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**IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES  
OF LOWERING THE  
DDA PART II THRESHOLD**

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# **Impact on Small Businesses of Lowering the DDA Part II Threshold**

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Produced for the Disability Rights Commission by

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## **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank the many managers and employees in the small businesses and organisations which participated in the survey and case-studies for the time and insights which they gave to the survey.

In addition, our colleagues at MORI, Nita Bhupal and Michele Corrado, who were responsible for the conduct of the telephone survey fieldwork provided an efficient and professional service.

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## Executive Summary

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This report presents findings from a telephone survey of 1,005 small businesses in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and in-depth case-studies of a further 45 small businesses. The study was commissioned by the DRC and conducted by IES in partnership with MORI, who were responsible for the telephone survey fieldwork.

The survey covered a representative national sample of small businesses in three size categories:

- Small – those with 1-14 employees (exempt from Part II of the Disability Discrimination Act – the employment provisions).
- Medium-sized – those with 15-19 employees (covered by Part II since December 1998).
- Large – those with 20-49 employees (covered by Part II since the inception of the DDA).

Key points about this sample were:

- Businesses in these size categories are dominated by service sector establishments (especially retail, catering and similar).
- Levels of recruitment activity vary from an average of less than two recruits a year among the smallest firms (1-4 employees) to six recruits a year among the largest (20-49 employees).
- Most of the firms do not have a distinct personnel/HR manager or department.
- Most do not have a formal written equal opportunities policy, although most of those that do address 'disability'.<sup>1</sup> Public sector employers stand out as being most likely to have formal equal

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<sup>1</sup> NB: The use of 'disability' here denotes the term in a generic sense, implying nothing with regard to definition or the extent of policy coverage.

opportunities policies, and most likely to have an explicit policy on the employment of disabled people.

## **Recruitment and employment of disabled people**

- The proportion of employers who have disabled employees varies with size and with the definition of disability. Only 12 per cent of the small firms (1-14 employees) initially claimed to have disabled employees. This rises to 28 per cent when we also include employees who are disabled according to a broader definition, as used by the DDA. The corresponding proportions among the large firms (20-49 employees) are 31 per cent and 53 per cent respectively.
- Among firms who do have disabled employees, the average number of disabled employees is around two.
- The largest group of disabled employees are found in relatively unskilled, routine occupations, but the picture is varied, and there are also significant numbers to be found in higher level (including managerial) jobs.
- Around a quarter of firms with no disabled employees currently have had them in the past, but it remains the case that, across the sample as a whole, more than a half of small employers have never (knowingly) employed a disabled person.
- Businesses with higher levels of recruitment activity are more likely to have disabled employees; as are businesses with equal opportunities policies.
- The most common reason given for not having disabled employees is that no disabled people have applied for work in the business (72 per cent of the surveyed firms who have never had disabled employees say this).
- Word-of-mouth recruitment is the most common method of recruiting among the smallest firms, although press advertising is more important among the larger firms.
- Only six per cent of the firms actively encourage job applications from disabled people (the proportion is higher among public sector employers), although hardly any say that they would not consider recruiting a disabled person. Surprisingly, there is no evidence

that having a policy of actively encouraging applications from disabled people is associated with having more disabled employees in practice.

### **Adjustments made for disabled recruits or employees**

- Between half and two thirds of the firms (depending on their size) who have disabled employees (or had had them in the past) said that they have had disabled employees for whom they did **not** need to make adjustments or provide additional support.
- Fewer than ten per cent of firms with disabled employees (now or in the past) have made adjustments in order to recruit a disabled person. The proportion who have made adjustments in order to retain an existing employee who became disabled is higher (at between 20 and 30 per cent, depending on the size of firm).
- The most common adjustments made relate to changes to working patterns or hours, or adaptations to the organisation of work.
- Four fifths of firms that have made adjustments have found it easy or very easy to do so.
- Only a third of those who have made adjustments say that they have incurred any direct financial cost in doing so. The average cost of adjustments in the last year, per employee for whom adjustments with a financial cost were made, was £772. This does not take account of the fact that most adjustments did not incur a financial cost, nor indeed that most firms with disabled employees did not make adjustments at all. If these two factors are taken into account, the average cost of adjustment, per disabled employee, falls to £184 over the last year.
- Less than half of those who have made adjustments identified any indirect costs in doing so (management time *etc.*).
- Only a fifth of those making adjustments have drawn on help (mainly non-financial in nature) from outside the firm, but most of those that have, regard the assistance received as important or very important in enabling them to recruit or retain disabled employees.

## **Benefits of employing disabled people**

- Only a minority of the firms (15 per cent overall) see any business benefits from recruiting disabled people, although the proportions reporting benefits were higher in the public sector, and the south east region, and also among those who had disabled employees (currently or in the past).
- The most common benefits identified relate to impacts on staff relations and morale, the skills of disabled people, and the external image of the business.
- A higher proportion of firms (31 per cent across the sample), however, identified business benefits from retaining existing employees who became disabled. This was especially the case among firms with a formal equal opportunities policy.

## **The DDA and the employment provisions**

- Nearly two thirds of the firms surveyed reported having heard of the DDA prior to the survey (and the proportion in the public sector was higher), although fewer than half of these claimed any awareness of the detail of the employment provisions. Awareness was higher among those with disabled employees, and among those reporting positive attitudes to the recruitment of disabled people.
- Nearly three quarters of businesses responding to our survey are unsure whether they are covered by the employment provisions, and many of those who think they know whether they are covered or exempt get it wrong. Only a small minority identify employment size as a reason for being covered or exempt.
- The majority of firms (82 per cent overall, falling to 72 per cent of the larger firms in scope of the Act since its inception) have not reviewed or revised any of their policies or practices which affect the employment of disabled people, since the introduction of the Act.
- Even among those who have made changes, most do not attribute them to the Act itself.
- Hardly any businesses responding to our survey express a negative attitude towards the DDA, with two thirds saying they

are in favour of the Act, and the remaining third saying they are neither in favour nor against it.

- Over half of the employers in all size groups claim to have heard of the DRC prior to the survey.
- Just over half of currently exempt employers think that lowering the threshold would have no impact on them (mainly because they believe they do not discriminate against disabled people), and only one in five believe it would have a significant impact on them (the largest group of whom believe it will lead to additional costs in adjusting the physical working environment).
- Just over a quarter of the medium-sized (15-19 employee) firms who came into coverage of the employment provisions in December 1998 were aware of that fact. Of those who are aware of coming into scope of the Act, virtually none have changed policy or practices as a result, and all of them say that coming into scope has had no impact on their business (the most common reason given for this was that disabled people do not apply for employment in their business).
- Similarly, the vast majority (over 90 per cent) of the firms (with 20-49 employees) who have been in scope of the employment provisions since they were first introduced in December 1996 say that they have seen no impact on their business as a result of the Act.

### **Part III of the DDA (goods, facilities and services)**

- Over half of the small firms in the survey are covered by Part III of the DDA, but only half of these have any substantial awareness of the Part III provisions, and a significant proportion (close to a fifth) were not aware that they were in scope.
- Close to 40 per cent of those in scope, and aware of that fact, have made changes in provision for their disabled customers/clients, and a significant minority of these (one in five, rising to one in two of the largest employers) believe that these changes have also benefited disabled employees.

## Information, advice and support

- Only a minority (12 per cent) have made use of external information, advice or support about employing disabled people.
- Where such support has been sought, it has most commonly related to information about the business's obligations under the DDA, and to support in making adjustments in order to employ a disabled person.
- The most common sources of external help are written information (leaflets *etc.*) and the various Employment Service resources (Disability Service Teams, Jobcentres).
- A third of businesses currently in scope of Part II (particularly those in the 15-19 employee category) anticipate future support or information needs (especially regarding their obligations under the DDA). There is a general preference for traditional written media (leaflets *etc.*) in delivering such information, followed by internet-delivered information and telephone helplines.
- Nearly 80 per cent of currently exempt employers believe they would need some information, advice or support if the threshold is removed. Again the main area of help relates to their obligations under the Act, and the preferred formats are dominated by written materials, followed by telephone helplines and the internet.

## Future developments

- Only seven per cent of currently exempt employers, rising to 11 per cent of the larger employers, have any plans to make changes to improve access to disabled employees or to make it easier to recruit or retain disabled staff.

