	
6	Docs in place reflecting ethos - needs upgrading	Yes
7	As above	Yes
8	On our application form we state that disabled people can have adjustments if they need them throughout the recruitment process.	Yes
9	We have standard recruitment process and we do tests, if we become aware of people having issues with things like reading the questions, we will read them out, we have an induction process if people can't read properly or can't read at all, we use pictures, we try to cover every base. We have onsite occupational nurse give everyone a pre-medical starter within first week of starting, she will make recommendations of things we need to do to make sure they are comfortable	Yes
10	Yes	Yes
11	No prevention - depends on condition e.g. driving.	Depends
12	We like to accommodate everyone I don't think I hope recruitment process ok	No
13	We can provide a different type of fitness test if people struggle with the Bleep Test. We can make Dyslexia adjustments to help with the tests later on in the recruitment process.	Some
14	No	No
15		N/A
16	We ask candidates if they require any reasonable adjustments for the interview	Some
17	No	No
18	We provide alternative methods of application if people need them. People can have support workers come along and they can sit outside the interview room. We do try and accommodate requests from applicants.	Yes
19	I do try and think about disability to some degree, but I'm sure we could be doing more.	Could improve

20	We like to think and try and accommodate with everybody its difficult know what put people off its maybe be application might be off putting we do have accessible premises it's difficult to say	Could improve
21	We offer reasonable adjustments if people specifically ask for them.	Yes
22	I believe if you are disabled and meet a minimum interview score, you automatically get an interview, even if candidates with higher scores would not get an interview (for example if it was a very competitive job application).	Depends
23	Risk assessments may be an issue	Depends
24	Guaranteed interview of your disabled, and you meet the criteria. Reasonable adjustments. We also run fair recruitment workshops for our managers.	Yes
25	We are a service provider supporting adults with learning disabilities so are aware of the need for good support when accommodating disabled people.	Yes
26	Not all	No
27	It asks about disability and reasonable adjustments that may be needed at interview stage.	Yes
28	Managers discuss with individual	Yes
29		N/A

IT IS THOUGHT THAT EMPLOYERS MAY UNKNOWINGLY CREATE BARRIERS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE DURING THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS. FROM AN EMPLOYERS PERSPECTIVE, HOW DO YOU THINK THIS ISSUE COULD BE RESOLVED?

No	Responses	Themes
1	With everything being electronic we may be creating barriers for people with sensory impairments. It's hard without people coming in and telling us what those barriers are.	Digitalisation
2	Asking - if identified then speak to them e.g. the application	Recruitment process
3	Learning from others experience, a disability confident employer which could help other employers	Education
4	I don't know. For us there is access barrier. I don't know how it could change unless we moved. It's a listed building This section is about your views on the barriers faced by employers when they are employing disabled people.	Access
5	It is about openness. Disabled people being open and able to say what they need. I don't think schools do it knowingly.	communication
6	They should look at documents, double check policies and learn from networks	Policies
7	Discharged responsibility	Responsibility
8	Employers should ask about which adjustments disabled employees need,	Adjustments
9	I'd have to know what the issue is.	Communication
10	Ask for feedback or comments within the applying process	Recruitment
11	No discrimination - wouldn't know if disabled - "if they walked through the door, they wouldn't know"	Recruitment
12	Asking people feedback only know from the people who we take on low turn over	Communication

13	It can be resolved by organisations being members of groups like the Disabled employment groups which all organisation on our sector in England are a member of. Which help raise awareness and tackle discrimination etc.	Support
14	Better awareness of disabled applicants needs and perspective and importantly their abilities	Recruitment
15		N/A
16	Conversations would help. Government help could come in here and help educate employers.	Employment law
17	Better communication	Communication
18	We have a disability network group who are disabled staff who help with policy changes etc. We try and make sure language is inclusive and we try and be inclusive.	Disability
19	Better information for employers and recruiters.	Information
20	Asking people and feedback, low staff turn over	Information
21	You need to be very clear in your description about what you need.	Information
22	Some guidance to reduce unconscious bias and meeting disable people to discuss concerns.	Guidance
23	Talking to disabled people about the issues how they can help	Communication
24	It is important to understand where those barriers exist. You could test out your recruitment process by asking disability charities (for example) to try it out. Our disabled employee numbers are quite low.	Barriers
25	Having advocates or support workers alongside the applicant	Support
26	Greater understanding from early ages, educate the young earlier.	Education
27	Asking on application form if reasonable adjustments need to be put in place at interview and displaying Disability confident logo on application form.	Recruitment

28	Communication and better advertising Request for adjustments Feedback could be useful	Communication
29	Open to all and inclusive	Accessibility

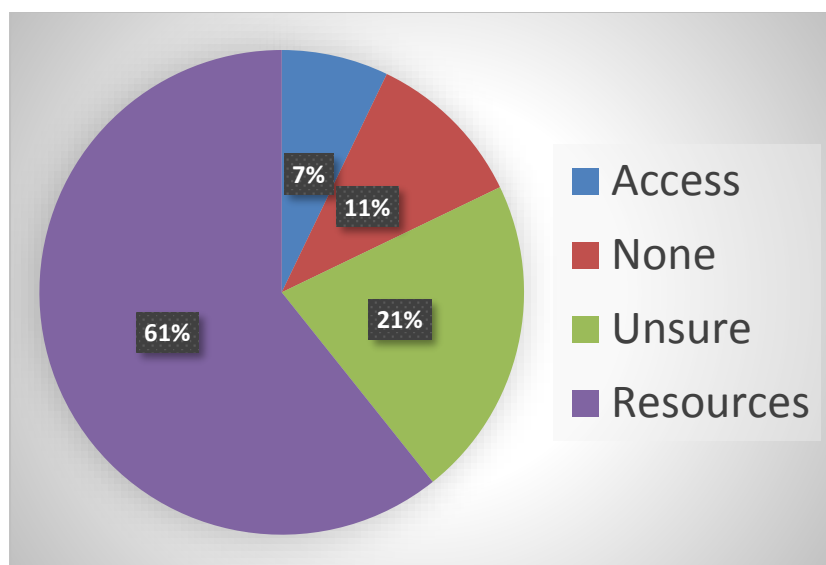
WHAT DO YOU THINK THE BARRIERS ARE FOR EMPLOYERS WHEN EMPLOYING DISABLED PEOPLE?