# 1. Introduction

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The DRC commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies, in partnership with MORI, to examine the impact on small businesses of lowering the 15 employee threshold for exemption from the employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The main objectives were to:

- map the policies and practices of small businesses in relation to recruiting and employing disabled people
- explore small businesses' awareness of and views on the DDA, including their views in relation to a possible further reduction in the employer threshold for Part II
- assess the needs of small businesses for information, advice and support relating to the employment of disabled people.

The study's methodology comprised:

1. A national telephone survey of 1,005 small organisations divided into<sup>2</sup>:
  - 504 organisations with 1-14 employees (currently exempt from the employment provisions of the Act)
  - 241 organisations with 15-19 employees (covered by the employment provisions since December 1998)
  - 260 organisations with 20-49 employees (covered by the employment provisions, since the introduction of the Act in December 1996).

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<sup>2</sup> The target sample was a survey of 1,000 respondents, divided into 3 size groups of 500, 250 and 250 respectively. In practice, some respondents turned out to employ slightly more or fewer employees than their initial categorisation suggested, and the final numbers of respondents in each of the size groups, therefore, differed slightly from the original targets.

2. Interview-based, detailed case-studies of 45 businesses responding to our survey in five areas: two in England<sup>3</sup>; one in Scotland<sup>4</sup>; one in Wales<sup>5</sup>; and one in Northern Ireland<sup>6</sup>. In consultation with the DRC, these areas were selected to represent differing labour market characteristics and urban and/or rural natures. The case-studies were mainly based on interviews with managers in the firms in question but, where possible, interviews were also sought with disabled employees in the businesses in question.

Survey data were analysed according to the three size groups and were also weighted to represent the national population of all employers with fewer than 50 employees<sup>7</sup>.

Interview data were analysed for their illumination of the study's objectives, the current status of, and possible changes to, policy and practice. Insights from the interviews were integrated with the quantitative results. Together these present a comprehensive and complex picture of when, where and how disabled people are employed in small businesses.

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides **background information** about the sample of small employers used in the study.
- Chapter 3 looks at the **recruitment and employment of disabled people**, focusing on: the numbers employed in small organisations, their reasons for not employing disabled people, and their recruitment methods and policies.
- In Chapter 4 we consider **adjustments and accommodations** made (or not made) to recruit or retain disabled people in employment, including: the extent and nature of such adjustments; perceptions of the ease or difficulty of making adjustments; the direct and

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<sup>3</sup> Greater London and East Sussex.

<sup>4</sup> Greater Glasgow.

<sup>5</sup> Powys.

<sup>6</sup> Belfast and County Antrim.

<sup>7</sup> Throughout the report, the tables contain weighted data, unless otherwise indicated, although we have also included in each table the total number(s) of respondents, unweighted, on which the table is based.

indirect costs of making adjustments; and the use of external advice, assistance and support in making adjustments.

- Chapter 5 looks briefly at small employers' perceptions and experiences of the **benefits of recruiting and/or retaining disabled people**.
- In Chapter 6, we turn to look in more detail at the **DDA**, covering: awareness of the Act and the employment provisions; employers' understanding of the coverage of the Act and the size threshold; changes to policy or practice which employers have made as a result of the Act; their attitudes towards the Act; and their awareness of the DRC itself. For exempt employers, we look at their perceptions of any likely impact of removing the threshold, while for covered and recently covered employers we look at the impact which coming into scope of the Act has had on the business.
- Chapter 7 extends the analysis to look at the **goods, services and facilities provisions** of the Act, employers' awareness of these and changes made as a result, as well as any linkages between these changes and employment-related issues in the organisation.
- The use of external **advice, information and support** relating to the employment of disabled people is the subject of Chapter 8, looking at the extent and nature of external support used and anticipated future requirements for support (particularly in the light of any changes in the employer threshold), as well as employers' preferences for the type of support needed and the mechanism through which it is delivered.
- Chapter 9 looks at employers' views about **future changes and developments** which may affect the employment of disabled people, as well as more general issues raised by the employers surveyed.
- Finally Chapter 10 draws out some brief **conclusions** from the research.

There are two Appendices:

Appendix 1 contains some summary information about the sample of employers interviewed as part of the case-study element of the research.

Appendix 2 contains additional statistical tables from the main telephone survey, which are referred to in the main text of this report.

## 2. Key Characteristics of Small Businesses in the National Survey

### 2.1 Sectoral breakdown

While a broad spectrum of types of business was represented in the survey, the service sector predominated (Table 2.1). Organisations involved in business services (including financial), and distribution (including retail, wholesale and repair) accounted for a half of respondents, and those involved in education, health, social and other public and community services accounted for an additional one in five of respondents (approximately).

**Table 2.1: Sectoral breakdown of businesses in the survey (unweighted data)**

(all respondents) Sector (standard industrial classification)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Primary and extractive <sup>8</sup>	5	3	2	3
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	18	24	24	21
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, transport, storage & communication	43	34	33	38
Financial intermediation & business services	15	11	10	13
Public administration, education, health and social work	12	25	22	18
Other including private households	8	4	10	7
Unweighted total (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

*Note: this table contains unweighted data, to show the actual overall distribution of respondents to the survey; the data in subsequent tables are weighted by size and sector to reflect the national distribution of small employers.*

In the rest of the report, the data in the tables are weighted by size and sector, to reflect the overall distribution of small employers in the national economy.

<sup>8</sup> *ie* Agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing, mining and quarrying.

## 2.2 Recruitment activity

It can be seen (Table 2.2) that some organisations in each of the three size bands have high levels of interaction with the labour market (either because of rapid growth or because of high levels of labour turnover). Thus some firms in each size group have recruited more people in the last year than they currently employ. These cases are not typical, however, and at the other extreme there are significant numbers of organisations which have not recruited at all. The average level of recruitment activity varies from less than two recruits a year in the smallest organisations to six among those in the 20-49 size group.

**Table 2.2: Interaction with the labour market**

(all respondents) How many employees have been recruited in the last year (either to replace leavers or to fill new posts)?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Maximum no of employees	16	40	65	65
Minimum no of employees	0	0	0	0
Mean no of employees	1.5	3.7	6.0	1.7
Unweighted total (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

There was some regional variation in recruitment activity, with firms in the North East and Scotland recruiting the least numbers of people in the last year, and those in the East Midlands having the highest rate of recruitment (Appendix – Table A.1). Similarly there were sectoral variations, with firms in the retailing, catering *etc.* sectors recording the highest rates of recruitment, and those in the primary (agriculture *etc.*) and extractive sectors, the lowest (Appendix – Table A.2).

## 2.3 Personnel/Human Resources management

As is usually the case among firms of this size, the degree of formalisation or professionalisation in the personnel or human resources area is rather low (Table 2.3). Even among the larger small firms in the sample, fewer than one in five have a dedicated manager or department responsible for personnel or human resource issues.

**Table 2.3: Presence of a personnel/HR manager or department.**

Does the business have a specific personnel/HR manager or department?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Yes	7	19	14	8
No	93	81	86	92
Unweighted total (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

## 2.4 Policies on equal opportunities and disability

Despite this general lack of a personnel management function, the majority of businesses in each size category reported having an equal opportunities policy – 74 per cent of small, 82 per cent of medium and 81 per cent of large businesses indicated that they have an equal opportunities policy (see Table A.3 in Appendix). Equal opportunities policies were most common in the public sector and least common in primary and extractive sectors (Appendix – Table A.4).

In most cases, however, such policies tended to be informal and unwritten. This applied in all sizes of organisation. In 51 per cent of large, 57 per cent of medium and 70 per cent of small organisations policies were unwritten (see Table A.5 in Appendix). Once again the public sector stands out as having the highest incidence of written, formal policies, while the retailing and related sectors have the lowest incidence (Appendix – Table A.6).

Where formal, written policies were in place, most, but not all (upwards of 60 per cent across all size categories), specifically covered the employment of disabled people (see Table A.7 in Appendix). Again, the highest incidence is recorded in the public sector (along with the other services sector) – Table A.8.

### Case-studies

#### Participating organisations are described in Appendix 1.

The case-studies confirm these findings with the majority claiming to operate some form of equal opportunities policy. Findings confirmed the general lack of formal, written equal opportunities policies in small businesses and raised some questions about the coverage and reliability of those that did exist. Less than half said that they had formal equal

opportunities policies with only one of the nine employers in Northern Ireland having a written policy. In London it is notable that the majority of written policies had been acquired on the advice of private HR or legal advisory services. Formal policies would not, however, necessarily point to an organisation's performance in the operation of equality measures, as many formal policies are no more than statements of intent not to discriminate, rather than representing actual measures or procedures to ensure equality of opportunity.