No	Responses	Themes
1	The term reasonable adjustments. Cost, the legislative things employers are having to work with the equality act, if I was to employ a disabled person what reasonable adjustments need to be made and can we afford them?	Cost
2	Because they don't know identify problems	Unsure
3	Nervous about reasonable adjustments e.g. universities. Buildings, old buildings not having access and system changes e.g. computers, software Jaws, commercial, logistical.	Resources
4	(JD explains with examples). Once we employ someone we do everything we can to help them do the job. I can understand about different ability levels.	Unsure
5	When you interview you should just look at the person, but people don't, they want to staff their schools with people who won't cause problems or complications and may end up down on staffing if people need time off because of their disability.	Time
6	Time Would like to be concise but e.g. Languages not just disability	Time
7	For example, stressful environment so resilience needed (on their part). Physical disabilities; premises need lifts and other access. We have premises that are 'dire', and clients have to visit these.	Resources

8	Often employers worry about sickness absence. We have a lot of machines here, so it may be dangerous for people with specific disabilities.	Dangers
9	If you really to the recruitment process correctly and it's the right person for the job there shouldn't be any barriers and I think that people's perceptions especially in our work place when you have got a lot of people multi-cultural that can be a barrier.	Unsure
10	Access for everyone whatever the disability	None
11	If they can't drive a car or there are stairs	Access
12	Embarrassment, scared to asking scared of law scared to ask about ability mental barriers	Access
13	Some employers think that they won't get value for money employing disabled people, e.g. they'll have time of work because of their disability. There's also still stigma around mental health. Also, small/medium sized employers may just want to be able to hire who they want (family members etc).	Resources
14	Often physical barriers in the working environment and a perception that they won't be reliable - physically not up to the job	Resources
15		N/A
16	I don't think there are any barriers for us personally.	None
17	Don't know	Unsure
18	Some disabled people may have confidence issues. Some disabled people would be successful if they applied but are too afraid to apply. We offer guaranteed interviews for people who tick that box. It might be useful if we or the council offered coaching to help people fill out our application forms. We receive around 80 applications per job.	Unsure
19	Lack of knowledge or understanding. Prejudice.	Resources
20	Embarrassment, maybe from employers and they don't know what people abilities are or are scared to ask also because of many things you can't ask question in the interview you could	Resources

	get done for disability discrimination and whatever and you need a good idea what people do just always	
21	Some employers would have a problem with physical disabilities. Also, people tend to like and employ people who are similar to themselves or who work in the same way as themselves. It's about cost. I have staff who don't work the hours I'd like. A lot of people who care for someone are discriminated against. It's cheaper when people work at home too. It's about fear, "what if I have to discipline a disabled person if they don't do the job properly?" People are scared of what will happen if they do that. People are frightened about having to talk about problems. It may not just be the attitude of the main staff - a lot of non-profit orgs (and for-profit orgs) have boards of people, chairmen etc who set the tone and dictate company/organisation attitudes - it comes from the top. Also, it's the staff "in the middle" who are the gatekeepers of how things get done and attitudes. They dictate stuff, the people between the main staff and the board etc.	Resources
22	Honestly not sure here	Unsure
23	Employment times late/night being left no work by themselves risk assessments or on time home	Resources
24	Lack of complete understanding. We have a great occupational health team who help us. The cost of adjustments etc is also an issue.	Resources
25	Having the right support for the applicant	Resources
26	They are only barriers, if you may them barriers.	None
27	Fear of the unknown, lack of knowledge and an extra burden on the work force.	Resources
28	Size dependant, what adjustments? E.g. Access to Work Not to be afraid of financial cost / sickness absence	Resources
29	Reasonable Adjustments	Resources

Question?



This question received a varied response, many saying that there were no, or few barriers, whilst others clearly identified barriers that were either real or perceived. Many of those who identified barriers quoted costs, and there was a general lack of awareness around reasonable adjustments. Respondents were aware of legislation but not sure how it applied, and for some there was a nervousness around how equality law may affect their organisation. Physical access, particularly regarding several organisations' inability to make adjustments to listed buildings, was also raised as a concern, as employers would be legally unable to make certain access adjustments to the listed buildings they occupy. Some respondent's also expressed concerns that disabled employees would take more sickness absence than their non-disabled counterparts. One respondent explained that "often employers worry about sickness," whilst another thought that "some employers think that they won't get value for money employing disabled people; they'll have time off work because of their disability." This concern is particularly interesting, as it highlights how 'perceived barriers' can greatly affect how employers view employing disabled people. It is very difficult to find statistics to support the belief that disabled employees take more sick days than their non-disabled peers; in fact, statistics tend to prove the opposite is true. As the disability issues website Evenbreak (2017) reports:

Many independent and unrelated studies agree that on average disabled employees have lower sickness absence rates than non-disabled

employees. Here are some examples: Retail participants with disabilities had fewer days of unscheduled absences than those without disabilities. (*Exploring the Bottom Line: A Study of the Costs and Benefits of Workers with Disabilities. Economic Impact Study, 2007*). In Australia it was found that an astounding 86 % of employees with disabilities had an above average attendance rate (Hall, H. (2002) cited by EEO Trust, *Employing Disabled People, 2005*). A United Nations report found that “Empirical evidence shows that persons with disabilities have high performance ratings and retention rates, as well as better attendance records than their colleagues without disabilities” (*Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities. United Nations, 2007*). (Evenbreak 2017)

It was thought that some disabled people may have confidence issues, but might be successful if they applied, and alluded to a fear factor for disabled people at the application stage. Some organisations offer guaranteed interviews for people who tick the right box. A helpful suggestion was for the council or other organisations to offer coaching to help people fill out our application forms.

That said there were many enlightened employers, best expressed in the following quotes "Once we employ someone we do everything we can to help them do the job and "When you interview you should just look at the person".

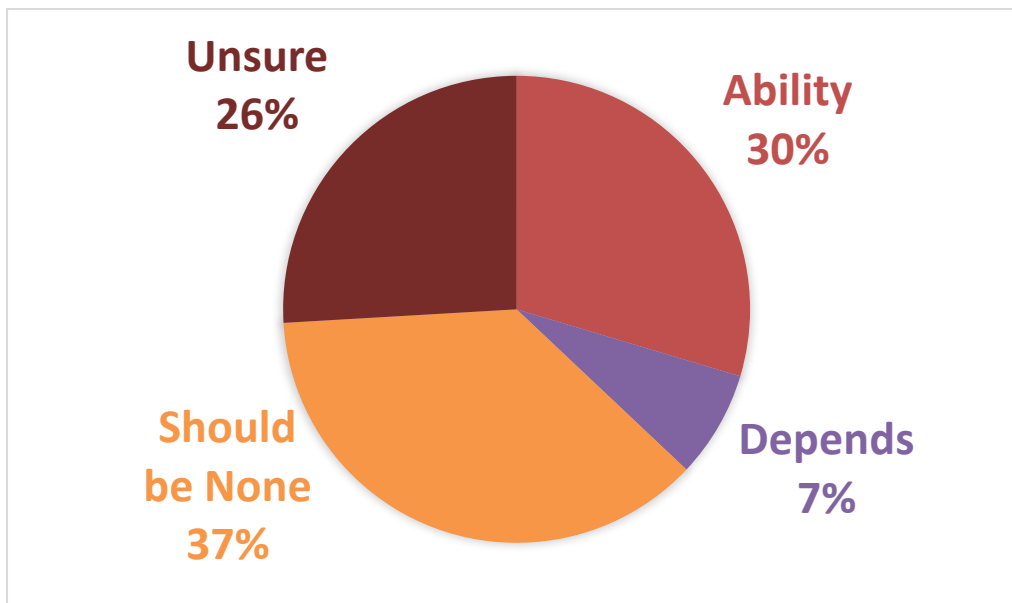
WHAT DO YOU THINK THE BARRIERS ARE FOR EMPLOYERS WHEN RETAINING DISABLED PEOPLE?

No	Responses	Themes
1	The common things with any employee, training them, setting targets, performance management as with any normal employee, you would have to think it through as with any person with how to not discriminate between employees	Ability
2	Not sure should be part of team same as everyone safe and risky	Unsure

3	Should be no barrier but issues like for mental health could change e.g. flexible hours. If condition worsens then what? how feasible is it for them to continue working.	Unsure
4	I've not put much thought in to be honest. Maybe longer-term support if more time off for sickness / appointments.	Unsure
5	You have to make sure the job is doable, that teachers can get in to the classroom etc, at a previous job I had an employee with not good sight, who needed loads of adjustments, and can make life harder for the teacher.	Ability
6	General burn out on voluntary sector needs careful management Physical number of sites.	Ability
7		N/A
8	The company should make sure they're inclusive, should make adjustments and there should be a good atmosphere in the company.	Should be none
9	Not really had any, that's quite hard, again it depends on what the disability is , it's being patient making sure they get the right training, sometimes it's the disabled person being able to keep doing the training until they get it sometimes you find that they don't like to be, you know we've had a few people who don't like to be pulled aside and say look we just need to show you that again, that sort of thing.	Depends
10	Updating the area of work accommodating peoples changing needs	Ability
11	Becoming disabled? Depends on condition.	Depends
12	I don't know you access to work	Unsure
13	We struggle to identify if people aren't working to full capacity because of their disability or because they're not good at their job or are lazy. People used to get early retirement because of their disability but that's too expensive now so people have to really prove that they can't do their job because of their disability.	Unsure

14	Probably no big a barrier once a disabled person is in place and showing their worth. But an employer who does not accept that some adjustments, both practical and support wise might struggle.	Should be none
15		N/A
16	If you incur a cost to employ someone you may then think about how long they are going to stay employed.	Ability
17	Being a good employer.	Should be none
18	Putting support in place - we have occupational health here, mental health service, a disability group. We offer flexible hours if disabled people need it. Disability can happen at any time. We're currently working to try and understand what it's like to be a disabled staff member working here at Hallam University - We're sending a survey around our staff as part of disability confident level 3.	Should be none
19	Struggling/failing to meet any specific needs. Struggling to help them integrate.	Ability
20	I don't know access to work	Unsure
21	It's about companies sticking by their equality policy and acknowledging difference. Taking action when things go wrong. You may assume that your employees are on the same page as you regarding being equal/not discriminating etc, but they may not be. If employees don't see problems being solved in the right way they won't feel comfortable coming forward.	Should be none
22	Honestly not sure here	Unsure
23	Whether they can work on their own disabled people needs	Ability
24	If a disabled person's situation is changing. Possible increased absence? We ask disabled employees to fill in feedback reviews to see if everything is ok. There needs to be a culture of confidence for people to come forward if they have problems.	Should be none
25	Continued support and funding	Should be none
26		N/A

27	Lack of awareness of support plus lack of knowledge with regard to funding and support	Should be none
28	Risk assessment should be put in place	Should be none
29		N/A



The responses to this question were quite varied, and there seemed to be a lot less certainty here, with many struggled to get beneath the question. Mental health was significant along with other fluctuating conditions. Among those who identified barriers many of the issues were not disability specific, for example burnout, especially in the voluntary sector was seen as a factor. Some respondents did though suggest that the prospect of retention varied according to disability.

There was a interesting point around identifying and differentiating between people who are struggling because they couldn't cope, and those who were struggling due to their disability.

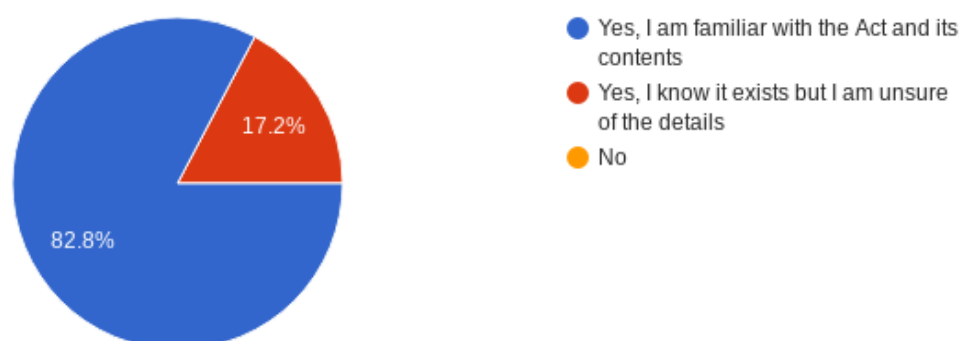
Training was identified by several organisations as a possible solution and reasonable adjustment.

Whilst there was doubtless uncertainty this did not mean that organisations weren't positive, they were just uncertain about what to do " *The company should make sure they're inclusive, should make adjustments and there should be a good atmosphere in the company*". Clearly organisation culture was identified as a factor " *There needs to be a culture of confidence for people to come forward if they have problems*".

"It's about companies sticking by their equality policy and acknowledging difference. Taking action when things go wrong. You may assume that your employees are on the same page as you regarding being equal/not discriminating etc, but they may not be. If employees don't see problems being solved in the right way they won't feel comfortable coming forward.

What is clear is that many were unaware of the support available, including the costs of reasonable adjustment many of which don't cost anything at all, and are arguable just about good management practice.

ARE YOU AWARE OF THE EQUALITY ACT (2010)?



ARE YOU AWARE OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES THE EQUALITY ACT (2010) GIVES YOU TOWARDS EMPLOYING DISABLED PEOPLE? IF YES, PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF WHAT YOU BELIEVE THEM TO BE.