Where there was either no EO policy, or the EO policy did not relate to disabled employees, it was extremely rare that a separate policy covered their employment. Under these circumstances, only two per cent of businesses had a separate, written policy relating to the employment of people with disabilities (see Table A.9 in Appendix).

### **Case-studies**

Of the few case-study employers that did have written equal opportunities policies, the majority did make reference to disability in such policies or have separate disability policies. However some of this coverage was less than satisfactory. One employer, for example, had not reviewed their policy for seven years and its coverage of disability was linked to the requirements of the 1944 Act. Where disability was not mentioned explicitly the focus tended to be on the vague notion of discouraging 'any form of discrimination'.

Among the minority who had formal policies covering the employment of disabled people, the coverage of such policies was fairly broad (Table 2.4). Interestingly, certain aspects of employment were less commonly dealt with. In all sizes of organisation, only around a third of policies addressed promotion, monitoring of numbers and the retention of employees with newly acquired or worsening disabilities.

**Table 2.4: Content of disability policies**

(businesses with a specific written policy on the employment of disabled people) What is covered in written policy?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Recruitment	51	57	65	52
Training and development	51	43	54	51
Promotion	31	41	38	32
Sickness or absence management	46	51	43	46
Redundancy or termination	41	46	39	42
Encouraging the retention of employees who become disabled or whose disability worsens	36	34	25	35
Promoting disability awareness among employees generally	53	41	41	52
Monitoring the number of disabled employees	35	27	26	34
Monitoring practices towards disabled employees	40	35	34	40
Equipment and/or personal support for disabled employees	42	34	34	42
Adapting working hours as necessary	50	43	29	49
Adapting working patterns as necessary	47	41	35	46
Consulting with disabled employees on their needs	52	46	43	52
Nothing specific on disability	3	4	3	3
All of these	0	4	0	0
Other	2	9	0	2
None of these	3	0	2	2
Don't Know	9	16	7	10
Unweighted total (n=100%)	86	68	83	237

*Note: figures sum to more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one item as included in their policy.*

### Case-studies

About a third of the case-study organisations could specify issues in their equal opportunities policies. On the whole these were broad policies covering a range of issues such as discrimination in recruitment, training and promotion, fair treatment and avoidance of harassment. There was no apparent correlation among the case-studies between an organisation's size and the coverage of its equal opportunities policy.

It should be noted, however, that the lack of formal equal opportunities policies did not necessarily prevent some companies from adopting wide-ranging approaches. This can be illustrated by examples drawn from the case-studies in Wales. Thus, one company representative with three staff proposed that an effective policy should, "operate across a

*wide range of human resource issues, including recruitment, training and development, promotion, sickness and absence, the retention of existing employees who become disabled and adaption of working hours for disabled employees".* Another, possessing a formal policy and employing 30 staff, operated a non-discrimination policy covering recruitment, training and development, promotion, redundancy and retention and the promotion of disability awareness.

## 3. Recruitment and Employment of Disabled People

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### 3.1 Current employment of disabled people

Consistent with previous research<sup>9</sup>, only a minority of employers reported that people with disabilities currently worked for the business (Table 3.1). Further, the survey results supported this statement irrespective of the definition of disability used. That is, the picture was the same whether we base the results on respondents' spontaneous interpretation of 'disability', or whether we ask them to think in terms of a broad definition of disability based on that used in the DDA<sup>10</sup>. 13 per cent of respondents spontaneously identified at least one disabled employee; the proportion of respondents who reported having disabled employees when asked to think in terms of the DDA definition was twice as high (26 per cent), and overall, some 30 per cent of respondents had at least one disabled employee on either definition.

As Table 3.1 also shows, the proportion reporting disabled employees (on either definition) tended to increase with size of organisation.

Using the DDA definition, we looked at the regional and sectoral variations in the proportion of employers who have disabled employees (Tables A.10 and A.11 in the Appendix). Across the sample as a whole, some 25 per cent of employers report disabled employees under this definition, but the regional variation is considerable, varying from a high of 38 per cent of employers in the East Midlands, to a low of nine per cent in Northern Ireland. As far as sectoral variation is concerned, as might be expected, the public sector records the highest proportion

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<sup>9</sup> See also Section 10.1 below.

<sup>10</sup> Interviewers said to respondents "There are many definitions of disability, but I would like you to think of people with long-term impairments or health problems which make it difficult for them to do some everyday things. As well as including people who use wheelchairs, or who are blind or partially-sighted, we would also include things that might not be obvious, such as diabetes, epilepsy, arthritis or learning difficulties."

**Table 3.1: Disabled employees in respondent organisations**

(all respondents) Does the business have any disabled employees?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
% of businesses reporting disabled employees (own definition)	12	22	31	13
% of businesses reporting disabled employees (DDA definition)	22	40	43	25
% of businesses reporting disabled employees (either definition)	28	49	53	30
Unweighted total (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

*Note: some respondents who reported having disabled employees according to their own definition, reported having no disabled employees under the DDA definition, and vice versa*

at 40 per cent, whilst the financial services sector has the lowest, at 16 per cent.

Among those businesses with disabled employees, the average (mean) number of disabled employees was generally between one and two (Table 3.2). This applied irrespective of the definition of disability followed.

**Table 3.2: Average numbers of disabled employees among businesses with at least one disabled employee**

How many disabled employees?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Mean number of disabled employees – own definition	1.8 (n=67)	1.4 (n=68)	1.6 (n=83)	1.8 (n=218)
Mean number of disabled employees – DDA definition	1.5 (n=130)	1.7 (n=102)	2.1 (n=110)	1.5 (n=342)

### Case-studies

The case-studies bear out the survey findings, with only just over a third reporting any disabled employees when asked for their spontaneous response. This increased to just over half of all our interviewees when they were asked to consider the wider DDA definition.

Close scrutiny of the London case-studies provides an illustration of how numbers of disabled employees are elevated when a DDA

definition is applied. Three organisations in this group originally said they employed disabled people (applying their own definition of a disabled person). When asked to apply a broader definition, six said they employed disabled people who may come with the DDA's definition of a disabled person.

In many of the case-studies there were examples of respondents identifying staff as disabled under the DDA definition who had not previously been regarded as disabled. In a Glasgow case-study, a respondent reported an employee with spina bifida who they *"never thought of as disabled because it didn't impact upon her ability to carry out her job"*.

Certain conditions were less likely to be defined as disabling in the absence of the DDA definition. To illustrate this point: among the case-studies in Sussex, once the wider definition had been introduced, six additional disabled employees were identified. These were employees with arthritis, epilepsy, cancer, a person recovering from surgery, someone with a mental health condition and two previous employees with dyslexia in a small hotel/restaurant. People with diabetes were also commonly overlooked initially.

Other employers had been unaware of the employee's disability when they were recruited. In Glasgow, for example, one respondent talked about finding about employee disability by noticing an orange badge in a car or through conversation with individual employees. In only one case was the employer aware of this at the point of recruitment. Similarly, in a Northern Ireland case-study an employee with a hearing impairment had not made his disability known on recruitment and the employer was not initially aware of it.

### **3.2 Occupations of disabled employees**

As for the jobs that disabled employees in the sample as a whole were doing, it seems likely that the largest group were employed in repetitive unskilled work (Table 3.3). Thirty-five per cent of the sample as a whole were employed in routine, assembly or operative work. Further, this proportion was similar between the different sized organisations.

However this is not the whole story; two other findings should be highlighted. Among the whole sample, 25 per cent of disabled employees were engaged in craft and skilled service-related work and a further 20 per cent were engaged in managerial and administrative

**Table 3.3: Occupations of disabled employees**

(businesses with disabled employees currently)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Managers and administrative occupations	20	19	12	20
Professional occupations	6	6	17	7
Semi-professional and technical occupations	10	4	9	10
Clerical and secretarial occupations	14	23	27	15
Craft and skilled service occupations	26	16	24	25
Personal and protective service occupations	2	2	3	2
Sales occupations	8	13	7	8
Routine, unskilled and assembly or operative work	34	39	38	35
Other	1	2	0	1
Don't know	1	1	1	1
Unweighted total (n=100%)	154	125	138	417

*Note: columns total to more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one occupational group*

positions. Interestingly, compared with the medium and large businesses, a higher proportion of the smallest businesses reported disabled people in managerial and administrative positions.

### Case-studies

In the case-studies, we found disabled people occupying a wide range of jobs in small businesses, at a variety of levels, including: architect; book keeper; bread baker; care worker; compliance officer; driver; health promotion officer; housing officer; industrial cleaner; instrument technician; kitchen worker; manager; managing director; personal assistant; production worker; sales person; shop assistant; systems analyst; software developer; and waiter.

### 3.3 Past employment of disabled people

Firms with no disabled employees currently, were asked whether they have ever had any disabled employees. Most have not: across the sample as a whole, 76 per cent have not (Appendix – Table A.12). Fifty-three per cent of large and 76 per cent of small organisations have not. This said, it should be noted that over a third of large businesses with no disabled people currently, had at some time

employed disabled people (compared with only 1 in 5 of the smallest businesses with no disabled employees).

### 3.4 Relationship between recruitment activity/policy and the employment of disabled people

Looking at respondents' employment of disabled people in the widest sense (*ie* firms who have currently or have had in the past, disabled people on either of the definitions used in the survey), we explored the relationship between employing disabled people and various aspects of the business's recruitment activity and policy.

First, Table 3.4 shows that firms which have disabled employees tend to have higher rates of recruitment than firms which do not, *ie* businesses which are more active in the labour market generally, are

**Table 3.4: Employees recruited in last 12 months, by whether the business has or has had disabled employees**

(all respondents) Disabled employees?	Employees recruited			Unweighted totals
	Mean no. of employees	Minimum no. of employees	Maximum no. of employees	
Yes	2.1	0	50	560
No	1.3	0	65	416
All	1.7	0	65	976

more likely to have disabled employees. This is consistent with the notion that it can take some time for a change in the legislative or policy environment to have an impact on small employers' recruitment of disabled people. Some small firms do not recruit very often, so it may be some time before a more favourable climate to the recruitment of disabled people actually results in their recruitment of any.

Table 3.5 confirms that businesses which employ disabled people are (slightly) more likely than others to report having an equal opportunities policy. They are also more likely to have a written equal opportunities policy (Table 3.6) and to have a policy which refers explicitly to the employment of disabled people (Table 3.7). These findings are consistent with equal opportunities policies having a positive impact on disabled people's employment, but it should be noted that the differences between firms with and without such policies are relatively

**Table 3.5: Existence of equal opportunities policy, by whether business has/has had any disabled employees**

(all respondents) Disabled employees?	Equal opportunities policy?			Unweighted totals
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Yes	80	19	1	580
No	71	27	3	425
All	75	23	2	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

small, and it is not possible to draw strong conclusions about the direction of causality. *Ie* it is possible that certain types of firm are both more likely to employ disabled people and to have equal opportunities policies, without the latter being an influence on the former.

**Table 3.6: Whether equal opportunities policy written or unwritten, by whether business has/has had any disabled employees**

(all respondents) Disabled employees?	Is the policy written or unwritten?			Unweighted totals
	Written	Unwritten	Don't know	
Yes	32	65	3	491
No	23	73	4	309
All	27	69	4	800

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

### 3.5 Reasons for not having disabled employees

Those organisations which reported no disabled employees currently, and were not aware of having had disabled employees in the past,

**Table 3.7: Whether equal opportunities policy covers the employment of disabled people, by whether business has/has had disabled employees**

(all respondents) Disabled employees?	Does the policy cover disability?			Unweighted totals
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Yes	67	13	20	219
No	61	10	29	108
All	64	12	24	327

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

were asked why they thought this was (Table 3.8). The responses from this sample of businesses responding to our survey were broadly consistent with those from previous studies of large employers.

By far the most common reason given by respondents for their lack of disabled employees, was that (as far as they are aware) disabled people have not applied for work in the business. Over 70 per cent of businesses of each size gave this as one of the main reasons disabled people were not and/or had not been employed.

**Table 3.8: Reasons for not having disabled employees**

(businesses reporting no disabled employees, now or in the past)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Main reasons for no disabled employees				
No disabled employees have applied for work in the business	71	89	81	72
Disabled employees have applied, but have not been recruited for reasons connected with their disability	1	0	2	1
Disabled employees have applied but have not been recruited for reasons not related to their disability)	1	0	4	2
The work is unsuitable for disabled people due to safety reasons	16	11	0	16
The business "doesn't have the facilities"	2	0	0	2
The business hasn't recruited employees	10	2	2	10
Other reasons	3	2	0	3
Refused	0	0	2	0
Don't know	1	10	0	1
Unweighted total (n=100%)	267	70	73	410

*Note: columns total to more than 100%, as respondents could give more than one reason*

Among small and medium-sized businesses, the second most frequently stated reason was the perceived unsuitability (for disabled people) of the type of work available. Interestingly none of the larger business cited this as a reason for the historical lack of disabled employees.

Virtually no respondents stated that they had rejected disabled applicants (for reasons associated with their disability or for other, unconnected reasons).

## Case-studies

The case-studies are consistent with the survey data, with most respondents suggesting that the main reason for not having disabled employees was simply that disabled people had not applied for jobs in the organisation. Sometimes respondents were unable to say why they had not had applications from disabled people. In other instances it was suggested that there had been no applications because premises are inaccessible to someone using a wheelchair, or because of the physically demanding nature of the work. To illustrate this point, two organisations in Scotland that did not employ disabled people argued that their premises might be unsuitable for someone with a disability. This appeared to reflect a stereotypical view of 'disability' which is limited to people with mobility difficulties. Thus one noted that *"the work involves a lot of standing, bending, narrow corridors"*; while another respondent commented: *"We don't seem to get any disabled people applying for jobs here. Parking might be a problem."*

The picture was similar across all the case-study areas. In Northern Ireland, for example, some businesses argued that the work would *"not be suitable"* for disabled people. It appeared that they saw this as a reason why disabled people had not applied for jobs, and were not saying that they had turned down disabled applicants on grounds of 'suitability'; indeed all of them stated that they had never turned down a job applicant with a disability. None of them had a policy not to employ disabled people, although one argued that there would never be applications from disabled people, because the firm, as a small coach hire business would have to ensure that all employees were physically fit and have (or be able to acquire) a PSV licence.

While no organisations reported operating a policy *not* to employ disabled people it is clear that most organisations (despite having the wider definition drawn to their attention) were operating with a relatively narrow definition of disability (and assuming, for example, that all disabilities would preclude an individual from coach driving). Having said this, although nearly all the respondents believed that disabled people would be limited in the work they could do, they also typically argued that they would not discriminate against a disabled person *"who could do the job"*.

### 3.6 Recruitment methods

Some recruitment methods may discriminate (indirectly) more than others against certain types of people. In particular, word-of-mouth methods are generally seen as being more prone to generate indirect discrimination. Thus, in considering why employers may or may not employ disabled people, it is important to understand the recruitment methods used.

Our survey confirmed the significance of informal, word-of-mouth recruitment methods, a finding familiar from previous studies of small

**Table 3.9: Normal recruitment methods**

(all respondents)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Advertising in newspapers, journals <i>etc.</i>	45	74	68	46
Jobcentre/Careers office	35	49	55	36
Private recruitment agencies	11	18	29	11
Public notices, shop windows or similar	8	17	14	9
Word of mouth or personal recommendation	51	60	53	51
Through direct speculative applications from potential employees	13	33	23	13
Contact with educational institutions ( <i>eg</i> schools, colleges, training and rehabilitation centres)	8	21	17	9
Other	1	2	1	1
Unweighted total (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

*Note: columns total to more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one method*

firms (Table 3.9). Across the sample as whole, the majority of respondents made use of word of mouth methods, although only among the smallest firms was it the most common method of recruitment. Among medium and larger organisations, newspaper advertising was the most commonly used method, along with Jobcentre notification and speculative enquiries from applicants.

Table 3.10 confirms that firms which use word-of-mouth methods are less likely than others to have or have had employees with disabilities than are those firms using the other main methods of recruitment.

**Table 3.10: Normal recruitment methods, by whether business has or has had disabled employees**

(all respondents) Recruitment method	Disabled employees?		Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	
Advertising in newspapers, journals <i>etc.</i>	48	52	597
Jobcentre/Careers office	55	45	462
Private recruitment agencies	55	45	140
Public notices, shop windows or similar	63	37	130
Word of mouth or personal recommendation	47	53	533
Through direct speculative applications from potential employees	48	52	192
Contact with educational institutions ( <i>eg</i> schools, colleges, training and rehabilitation centres)	64	37	140
None (not recruiting)	23	77	22
Other	33	67	7
Total %	45	55	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

We looked also for regional and sectoral variations in the usage of different recruitment methods, and key findings (not shown in tabular form) are:

- Public sector employers make the least use of word-of mouth methods (only 36 per cent report using such methods), and the highest use of newspaper advertising (73 per cent). At the other extreme, employers in the retailing, catering and related sectors report the most use of word of mouth (63 per cent use it) and the least use of newspaper advertising (39 per cent).
- Consistent with the case-study evidence (below), firms in Northern Ireland were much less likely than those elsewhere to report using word-of-mouth methods (only 27 per cent reported using such methods, compared with, at the other extreme, 69 per cent in Yorkshire and Humberside). Northern Ireland employers made the most use of newspaper advertising (69 per cent).