No	Responses	Themes
1	No, is there a responsibility on employers?	No

2	To treat people equally	Yes
3	Hope yes - don't discriminate remove barriers	Yes
4	EA we can't discriminate with protected characteristics.	Yes
5	It's about interviewing and appointing without prejudice.	Yes
6	Responsibility with LA / NHS Legally practice should be same	Yes
7	Must not unlawfully discriminate deliberately or otherwise. Also, obligation wo work with employees for the company to succeed.	Yes
8	To make sure people aren't discriminated against.	Yes
9	Everyone treated fairly can't discriminate against anyone for disability, male, female anything like that, make adjustments,	Yes
10	To treat everyone equally and provide a safe and accessible work environment	Yes
11	Can't discriminate, some things don't make a difference.	Yes
12	Make sure everyone same opportunities	Yes
13	First of all - Public Sector Equality Duty. All public-sector employers have a duty to eliminate discrimination and ensure a level playing field. You also aren't obliged to tell people about your disability.	Yes
14	Only very basic	Yes
15		N/A
16	We couldn't choose to discriminate against a disabled person.	Yes
17	We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and although equality of opportunity has been a long-standing feature of our employment practices and procedure, we have made the decision to adopt a formal equal opportunities policy.	Yes

18	Yes, I'm aware, basically don't discriminate against protected characteristics. We offer training for all staff - it's a legal requirement.	Yes
19	Yes, my understanding is that we are obliged not to mark a candidate down or not employ them based upon any of the above criteria. My understanding is also that if it's a physical job (for example) then employing someone with a severe physical disability, which made it impossible for them to do the job, is allowed.	Yes
20	Same opportunities and the same ability work each other	Yes
21	Making reasonable adjustments - having a clear set of statements - ensuring you give the same opportunities to everyone - pay equally - It is not necessarily about being "equal" it's about dealing with differences.	Yes
22	No	No
23	No discrimination race, disabled etc I do understand a bit you can't discrimination with other disabled people	Yes
24	Yes. Make reasonable adjustments. Do not directly or indirectly discriminate. Make sure our vacancies are accessible to all. Do impact assessments for the various groups of protected characteristics.	Yes
25		N/A
26	Each person should be treated equally.	Yes
27	Reasonable adjustments and adaptations to be put in the work place for all disabled people whether it being physical or hidden disabilities	Yes
28	Ensure protected characteristics. Rights for discrimination on grounds	Yes
29	Yes - protects rights	Yes

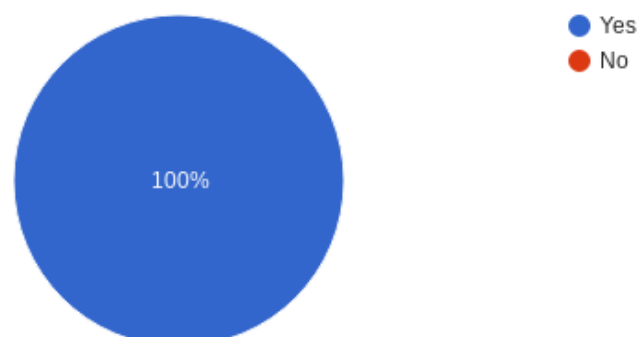
Whilst a lot of the respondents suggested they knew about the basic tenets of the Equality Act, the responses to the supplementary questions suggested there was

very little substantial understanding of the Equality Act relating to disabled people specifically, and awareness is not a proxy for action.

Interestingly one respondent mentioned that a stressed colleague was disabled and kept referring to this employee when asked about disability specifically. We had some debate about this and felt that this employee was not disabled, meaning that the respondent may not have understood what "disability" means. She said something like "well it affects her work daily, so it is a disability" or words to that effect. If the stressed woman had Anxiety, and it had lasted for more than a year, then it is a disability. We may have put a value judgment on what we're being told, and the stressed woman, may be more disabled in the workplace than us. Do we think that our disabilities are more "legitimate" than hers? Hidden disabilities? If people can't see it, they can often be unable to respond to it. By its very nature, hidden disabilities will be the ones we make value judgments about.

Questions were raised about What is disability and what are reasonable adjustments in those sections of the survey. It became apparent that it's not clear to some people what disability can be or look like and this is the same for what a reasonable adjustment could be. This is reflected in our personal experiences of the face to face interviews as interviewees often assumed that the researchers with hidden disabilities were not disabled.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE TERM 'REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT'?



DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT MAKING 'REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS'?

No	Responses	Themes
1	Main one is cost involved with reasonable adjustments.	Cost
2	No	No
3		N/A
4	No- we have guidelines	No
5	No, the tension is about supporting employees.	No
6	No	No
7	No	No
8	No, we don't have any concerns, it is something we do.	No
9	No	No
10	No	No
11	No	No
12	No	No
13	Yes - is something "reasonable" or appropriate? For example, we paid £2,500 for adjustments for a member of staff so they could stay in their job, which we found reasonable.	Cost
14	Perhaps regarding cost and the practicalities of making them	Cost
15		N/A
16	No	No
17	No	No
18	No.	No
19	No.	No
20	no	No
21	No - although I am struggling a bit at the moment with knowing what to do with mental health problems, as a charity, things have to	No

	be done on time. I've talked to members of staff about what to do - talk about adjusting hours?	
22	I have concerns that there isn't a clear process in place at my work. And that people who know the process better will be at a better advantage. Also, that some staff at work don't realise they need reasonable adjustments and as such are getting worse.	Process
23	No, I don't 2 different working patterns	No
24	No.	No
25	No	No
26	No	No
27	No because we do this every day for our clients.	No
28	Occupational Health Advisor seeks 9/10 individual Where possible business needs case by case Always support within business needs	No
29	No	No

On concerns **23 said no, 3 said yes, cost, 1 said yes process**

"No- we have guidelines" "No, the tension is about supporting employees."

"No, although I am struggling a bit at the moment with knowing what to do with mental health problems, as a charity, things have to be done on time. I've talked to members of staff about what to do - talk about adjusting hours?"

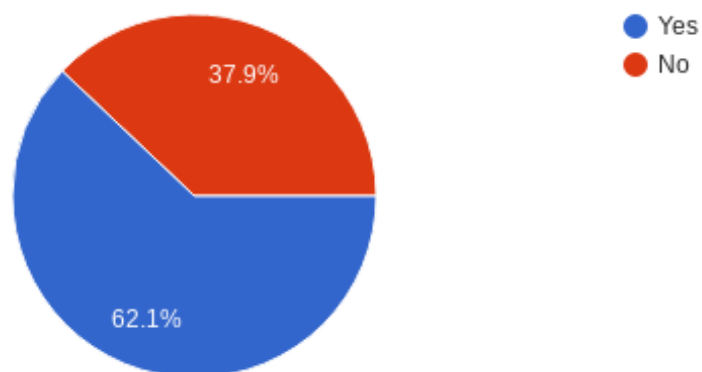
CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT ANY 'REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS' YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION HAVE PUT IN TO PLACE?

No	Responses	Themes
1	I'm unaware of any being made.	Unaware
2	Access to work - software (MS). PA. Skeletal chairs	Equipment

3	Mental Health - flexible working	Flexi-hours
4	For young people who are studying here, if needing additional support (interviewee describing services for clients)	Various
5	The colleague who works here with Asperger Syndrome can't be in the main hall on parent's evening and has to be in a separate room with one other member of staff, so they don't feel isolated, that is an adjustment we've made.	Physical
6	Manage workload / confident. Buildings e.g. Lift	Flexi-hours
7	(JD is sat at desk with special computer and chair). Yes, where you are sat and appropriate support, software etc. Sign language needed. We have 4 volunteers who speak BSL. Someone else was moved job location.	Physical
8	We have amended places of work and provided special equipment for disabled employees. We have also adjusted our absence recorder to take in to account people who may be late or have days off due to their disability.	Physical
9	We have a deaf gentlemen with things like fire alarms we buddy him up so that there is always someone who knows if a fire alarm goes off he needs to be looked after, it's difficult because we do things naturally, someone with a bad back we automatically make sure they have the right chair, people with problems with feet and walking so we make sure they have the correct footwear, they go to the nurse and she tells us what's best for them, physio will tell us about mobility issues what to put in place equipment they need the correct mouse, screen	Physical
10	We provide personal support and a listening caring environment	Various
11	Yes, for example stress, depression, anxiety - careful to follow law. Phased returns.	Phased returns
12	A Diabetic needed 2 minutes break every few hours A member of staff has crohn, so needs regular toilet breaks Allowing someone to start later in the day	Various
13	Ergonomic keyboards, dragon software, adjustable chairs	Physical

14	Not needed to yet but newer parts of the site have been made accessible and have disabled toilets - alarm etc	Physical
15		N/A
16	Car park access, keyboards, mice, Dyslexia support.	Physical
17	Made exam room street level access, so no step between the street and exam room.	Physical
18	Things like flexible working, different chairs, screens, desks, change of location, we have something called a "redeployment register" for if people can't carry on their job so they can be redeployed to another role.	Various
19	Relieving an employee from certain tasks which they found particularly challenging.	Various
20		N/A
21	Letting staff go home after they've been to counselling, rather than come in the office afterwards.	Flexi-hours
22	In my small team's role, no.	No
23	No	No
24	Add time on to projects if disabled employee needs longer. We've changed how we record absence so disabled people aren't recorded as absent when they have varying start times etc.	Flexi-hours
25	Extra support for staff who have dyslexia	Various
26	We have charging points for disability scooters.	Physical
27	Adapting information into easy read, explaining information into manageable chunks, tailoring a job to suit the individual.	Various
28	Phased returns one week to 8 weeks H & S w/s assessments. Access to Work Stress risk assessments H&S and work-related assessments	Various
29	Workstation / seating / computer	Physical

ARE YOU AWARE OF ANY GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR DISABLED EMPLOYEES AND THEIR EMPLOYERS?



IF YOU ANSWERED 'YES' TO THE PREVIOUS QUESTION PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT YOU KNOW OR HAVE EXPERIENCED.

No	Responses	Themes
1		N/A
2	Occupational health and counselling. (Black Report)	Workplace health
3	Access to work, pc/ support worker	Access to Work
4	I suppose depends on person. If needed additional eqpt e.g. visually impaired, then personalised equipment	Access to Work
5	Access to Work, has been helpful in the past, we used it to get help for a colleague, but I think it may be getting harder to get now?	Access to work
6	Usual / ongoing awareness training e.g. New staff	Training
7	Access to Work	Access to Work
8	The charity Scope helped us.	
9		N/A

10		N/A
11		N/A
12	Access to work used a few pieces of equipment	Access to Work
13	We have experience of Remploy, Access to Work, worked with Mind, National Autistic Society. It takes a long time to get reimbursed for adjustments though.	Access to Work
14	At previous local authority employment - used access to work funds to assist workers moving into employment or changing jobs	Access to Work
15		N/A
16	Access to work	Access to Work
17		N/A
18	Access to work - Occupational Health here. People can have sickness days off.	Access to Work
19		N/A
20	Access to work	Access to Work
21	You get support if you have a physical disability - and you can get bursaries if you hire disabled people. If you have students do placements and they have a disability, then the university provides them with support.	Government grant
22		N/A
23	Charities- know that they can support disabled people in work didn't know about Access to Work.	Access to Work
24	Access to work. Shaw Trust charity offer help. We've spoken to someone from the DWP before for advice.	Access to Work
25		N/A
26		N/A

27	Funding for supporting a person in work can be got through Access to Work, Government funded project etc.	Access to Work
28	SOHAS Advocacy offer support	Local provision
29	DWP	Access to Work

CAN YOU PLEASE DESCRIBE WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT YOU BELIEVE WOULD HELP ORGANISATIONS TO EMPLOY DISABLED PEOPLE?

No	Responses	Themes
1	I guess the whole area around reasonable adjustments, accommodate more expensive reasonable adjustments, best practice ideas, info etc	Risk assessments
2	Access to knowledge e.g. Access to Work. Sharing information, not being scared	Access to Work
3	Too much left to employee e.g. blind person had to leave job. access to work complex to deal with, should be a place where both employee and employer can go to have help getting support.	Access to Work
4	I suppose depends on person. If needed additional eqpt e.g. visually impaired, then personalised equipment	Reasonable adjustments
5	Access to work is invaluable, schools aren't well funded, so you really need Access to Work to pay for adjustments.	Access to Work
6		N/A
7		N/A
8	Financial support for smaller companies, as well as finding out what a person's needs are.	Financial support
9	Having a better understanding of what we can do to support disabled people because we think we are doing a good job, but we might not be, more knowledge around it for people and employers in general.	Disability rights

10	Ongoing training and funding to facilitate any changes needed to workplace and environment	Access to Work
11		N/A
12	Useful for employers to mix with disabled people to see what they can do difficult to sell disabled also said that she thinks that employer would be worried that disabled people would have lots of time of sick. different for us	Employer perceptions
13	It depends, there's no "one thing" a little company like a garage would be different. It might be good to have something like recognition for companies that employ disabled people. It'd be good to have a way to get specific advice. We also need something like Stonewall but for disability. Need specific disability job advisers to help employers that need help.	Access to Work
14	An access to work scheme that reacted quickly when support is needed and is easy to access	Access to Work
15		N/A
16	Single point of contact, there are some disabilities that we would struggle to know how best to support. A lot of people might focus on physical disabilities rather than mental disabilities.	Information resources
17	Finding a suitable candidate who happens to be disabled	Recruitment
18	General awareness about what's covered in the equality act - a lot of employers don't know what support is available. We're working with job centre to get disabled people doing short 2-week placement here.	Recruitment
19	Information support. Financial support to put measures in place to assist disabled employees.	Information
20	Different for us, useful for employer to mix with disabled people to see what they can do	Employer perception
21	Raising awareness - financial support - people would take on apprentices if there was a bursary to help pay for it. Also meeting advocates of disabled people so you're not afraid of disabled people. It's about cost - it's cheaper when people work at home.	Financial support