### **Case-studies**

The case-studies generally confirmed the patterns of recruitment methods observed in the survey although there were certain variations by area. It is interesting to note, for example, a greater emphasis on

methods such as the local press advertising in Northern Ireland, where word-of-mouth methods are seen as contravening Fair Employment legislation. Despite more emphasis on formal methods, however, the case-study businesses in Northern Ireland were no more likely to have disabled employees than the other case-study areas. Word-of-mouth tended to be a more common method of recruitment in smaller rural businesses, and this was particularly evident among the case-study firms in Wales. Advertisements in local newspapers were a common recruitment method for almost all case-study organisations.

### 3.7 Attitudes towards disabled employees and recruitment of disabled people

To further understand why they may or may not employ people with disabilities, the study explored businesses' general attitudes to having disabled employees. It is clear that only a minority of businesses responding to our survey (ten per cent or fewer) see themselves as actively encouraging job applications from disabled people (Table 3.11), although hardly any stated that they would not consider the recruitment of a disabled employee; over 80 per cent indicated that they held no particular view for or against employing disabled people.

**Table 3.11: Attitudes towards the recruitment of disabled people**

(all respondents) Attitude towards recruitment of disabled people	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Actively encourage job applications from disabled people	6	5	7	6
No particular view or policy for or against recruiting disabled people	86	90	90	86
We would not consider recruiting a disabled person	4	3	2	4
Depends on the disability	2	1	1	2
Other	1	0	1	1
Don't know	0	1	1	0
Unweighted total (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

There is some variation between sectors in attitudes towards the employment of disabled people (Table A.13), which is broadly consistent with some of the earlier sectoral findings. In particular, employers in the public sector are much more likely than other

employers to have an approach of positively encouraging applications from disabled people.

Perhaps surprisingly, however, there appears to be no correlation between a positive attitude to the recruitment of disabled people, and the likelihood that an employer will have or have had in the past, any disabled employees (Table A.14).

### Case-studies

Once again, these patterns were confirmed in the case-studies.

Thus, in the Northern Ireland case-studies, none of the businesses actively encouraged applications from disabled people, and some respondents made it clear that they thought the suggestion that they might was an 'odd' one. A typical response to the question on this, was along the lines of "... well, we wouldn't actively **discourage applications from disabled people**". Most could not think of reasons why they would want actively to encourage such applications, although a couple of businesses said that although they had not previously considered it, they might do so in the future, to make sure that they were complying with legislation, and were seen to be 'equal opportunities-friendly'.

Similarly, in the Sussex case-studies, none of the businesses interviewed encouraged disabled people to apply, and none wanted to. A typical response was, "*I don't encourage them, but I don't discourage them, and wouldn't want to.*" In some cases, however, illustrations given as evidence of not discouraging disabled applicants were suggestive of the extent to which disabled people may sometimes be disadvantaged in the application process. Thus one respondent commented: "*If they send in a good application form, and come in and interview well, and they are competent to do the job, then we can do business, and their disability will not matter.*" A common view was that taking this kind of position was sufficient to show that the employer was doing enough to welcome disabled applicants. In exploring with respondents whether and how they might, if necessary, assist a disabled person in completing an application, or in taking a test, respondents expressed both surprise that this might be expected, and concern about how much they might have to provide/change to enable an individual to demonstrate their suitability for the job.

Only three organisations actually had a policy actively to encourage disabled applicants. Two of these were voluntary sector organisations in Glasgow, and it was clear that their voluntary sector nature and the fact that their clients included disabled people were influences on their having such a policy. The other organisation, in Wales, reported that they had actively sought disabled job applicants through a local Jobcentre.

Two case-study organisations in London said that, in the event of recruitment taking place, they would be happy to consider disabled job applicants nominated by the local Jobcentre, the implication being that the Employment Service has a responsibility to provide disabled job applicants rather than the employer seeking actively to encourage applications from disabled people.

Looking at the small minority of employers who do claim to encourage disabled people to apply for jobs (Table 3.12), the most frequently used

**Table 3.12: Methods used to encourage disabled job applicants**

(businesses claiming to encourage applications from disabled people) Methods used to encourage applications from disabled people	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19)%	Large (20-49)%	
Specific request to Jobcentre/Careers Office	25	38	29	25
Job advertisement welcoming disabled applicants	34	1	49	34
Notify Employment Service Disability Service Team, or Disability Employment Adviser	0	1	0	0
Contact with voluntary sector/charity	6	10	3	6
Contact with educational institutions ( <i>eg</i> schools, colleges, training and rehabilitation centres)	3	1	3	3
Use of disability symbol/logo in job advertisement	1	11	0	1
Contact with local employer network for disabled people (or Employers Forum on Disability)	0	0	0	0
Contact local Training and Enterprise Council/Local Enterprise Council	0	0	1	0
Contact with chamber of commerce, Business Link, or small business organisation	0	0	0	0
Word of mouth	0	18	0	0
Other	6	29	12	7
None	19	11	17	19
Don't know	17	10	12	16
No answer	3	1	0	3
Unweighted total (n=100%)	39	20	24	83

*Note: columns total to more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one method*

ways of doing this are through specific mention in job advertisements, or through specific requests to the Employment Service.

Among the very small proportion of survey respondents who stated explicitly that job applications from disabled people would *not* be considered, a variety of reasons were given (Table 3.13).

Two reasons predominated. These related to the perceived ability of a disabled person to do the job, and to concerns about the 'health and safety' of the disabled individual.

**Table 3.13: Reasons given for not considering disabled job applicants**

(respondents who would not consider applications from disabled people) Reasons for not considering applications from disabled people	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
A disabled person would have lower productivity at work	9	0	0	8
The cost of adapting premises or equipment would be too expensive	4	0	30	4
The disabled person would make demands on the time and support of colleagues	5	0	0	5
A disabled person simply could not do the job	55	85	67	55
Management time would be taken up with dealing with the needs of the disabled person	0	0	0	0
We would be concerned about the health and safety of a disabled person in our organisation	37	30	67	37
We would be concerned about the reaction of other staff to a disabled employee	0	0	0	0
Other reasons	0	24	0	0
Not Answered	17	0	3	16
Unweighted total (n=100%)	17	6	4	27

*Note: columns total to more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one reason*

### Case-studies

These issues were also explored in the case-studies. Respondents identified the following as the main reasons for not encouraging disabled job applicants.

- unsuitability for certain types of work
- inaccessible premises
- fear of compensation claims

- health and safety considerations, and
- lack of flexibility within the organisation, and the need for employees to multi-task.

Taking each of these reasons in turn, a common concern was that disabled employees or job applicants would be unsuitable for certain types of work; they themselves would not be able to cope, or there would be external factors which would make their position unsuitable. Some were concerned that disabled people would be unable to carry out the duties for which they were being employed. Physically demanding work was thought, by many, to be particularly unsuitable. The general view of a number of organisations visited in Wales, for example, was that the nature of a business determines the 'type' of disabled person they can employ. For example, it would not be possible to offer a commercial driving job to a person with a heart condition. Another company reported that although not discouraging disabled people from applying for jobs, they felt that there were limits to what disabled people could do, *"... not so much in terms of the cost of physical adaptations, but rather the difficulty in employing people with mobility and sensory impairments in jobs such as hairdressing."*

It was notable that several of the businesses which involved contact with the public (eg a domestic cleaning company, a supermarket and a café) raised concerns about certain disabilities being 'off-putting' to the public. Thus the cleaning company, for example, was concerned at the idea of people with learning disabilities going into customers' houses *"I would have to employ an 'acceptable' person"*. In contrast, office-based employers were typically more amenable to the idea of recruiting disabled people, and raised fewer issues of the 'suitability' of disabled people to work in their organisations.

As mentioned earlier, inaccessible premises were often seen as an obstacle to employing disabled people. One employer commented *"... although nobody has applied, if they did the building might not be suitable."*

It is worth noting that a few employers expressed reservations about employing disabled people because of a fear of 'compensation claims' and being 'taken to court'. Questioning of these organisations often suggested that the main fear related to the financial and legal consequences of a disabled person claiming that working for the business had worsened their disability.