22	A helpline you could call with any queries about disability. It is normally difficult to find anyone with a clear answer on these things which employers would get frustrated about. Not at the person with a disability, but all the time it would take to figure out what to do to help them.	Information helpline
23	Expertise from outside would be good it's would be a lot easy	Knowledge
24	We would like to have meetings with different groups who work with disabled people to test different aspects of our work. We'd like to attend focus groups to share experiences, like the Equality Hubs.	Disability/Equality
25	Extra funding	Finance
26	TV advertising campaign	Advertising
27	An employer needs to know that they have support as well as the disabled person they are employing. They need to be able to contact that support when they have concerns or worries.	Support
28	More support of mental health Stress e.g. Depression and anxiety Upskilling managers e.g. Get it out in open before it gets bigger	Training
29		N/A

Lots of organisations wanted to understand more about reasonable adjustments and best practice and were keen to get hold of more information. People wanted a one stop shop for information help and guidance for both employer and employee.

A helpline was also suggested where people could call with any queries about disability. *"It is normally really difficult to find anyone with a clear answer on these things which employers would get frustrated about. Not at the person with a disability, but all the time it would take to figure out what to do to help them."*

This should be relatively straight forward to do with a small amount of resource. \It might help to have some open challenges to employer's perceptions about what disabled people can and can't do.

"We would like to have meetings with different groups who work with disabled people to test different aspects of our work. We'd like to attend focus groups to share experiences, like the Equality Hubs".

There was a mixed response to Access to Work. Some of those who knew about it found it invaluable, although others found it complicated.

Resources came up time and again, *"on-going training and funding to facilitate any changes needed to workplace and environment"*. There was a point made about support being focussed on smaller companies.

"It'd be good to have a way to get specific advice. We also need something like Stonewall but for disability".

Respondents wanted more support around mental health, especially stress, depression and anxiety. Something also about upskilling managers. *"Get it out in open before it gets bigger"*

WE THEN GAVE INTERVIEWEES THE OPPORTUNITY TO TELL US ABOUT ANYTHING THAT THEY BELIEVED HAD NOT ALREADY BEEN COVERED, OR THAT THEY WISHED TO EXPAND UPON AND DISCUSS IN MORE DETAIL.

No	Responses	Themes
1	Nothing I can think of, what you said not having to deal with a disabled person in our workplace.	Disability
2	Q's about right for general use	N/A
3		N/A
4	No. To be honest we never been approached by any organisation wanting support with getting disabled people back into work. With our clients, more information would be good.	Information
5		N/A
6		N/A

7	Employing and retaining disabled people is time consuming.	Resources
8		N/A
9		N/A
10	info on the disability confident scheme	Information
11		N/A
12	I would it be useful company to work disability people social media training	Training
13	You didn't ask about career progression. Law is good at protecting jobs but NOT career paths. Need ability to progress. We try and make our internal progression equal. We helped someone who had a stroke to get a job and progression.	Employment law
14		N/A
15		N/A
16	No.	N/A
17	We rarely recruit new employees; the majority of our staff have been with us for more than 15 years and the company has only 20 years trading.	Recruitment
18	We "quality check" 5 jobs a month. We check that the managers who are making the shortlists are putting disabled people through who deserve an interview to make sure they are doing what they are supposed to do.	Recruitment
19		N/A
20	When disabled person goes to an interview they might get bit struck with things and there said might not want to go back to work again	Recruitment
21	We need to try and make sure our decision board (who decide who gets the money we give out as an org) is more equal. We don't offer our staff any equality training, so we should think about that. We need to try and check how the public benefits from the money we give to projects.	Equality
22		N/A

23	You guys offer support employer hiring disabled people could you give use guideline for support for employer disabled person in work disability Sheffield would help you its company would be good for use to have disabled person working for use and see how they get on with this job	Recruitment
24	I would have liked to attend any future event you hold discussing this project.	Information
25		N/A
26	People need to understand that there are many forms of disability.	Disability
27		N/A
28	Disability Confident level 3 unsure and needs advice. DWP asking about improvements City Wide Quality Group - members	Disability
29		N/A

Personal Perspectives

As part of the process of face to face and phone interviews the team wrote personal diary sheets recording observations and experiences of each interview.

"Perceptions of the interviewers by the employers were very apparent in some interviews, we are a mix of hidden and visible disabilities and we didn't disclose disabilities our disabilities at the beginning of interviews if it came up some of us disclosed after we had completed the survey questions and were finishing up and leaving. some of our experiences like an interviewer asking if one of us was the other researchers 'apprentice', interviewees staring at us and trying to look at the questions on the sheets we had and or taking the sheet off us and looking ahead at the questions to have more control in the interview".

G. - My background is as a senior policy advisor working in disability employment across several government departments. I have led on several related national strategies. My role has been to work with colleagues to shape the project and the bid and to design and deliver the training.

When we had the initial training session, I was confronted by six nervous and not very confident students and we began the process and indeed hard work of growing together. We had fun, and by the end of the third session, colleagues had moved from a primary identity around disability, through to a researcher identity, and now see themselves as fully fledged researchers, which they are of course. The training was critical in giving colleagues both the knowledge and more importantly confidence to carry out this unique piece of research. I have been blown away by how they all support each other.

We always saw this as an action learning process, this project has been a big deal for all of us, I'd just like you to note that it has been an amazing and uplifting experience for me, I've done lots of work around mental health and disability and this has been right up there. The researchers are an absolute pleasure to work with, and it's been brilliant to see them come alive, and begin to fulfil their potential.

H.I was anxious at first because I am always anxious in new situations, with new people and places.

We worked very well together as a team of researchers, we worked around a lot of issues to produce a comprehensive survey.

There were a lot of issues with lack of resources, equipment, support for our disabilities. It was frustrating as time was wasted trying to get things to work, setting up systems and trying to figure out a lot of practical issues for example how do we do a phone interview in a room on the second floor when the wireless phone we had on the 4th floor's signal won't work on the 2nd floor. We had a lot of tech failures and complications that were often difficult and time consuming to resolve.

I'm proud of how well we worked together and the hard work we put in as a team. Peer support in general and for our specific disability needs which was a vital part of being able to do this project.

I know more now about what my needs are for my disability as this is the first job I have had like this where my disabilities have been affected. For example, it is the first time I have worked in a large open plan office like this and I found it very difficult to concentrate, I was easily distracted by phones ringing, people coming in and out past our desk, conversations between others and I was always exhausted at the end of the day from sensory overload. I now know that these are issues for me and so would flag up those as issues.

Ideally the Equipment would be there at the start of the project, a laptop each as we have had to bring our own, word, quiet office space for us to work with internet that works, a printer that was wireless, a project manager, help with admin, support workers for those who needed them, transcribing, specialist software for disabilities with the training at the beginning of the project not at the end, access to work is not very accessible for disabled employees and their employers. Some other systems could have also been in place like specific software with training for creating things like the employer framework. One of the researchers left and wasn't replaced, a replacement might have been good.

The training was good but the training for analysis was rushed as we could see we were running out of time for the project and spent a good part of the time doing 'project management' for the remainder time. There had been no provision for any training for us to learn how to write a report and we didn't know that we were

expected to write the report until December. We worked out some training sessions with Simon and he came in and supported through the writing process.

My disability was a factor and If I compared the experience to that of me starting post graduate studies, for my studies I have had a needs assessment and have support in the form of laptop, specific software, coloured overlays for reading, Dictaphone, dyslexia tutor. If access to work was as accessible as DSA and assessments at universities that would be wonderful.

I have learned a lot about myself my own disability needs in the workplace and many other skills not relating to the disability aspect, I have also learned to communicate needs.

It has been exciting, exhausting, frustrating, a real roller coaster ride. I feel accomplished and relieved.

I don't like being negatively critical, some of my responses to these questions I have answered here may come across as so, I think that our experiences can be a positive learning experience for the project moving forwards.

K - I felt very nervous when I started this project back in June 2017. Because I've never done research before in a job. at the start of the project my self-esteem and my confidence was low I think the interview was great also, it's been useful to meet the employers. We got lots of useful information from most of the employers. Some employers didn't get back to us after I sent a link of the survey. I Had to wait for my laptop and victor phone, and my c pen which was frustrating as I needed these to help with the project. I am so proud of myself because I can now work as part of a team. I am also proud that we have managed to get an event in January for the project.

Thing I would do differently is change my questions to make them easy read and maybe get some support with it as well. I think the project should help other people understand things beforehand not in front of other team members, because they might get confused about it. I think the project should do things at a slower pace, not in a rushed pace. I feel the training was bit useful, but it was a bit hard for me sometimes and I struggled a bit with a few words, and it's made me feel a bit

anxious. The training was perfect, and we had a good exercise and good things to do and I think if someone has dyslexia there should be someone to one support available instead of a group exercise. Yes, it has been a disability factor because I only like one person talking at once not too many people talking at once I get confused and I forget things what people said to me. Maybe in the future I would consider doing something like this as I've enjoy doing this work as a researcher. I feel disappointed that nobody has answered the phone to me when I rang them to book an interview not many companies was good at communicating back. And the other issues I would like to raise is that I don't think I've had much support during the beginning of work. Sometimes people didn't understand things when I was explaining things to them.

W - At the start of the project I was excited and enthusiastic to begin working. I believed that I would very much be able to carry out the work. I thought that when the team had the resources and support we required we worked very well together, which was something that stood out for me. I thought that the teams' ability to support and encourage one another when needed was something that made the group feel better able to complete the work asked of us. I found that the aspects of the project that did not go so well were more focused around admin or support. For instance, the team were able to carry out interviews well, but it took a while for any provision to record the interviews was put in place.

I believe more could have been done to support all members of the team, and large, obvious barriers were not given any thought before the project started. This left member of the team without the support they required to carry out their roles for months. Furthermore, when a team member left the project within the first few weeks, this team member's workload was simply divided up between the remaining employees, with no extra provision being made to account for the increase in workload.

I am particularly proud of the team working together and supporting one another when the project was experiencing particularly difficult stretches of time. I believe that these moments of stress, and the teams' ability to work through them has had a positive effect on the members of the team, and overall group morale.

As the project progressed and we contacted more employers through emails, rather than by telephone, I found that I was more likely to get a positive result (an employer filling out our online survey, for example) the nearer to the end of the project we got. Therefore, if we were to carry out this research again, and I was to do something differently, I would work towards getting my correspondence with employers to the level they were at the end of our project, much sooner.

I believe that the project could have been handled in several different ways. From a Human Resources point of view, I would suggest that it may have been a good idea to have a conversation with each of the employees before the start of the project, asking how they believed their disability would, or could affect their work. Project management could have also questioned whether all team members had properly read, and fully understood, the job description before committing themselves to conduct research, and write a report on the findings of their research.

I believe that there was a fundamental misunderstanding about what the aims of the project were, what was expected from the researchers and what was expected from the managers and outside staff assisting with the research. At no point were the team given any direction on how to write research questions or how to structure research interviews, which would have been useful.

For me personally, disability has been a factor, although not one that caused me any great concern. Given the measures I put in place, the team were able to work effectively around the issues specific to me and my disability. For other members of the team, disability has been a major factor, and has affected large stretches of working time for both themselves and the team.

I believe that my participation in this project has had a definite positive impact on my future opportunities. I have enjoyed doing the work required of me throughout this process. I hope that my enthusiasm and interest in this work will be reflected when I discuss it in the future.

At the end of the project I feel proud of what we as a group have achieved. I am happy to have been given the opportunity to take part in such an interesting, exciting and worthwhile project. I believe that every member of our team will be leaving the project having gained a great deal of experience and confidence. Whilst there have

been challenges along the way, I feel that our ability to overcome them, and produce the research we were tasked to is a great confidence boost for the group.

I do not feel that I specifically required much support because of my disability. However, I do believe that I would have benefitted from at least one, face to face, one on one meeting with any member of the management team at some point throughout the process. This would have been useful to discuss and assess both the overall progress of the project, and my personal progress.

T - At the start of this project I was excited to be working with a team of people that could improve the lives of others. Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder and impacts the whole brain so very difficult to detect by the untrained eye, which means work and social situations can be very tricky for everyone concerned. I am personally very interested in the project, the findings and the challenges of noisy, busy town centre working have been particularly revealing. I have had some strong learning experiences on several levels including patience, commitment and confidence. I have enjoyed being part of a compassionate team and watching my colleagues grow and learn.

Our research training was thorough and co-production and the autonomy were appreciated although this at times stretched me beyond comfortable limits. As I learned and discovered the general ambiguity from employers about impacts of disabilities, it became a personal challenge. We witnessed different people leaving and joining and I also struggled with distraction and unpredictability. If I was asked to continue in a similar office-based role, I would like regular staff meetings, a timetable and a dedicated team office, with the option to work elsewhere as I focus with writing best on my own. Our specific and personal input at the design stage would've meant we were more intrinsic to the programme, had more respect for the structure of the project and so more empowerment, instead of being vulnerable to our own shortcomings.