A large number of businesses were concerned with the health and safety implications of employing a disabled person. In one case an employer *“had to release”* an employee with epilepsy due to concerns that she might have an epileptic fit when alone in the office. He felt that there were health and safety implications inherent in employing someone with this type of condition. An employer from a printing company said that in some instances, *“disabled employees may present a safety risk when using machinery.”*

A common explanation given for this concern with health and safety was that the employers would not wish there to be any danger of the employee injuring themselves (or, in one case [a café] injuring a customer).

Some of the smallest employers were more likely to mention the need for ‘flexibility’ and ‘multi-tasking’ in their organisations and to raise these as potential ‘barriers’ to the recruitment of disabled people. The café proprietor, for example, said that although there were tasks (such as cleaning tables) which they felt could be undertaken by someone with learning difficulties, they also argued that they would not be able to ‘muck in’ and carry out the full range of other tasks required. They would therefore be standing around for periods of time, which would not be acceptable.

Following on from this, concerns were also raised by a number of employers in relation to extra demands on colleagues’ time (especially in terms of covering and arranging cover).

One business identified the factors they would consider in deciding between a disabled job applicant and an otherwise similar non-disabled applicant, as:

- the duration and stability of the condition *eg* if “it’s long-standing and stable, then it’s less likely to get worse”
- the possible effects of the disabled person (*eg* someone with mental health problems) on other employees, especially immediate co-workers
- any cost and disruption associated with necessary changes to the working environment
- the skills the person offered.

It should be stressed that many of the respondents were not categorical in their responses to these questions – a common view was that it would be up to the job applicant to explain about their disability and inform the employer what kind of help would be necessary. A point which emerged strongly in this context is that many employers would need help in assessing the extent of the disability and its likely impact on the person’s ability to carry out a job. Several said that they would need to ‘see’ the potential applicant doing the job, to be sure.

### 3.8 Influence on attitudes of external support/funding

The survey asked whether the availability of financial or other supports would incline those who said they would not consider disabled applicants to re-consider. The results are shown in Table 3.14, and should be interpreted with care, given the relatively small numbers of respondents to which they refer.

**Table 3.14: Effect of external support on willingness to consider disabled job applicants**

(respondents who would not consider applications from disabled people)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
<b>If financial or other support was available would respondents consider employing a disabled person?</b>				
Yes	0	0	0	0
Possibly ( <i>eg</i> depends on how much funding, or nature of support offered)	19	15	3	19
No	64	85	97	65
Not Answered	17	0	0	16
Unweighted total (n=100%)	17	6	4	27

The Table shows that:

- across the sample as whole, one in five of those who would not otherwise consider disabled applicants, indicated that support might incline them;
- the prospect of support was more persuasive to those in smallest and medium-sized businesses;

- however, the majority indicated that the availability of such support would not influence their consideration of applications from disabled people.

### **Case-studies**

The case-studies shed some light on this issue. The effect of external support on the willingness to consider job applicants was also dependent on the amount of funding available and the nature of the support offered. Views were split between those that did not feel support would make any difference, and those that would welcome (particularly financial) support.

Where employers felt that support would not make any difference it was argued that no financial support would compensate for lower productivity and lost hours (through sickness), in cases where these were an issue with a disabled employee. It was also argued that for certain disabilities, financial support would make no difference (*eg* a travel agency argued that someone with a hearing impairment would not be able to deal with customers, and that no amount of adjustment or financial support would tackle this).

There was some evidence that attitudes on this issue varied according to the nature (and profitability) of the business. Thus some professional organisations with high levels of earnings (*eg* a private dental practice) felt that they could adequately provide and finance adjustments for disabled employees. Others which are less well-resourced (*eg* respondents in the voluntary sector), argued that financial support would be necessary.

Despite these attitudes, there were a significant number of employers who stated that they would welcome financial assistance. Generally this was felt to be particularly useful in the case of physical and structural adjustments. One employer, for example, commented that financial assistance would be useful for widening doorways and installing a ramp for wheelchair access. In addition a number of organisations said that they would welcome expert advice on accommodating people with a range of disabilities.

Attitudes towards existing employees becoming disabled are dealt with below. However, it is worth noting at this point that most respondents said that they would go to some lengths to support an existing employee, and that they would do this whether or not financial support

was available. Less flexibility was evident with regard to new recruits, however. One employer commented: “... *if the disabled person can do the job as well as a non-disabled person, I don't think I should get anything extra. However, if the Government said that we needed to employ someone that would be off sick at regular intervals, I would need to be compensated for that.*”

### **3.9 Attitudes towards the retention of existing employees who become disabled**

In Chapter 4 we examine the question of adjustments which have been made for disabled people, both for new recruits and towards existing employees who become disabled. The case-studies in particular, however, explored respondents' more general attitudes towards the retention of existing employees who become disabled.

#### **Case-studies**

A significant number of the employers interviewed had had some experience of an existing employee becoming disabled. Very few reported that the individuals concerned had left the organisation. In fact, in some cases adjustments had been made to retain the employee. In London, for example, the managing director of a bakery reported that an employee, with a progressive illness, had offered her resignation believing that she could no longer work. The informant convinced the individual to stay in employment, assuring her that the job she presently performed could be changed or modified and her hours adjusted over time as was appropriate or necessary. A cleaning company in Northern Ireland, for example, had had the experience of a supervisor who developed a heart condition. The respondent said of the employee that “*he was kept because of his experience*”.

It would appear that, in the main, case-study organisations have positive attitudes towards employees who become disabled during the course of their employment. There is, however, limited evidence from our case-studies as to what steps employers take in this type of situation, other than allowing individuals time-off for treatment and recovery in the event of injury or illness. This issue is explored in more depth in the following chapter.

It was often considered good personnel policy to allow staff ‘reasonable’ time off for hospital and clinic appointments (although this

attitude had nothing to do with the introduction of the DDA, even for those covered). It is probable that where companies have experienced employees falling ill, they are more likely to have developed policies around time-off. For example, a printing company, where two company directors experienced heart attacks, has a policy to give staff considerable time-off from serious illness together with a gradual return to work. Unsurprisingly most respondents reported that they would respond with understanding and support to an employee that became ill or disabled.

## 4. Adjustments made for Disabled Recruits or Employees

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The survey included a range of questions about adjustments which employers had made, or would consider making for disabled employees.

### 4.1 Employment of disabled people without need for adjustments

First, however, we asked those small businesses which have employed disabled people, whether they have (or have had) disabled employees, for whom they did **not** need to make adjustments. Between half and two thirds of them (depending on the size of organisation) have had disabled employees whose employment did not necessitate any adjustments and did not generate any additional support needs (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Employment of disabled people not requiring adjustments or additional support**

(businesses which have, or have had disabled employees)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Has respondent ever employed a disabled person for whom they did <i>not</i> have to make adjustments or provide additional support?				
Yes	51	63	61	52
No	48	36	38	47
Don't know	1	1	1	1
Unweighted total (n=100%)	239	167	183	589

#### Case-studies

The survey findings are borne out by the case-studies. In many cases examples were cited of disabled employees not requiring adjustments or additional support. Thus, for example, a grocery store employing 18 staff said that no adjustments were made for an employee with

diabetes, as sufficient flexibility in working hours and patterns, available to all staff, means that the individual can work hours to suit her needs.

Where adjustments were made they tended to be minimal and did not lead to significant disruption *eg* permitting staff 'reasonable' time-off to attend hospital or clinic appointments.

## 4.2 Adjustments made to recruit or retain disabled employees

On the other side of the coin, the same group (with disabled employees now or in the past) was then asked whether they had ever taken positive steps either to recruit a disabled person, or to retain an employee who became disabled.

While such positive steps were not common, adjustments to keep existing employees were more common than were adjustments made in order to recruit disabled people. (Table 4.2). Depending on the size of the business, 15-26 per cent of businesses had made positive adjustments to keep an existing employee whereas less than one in ten had made adjustments (to the job, working environment or working conditions) or provided additional support in order to recruit a disabled person.

**Table 4.2: Incidence of adjustments or additional support provided to recruit/retain disabled employees**

(businesses which have, or have had disabled employees)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Has respondent ever taken positive steps to recruit a disabled person, or retain an employee who became disabled ( <i>eg</i> by making adjustments or providing additional support)?				
Yes, to recruit a disabled person	6	8	9	6
Yes, to retain an employee who became disabled	15	23	26	16
No	72	69	61	71
Don't know	8	2	5	8
Unweighted total (n=100%)	230	167	183	580

*Note: columns total to more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one response*

## Case-studies

Very few of the case-study employers had actually made adjustments for the purpose of recruiting disabled employees. Discussions therefore focused more on the feasibility of making such adjustments, and adjustments that had been made in order to retain staff who had become disabled.

Several respondents queried the feasibility of making adjustments (an example was given, by a Northern Ireland employer, of a production line which could not, it was argued, be adapted to make adjustments for a disabled person, without a negative impact on productivity). One of the few examples of an employer making adjustments at the recruitment stage was a financial services company which adapted a recruitment test to accommodate an applicant with dyslexia. The applicant was successful, and once their employment commenced the firm provided the individual with additional administrative support to accommodate their disability.

There was, however, a reasonably high incidence of employers making adjustments for existing employees that were (or had become) disabled. Generally speaking, the employers interviewed were much more willing to make adjustments for existing employees that were seen as 'tried and tested' than to 'take a risk' spending money making adjustments for someone that they were not sure would even be any good at the job. Indeed several of them had direct experience of a member of staff acquiring a long-term health problem and of making various adjustments to retain them.

The type and amount of tasks required of an employee with a learning disability working in a primary sector establishment were adjusted, for example. Similarly, in another business, cover for an employee undergoing chemotherapy treatment was paid for; and minor adjustments were made for an employee with dyslexia working in an electronics firm.

Most employees in receipt of adjustments are still employed by these organisations and there is no evidence that respondents had to go through a complicated and/or time consuming or costly process to accommodate these staff. Several employers, for example, talked about adjustments coming within standard employment practices applied routinely, for example through sick pay schemes and working arrangements which can include flexitime and part-time working.

Those respondents who had made adjustments to recruit or retain disabled employees were asked to describe in more detail what they actually did (Table 4.3). The minority of respondents able to address this question and the small numbers making use of certain of the adjustments make it difficult to draw a general picture here. The following statements may, however, be taken as indicative:

- Adjustments involving material changes (*ie* providing special equipment and modifying the workplace) were made by fewer than one in five of those making adjustments.
- More common were changes in work organisation, such as re-allocating responsibilities and changing working patterns or hours.
- The type of adjustment varied to some extent with the size of the business. For example, it was more common for small and

**Table 4.3: Nature of adjustments or additional support provided to recruit/retain disabled employees**

(businesses that made adjustments to recruit or retain a disabled person)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Steps taken				
Provide special equipment	19	12	7	18
Modify workplace/premises	16	10	19	16
Provide flexible working patterns or working hours	34	36	36	35
Alter work organisation ( <i>eg</i> by transferring a disabled person to another job or re-designing working duties)	14	19	27	15
Employ job-sharing	2	0	0	2
Use homeworking	0	0	2	0
Allow for special leave necessitated because of the disability	9	7	0	9
Provide additional on-the-job support or assistance	11	24	13	11
Provide training/retraining	1	16	9	2
Provide counselling	2	0	2	2
'Partnering' them up with a non-disabled person or mentor	4	3	4	4
No steps taken	6	8	2	6
Other (please specify)	11	7	8	11
Unweighted total (n=100%)	55	54	66	175

*Note: columns total to more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one adjustment*

medium-sized businesses, compared with larger organisations, to allow special leave related to disabilities.

### **Case-studies**

The findings from the case-studies concur with the survey in terms of the types of adjustments that are made. Most adjustments that had been made by case-study employers were neither costly, nor time-consuming. The most common adjustments which took place would involve changes to working time (*eg* allowing someone time off for medical tests or allowing employees to work from home).

In cases where employers were flexible about the hours or days worked, that flexibility most often reflected a general policy towards employment (*eg* that they wished to be 'family-friendly'), rather than a policy specifically designed to cater for disability. It was very rare for employers to make any adjustments to the physical environment.

In Northern Ireland, for example, the most common adjustments made (for existing employees who had acquired a long-term health problem) involved allowing these employees more flexible hours, and redistributing some work to other colleagues. Similarly, among the Glasgow-based case-study employers, most of those which had experience of existing employees becoming disabled were willing and able to adapt working conditions (*eg* via encouraging home-working) or the working environment. In one exceptional case, however, an employee's becoming disabled had been used as a reason for terminating their employment. In one Glasgow employer (a financial intermediary) there was a clear example of the employer altering the recruitment process (through allowing a person with dyslexia to make verbal rather than written responses in a test) as well as the work environment.

Adjustments made by London-based case-study employers have all been relatively minor, and most could be seen as being of a nature associated with 'good practice' personnel policies, such as allowing time-off to attend rehabilitation, extended sick leave and some flexibility in working hours/patterns. The managing director of a television production company in London, employing six people, said he was able to employ someone with arthritis by introducing flexible working patterns and adjusting office furniture layout.

Among the Sussex case-studies, none had had to make adjustments to the physical working environment. Such adjustments that had been made were outlined as being adjustments to: a) managers', teamworkers' and the individual's expectations; b) scheduling and content of work; c) the amount and consistency of responsibility given to the person in question.

Adjustments made by Wales-based case-study employers were concerned exclusively with what the DDA terms 'arrangements' for employing disabled people rather than adjustments to premises.

More generally, whether in recruitment or retention, respondents argued that there was, in most cases, little or no need to adapt the work environment to accommodate a person's disability.

Returning to the survey results, the vast majority of those that have made adjustments in order to recruit or retain disabled employees, have found it easy or very easy to do so (Table 4.4), with only around a fifth claiming that making the adjustments caused the organisation any degree of difficulty.

**Table 4.4: Perceived ease of making adjustments to recruit/retain disabled employees**

(businesses that made adjustments to recruit or retain a disabled person) In practice how easy was it to make the adjustment(s)?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Very easy	31	20	27	30
Fairly easy	34	45	40	35
Neither easy nor difficult	9	7	7	9
Fairly difficult	20	19	22	20
Very difficult	2	5	0	2
Don't know/can't say	4	5	3	4
Unweighted total (n=100%)	55	54	66	175

### Case-studies

In the cases where adjustments had been made, the majority of case-study organisations reported little difficulty in those adjustments for disabled employees or job applicants. Some did however feel that

funding extended sick leave for employees with serious illness was quite a large financial burden to them.

There is clearly a difference in respondents' beliefs about the ease of adjustments (when they have been made), and their perceptions about hypothetical adjustments. Most interviewees tended spontaneously to think of physical adjustments and for most of them these adjustments would be difficult. On the whole it was perceived to be difficult to make adjustments for people with mobility problems (such as wheelchair users). Several respondents mentioned this, with concerns focusing on: the fear of the costs of making physical changes; fears related to security of the building (*eg* an extra entrance to secure); and issues related to sharing property with other businesses (*eg* would other businesses share the cost of adaptation to accommodate a disabled employee from one business?).

Around a third of those who had made adjustments (Table 4.5) indicated that the adjustments involved a direct financial cost to the business.

**Table 4.5: Whether financial costs incurred in making adjustments**

(businesses that made adjustments to recruit or retain a disabled person)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Did the adjustment(s) have a direct financial cost for the business				
Yes	35	39	40	35
No	63	58	60	63
Don't know	2	3	0	2
Unweighted total (n=100%)	55	54	66	175

Looking first at the cost per employee for whom adjustments were made, and where those adjustments had an identifiable cost, the average cost was £722 in the last year (Table 4.6 – top). There were considerable variations between sizes of firm in this respect, but given the small numbers of respondents on which this table is based, not too much should be made of these variations.

It should also be stressed, moreover, that the majority of respondents either did not need to make adjustments or made them without incurring a cost. If we look at businesses which made adjustments for which they could identify the cost, or for which there was no cost, and look at the average cost of adjustments per disabled employee in those

**Table 4.6: Amount of financial cost incurred in making adjustments**

(businesses with disabled employees currently, who have made adjustments)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All £
	Small (1-14) £	Medium (15-19) £	Large (20-49) £	
<b>Cost, per disabled employee for whom adjustments were made (where adjustments had a financial cost and that cost was known).</b>				
Maximum cost	7,000	17,500	10,000	17,500
Minimum cost	1	1	1	1
Mean cost	310	4,740	2,562	722
Unweighted total (n=100%)	12	12	7	31
<b>Cost, per disabled employee of adjustments made (all employers who made adjustments, where cost was known, including cases where no cost was incurred, and including disabled employees in those organisations for whom no adjustments were made).</b>				
Maximum cost	7,000	17,500	5,000	17,500
Minimum cost	0	0	0	0
Mean cost	76	1,583	351	184
Unweighted total (n=100%)	25	31	32	88

firms (including those employees for which no adjustments have been necessary), it is clear that the average cost falls considerably to just £184 per disabled employee in the last year (Table 4.6 – bottom).