I feel like I've been stretched psychologically but the benefits for me have been far-reaching in personal and social growth. I'm able to refer to myself as a researcher, which has provided new opportunities with wider work and study. People are genuinely interested in 'our project'.

N - In hindsight, I think that what we set out achieve was over ambitious given the resources we had. The time between completing the application and the time it took before we started the project meant that the agenda on employment and disability had evolved which put us on the back foot when starting the project.

The strategy behind the project was twofold:

1. To engage with the researchers and help them to develop new skills, but also trying to disprove the myth that people with disabilities can only carry out entry level jobs.
2. To carry out the work of the project and provide some detailed training to the researchers to give them the skills to complete the task of interviewing employers and communicating the results.

I decided early in the project that we would have an autonomous structure, where the researchers took decisions on how they would design the structures needed to run the project e.g. CRM and recording systems. That meant that there was tension between the researchers as they formed the team. This led to one of the researchers leaving the team early in the project as it became clear to the researcher and the project team that the issues that surfaced did not have a simple solution that could resolved.

As the project progressed it became clear that the researchers sometimes struggled to manage their health in relation to their work, which led to higher levels of absenteeism that we expected. This had a knock-on effect on the work of the project and became frustrating at times as deadlines were not met.

We soon realised that the way we had design how to manage the project wasn't effective and led to confusion amongst the researchers about who they could go to if there were issues that needed to be discussed as they were in Disability Sheffield's office and tended to report to Emily by default. I changed my way of working once this became apparent, sending more time in the researcher's office, which allowed myself and the team to discuss and resolve issues quickly.

E- We adopted a partnership approach to delivering this project to include a range of experience and expertise. This brought with it a range of perspectives to the

research which was positive but also lead to some complexities as we grappled with developing a shared approach. As the employer Disability Sheffield, a user-led organisation, is used to employing disabled people individually and working with them to put in place any support or adaptations required to enable them to work effectively. Employing a team of 4 people all at the same time with a range of disabilities was a challenge and provided some learning from us an organisation in how we meet the needs of disabled employees.

Conclusions

The researchers were asked **"If you were to do it again how would you approach it.?"** Below is a summary of their views.

- We would have tried to reach more people through marketing etc.
- Would have liked to have better resources to record interviews etc.
- We weren't prepared to do the telephone interviews immediately during the initial contact phone call.
- People may have associated being asked to do a phone survey with when they get phone calls at home asking if they want to do phone interviews.
- We were unable to do phone interviews during the initial contact because we were unable to carry out interviews because we didn't have private office space.
- They said no to the telephone because they've already said no to the face to face interviews, so you're likely to get a no again after the initial no.
- Could have followed up asking why they wouldn't do the face to face or telephone interview. Basic things stop the methodology of working.
- Two people doing each method, separate to each other, with separate lists of companies.
- We started off with a single methodology (just doing face to face) which we adapted (added options to do telephone and online) to try and make the research wider reaching and include people who did not want to do face to face interviews.

General Conclusions

- The project was designed to test out whether you could employ people with different disabilities, provide them with tailored training and support to deliver the outcomes of the project. The experience of the researchers working on the project was positive, increasing their confidence and developing leadership and teams working skills. However, the way the structure of the project was designed with the project team was based in a location away from the project manager and within a busy office caused issues through the project which led it to be less effective than we originally envisaged.
- We underestimated the costs of delivering the project which led to self-imposed limitations on the scope of the project. Funding was applied through the small grants section of DRILL which limited the amount of funding we could ask for. SOHAS and Disability should have taken a bolder approach to in terms of what we wanted to achieve and the costs that would be incurred.
- The research team struggled to engage with and get businesses to take part in the project and give their views on disability and employment. This was in part due the nature of how organisations were contacted. It became clear that some businesses were uncomfortable with talking to someone with a disability about the project on the phone. A more varied approach including meetings and focus groups would be beneficial and potentially increased the numbers of organisations who took part.
- A small number of organisations who took part in the interviews were unsure how they should respond to the questions they were asked. There were several stereotypical answers, where the replies were focussed on the kind of support for a range of physical disabilities, but not from a mental health or learning disability point of view. One organisation assumed that one of the researchers with a learning disability was the “assistant” to the researcher with a mental health disability. When questioned on the types of reasonable adjustments. 44% of organisations responded said that they provided adjustments for physical issues such as chairs and display screen assessments. Organisations gave no indication that they had made an adjustment for an employee with mental health or learning disability.

- The project highlighted the issues around “hidden” disabilities” where there is a lack of awareness from employers on what a range of disabilities “look like” In face to face interviews they were more comfortable when being asked questions by the researcher with a physical disability.
- One of the aims of the project was to test out whether organisations who were signed up to Disability Confident employer scheme. Our research showed that organisations who were signed up appeared to be just as uncomfortable with how they engage with and support people with disabilities than organisations who weren’t signed up to the scheme.
- Only a minority of the organisations (38%) who took part in the research were aware of support schemes like Access to Work. The organisations who had used Access To Work said that it was complex to use and there was too long a time to be reimbursed when making reasonable adjustments that were funded. The project manager contacted Access To Work to provide support to one of the researchers and encountered the same types of problems reported within the research.
- There was some evidence that organisations identified people with disabilities with entry level jobs. One organisation identified while employment law is good at protecting people with disabilities e.g. Equal Opportunity Act in employment, there should be help and support for people with their career path.
- Employers said they had a better understanding of employing and recruiting disabled people if they had personal experience of friends or family with a disability, but the research still shows lack of confidence from employers
- Some employers identified that the processes they have in place are barriers to recruiting and employing disabled people
- Some employers found it hard to differentiate between people struggling because they were not coping with their job and those who were struggling due to their disability – need for training and good practice that goes beyond equal opportunities policy
- Lots of employers were asking for support whether that be a helpline, good practice, resources, information

Recommendations

- The introduction of a workplace adjustment passport which can go with the employee if they move jobs within an organisation or start a new job.
- The setting up of a forum for employers to discuss and share practice around employing disabled people, this could include opportunities for employers to meet disabled people about the issues they face in work. This could be linked to existing local disability provision.
- Good practice guidelines for employers around inclusive recruitment.
- A review of the Disability Confident scheme in Sheffield.
- Discussion with the DWP on the issues that have been raised by employers on the difficulties they face in accessing the service.
- An Information point for employers, including a telephone help line, having advisers who can identify resources and good practice on disability and employment issues.

Annexes

1. Confidentiality agreement
2. Data storage and data security
3. Final Survey/Questionnaire
4. Employer Consent Form
5. Researcher Consent Form
6. Phone Script
7. PowerPoint Presentation used for event day

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