Firms making adjustments to recruit or retain disabled employees were also asked whether any indirect or non-financial costs had been incurred in the process—*eg* costs relating to additional management time, or increased workload for other staff. More than half of them (in all size categories) say that no such indirect costs were involved (Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7: Indirect costs incurred in making adjustments to recruit/retain disabled employees**

(businesses that made adjustments to recruit or retain a disabled person)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
<b>Which, if any, indirect (non-financial) costs were incurred from the adjustment(s)?</b>				
Loss of output/lower productivity	15	14	19	15
Additional supervisory or management time	12	7	8	11
Additional workload for other colleagues	14	13	5	13
Training	3	2	2	2
Other indirect costs	4	3	4	4
No indirect costs identified	57	56	63	57
Unweighted total (n=100%)	55	54	66	175

Where indirect costs were identified there seem to have been few differences in the experiences of small, medium and large-sized businesses. Lowered productivity, additional work for colleagues and additional work for supervisors or managers were the more commonly cited indirect costs.

### **Case-studies**

The evidence from the case-studies on costs of adjustments is limited. Thus, in the Northern Ireland case-studies, for example, none had incurred direct financial costs (although some had incurred indirect costs in redistributing workload to other staff), and discussion was therefore limited to a consideration of what costs employers would be prepared to incur in different circumstances. The travel agency stated they would be much more likely to incur the (majority of) the cost of adaptations for an existing employee (and would fund 50 per cent or more in such cases). The respondent in this case argued that *“a couple of thousand pounds”* would be reasonable to spend on an existing employee, but *“anything over £10,000 would be too much; we would be prepared to change shop fittings, but would draw the line at structural changes”*.

A general point made was that willingness to incur cost would be greater in the case of existing employees than for new recruits, and even in the former case it would also depend on the employee’s track record.

Only a very small number of respondents had used any external support to recruit or retain a disabled employee, and this should be borne in mind in interpreting the following findings. Of the 175 businesses (in the unweighted sample) that made adjustments to recruit or retain disabled employees, only one in five had drawn on any external information, advice or support in helping them to do so (Table 4.8). In most of these cases, the external support did not extend to financial assistance (Table 4.9). In the few cases (eleven in total) where such financial support had been used it came mainly from central government sources (such as the Employment Service’s *Access to Work* scheme).

**Table 4.8: Use of external support in making adjustments to recruit or retain disabled employees**

(businesses that made adjustments to recruit or retain a disabled person)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Was any external information, support or advice received in making adjustments?				
Yes	21	24	20	21
No	79	74	80	79
Don't know	0	4	0	0
Unweighted total (n=100%)	55	54	66	175

**Table 4.9: Receipt of financial support in making adjustments to recruit or retain disabled employees**

(businesses that received external support in making adjustments)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Did the assistance include any grants or financial support to help in making adjustments?				
Yes	23	12	19	22
No	77	71	81	77
Don't know	0	17	0	1
Unweighted total (n=100%)	12	15	17	44

Although the use of external support is not widespread, in cases where it has been used, most of the organisations in question regard it as important or very important in enabling them to recruit or retain disabled employees (Table 4.10, below).

### Case-studies

The case-studies reinforced the picture drawn from the survey data. Indeed, use of external support and advice in making adjustments for disabled employees was virtually non-existent among the case-study employers. Thus, for example, none of the nine Northern Ireland case-studies had sought or used such external advice or support.

**Table 4.10: Perceived importance of external support received in recruitment/retention of disabled employees**

<b>(businesses that received external support in making adjustments)</b>		
<b>How important was the support in...</b>		<b>All size groups (%)</b>
Enabling business to recruit disabled employees (if appropriate)?		
Very important		33
Fairly important		0
Not important		67
Unweighted total (n=100%)		15
Enabling business to retain disabled employees (if appropriate)?		
Very important		39
Fairly important		46
Not important		15
Unweighted total (n=100%)		31

*Note: given the small number of cases, it is not appropriate to present these data separately by size group*

## 5. Benefits of Employing Disabled People

The survey and case-studies explored the (perceived and experienced) benefits to the business of both recruiting disabled employees and retaining existing employees who become disabled.

Only a minority of those questioned (between 13 and 18 per cent dependent on the size of business) could see (or had experienced) any advantages to the business in recruiting disabled employees (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1: Perceived benefits to business of recruiting disabled employees**

(all respondents)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Does (would) recruiting disabled employees have any advantages for your business?				
Yes	15	13	18	15
No	66	70	70	66
Don't know	19	17	11	19
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

There were some variations by sector in whether or not employers perceived benefits to the recruitment of disabled people (Appendix – Table A.15), with respondents in the public sector being much more likely than others to identify such benefits. At a regional level it is also of some interest to note, that with the exception of Northern Ireland (which also had a relatively high proportion identifying such benefits), it was generally employers in the tighter labour markets of the south east which were most likely to identify benefits (Appendix – Table A.16).

Respondents who currently have disabled employees, were more likely to identify benefits in recruiting disabled people (Table 5.2). It is unclear which way the causality runs here, however: are firms with experience of employing disabled people more likely to become aware of the benefits through experience, or are firms with a more positive attitude to the possible benefits of doing so more likely to recruit disabled people in the first place?

**Table 5.2: Perceived benefits to business of recruiting disabled employees by whether or not the business has disabled employees**

(all respondents)	Benefits to recruiting disabled employees?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Disabled employees				
Respondents who have disabled employees	19	66	14	349
Respondents with no disabled employees	14	66	20	626
Don't know	0	100	0	30
Total %	15	66	19	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table.*

### Case-studies

Within the case-studies there was a mixed response to the question of the benefits of employing disabled people. In some areas (*eg* London) most employers identified some benefits, whereas in Northern Ireland (in contrast to the survey findings) none of the case-study employers were able spontaneously to identify any benefits (once again several respondents saw this as an 'odd question'). Having said this, further questioning did, in some cases, elicit benefits.

Among those who identified (actual or expected) advantages from recruiting disabled employees, the most common benefits cited related

**Table 5.3: Specific business benefits identified in recruiting disabled employees**

(businesses identifying advantages in recruiting disabled employees)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
What are the advantages?				
Benefits through improved personnel practices (recruitment, training <i>etc.</i> )	8	8	7	8
Benefits through improved retention and reductions in recruitment costs <i>etc.</i>	4	0	10	4
Benefits through improved absence and attendance records	2	0	0	2
Benefits through improved staff relations and morale	32	26	41	32
Benefits through improved image of the business to customers	20	28	13	20
Skills	33	20	11	32
Loyal or hard workers	30	31	11	29
Other benefits	23	15	27	23
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	40	29	38	107

*Note: columns total to more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one benefit*

**Table 5.4: Perceived benefits to business of retaining employees who become disabled**

(all respondents)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
<b>Does (would) retaining existing employees who become disabled have any advantages for your business?</b>				
Yes	32	35	25	31
No	44	48	54	44
Don't know	25	17	21	25
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

to impacts on staff relations and morale, the skills which disabled people bring to the business, their hard work and loyalty, and to the external image of the business (Table 5.3).

A higher proportion of respondents (a third or more), however, could see advantages to the business in retaining existing employees who became disabled (Table 5.4), with the reason cited most frequently relating to the retention of key skills in the organisation, followed by improved staff relations and morale (Table 5.5).

**Table 5.5: Specific business benefits identified in retaining employees who become disabled**

(businesses identifying advantages in retaining disabled employees)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
<b>What are the advantages?</b>				
Benefits through improved personnel practices (recruitment, training <i>etc.</i> )	17	16	31	17
Benefits through improved retention and reductions in recruitment costs <i>etc.</i>	16	20	14	16
Benefits through improved absence and attendance records	2	6	5	2
Benefits through improved staff relations and morale	18	29	42	19
Benefits through improved image of the business to customers	15	10	23	15
Skills	40	35	22	40
Loyal or hard workers	6	3	0	6
Other benefits	18	15	50	18
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	87	32	28	147

*Note: columns total to more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one benefit*

**Table 5.6: Perceived benefits to business of retaining disabled employees – by whether or not the organisation has a formal equal opportunities/disability policy**

(all respondents)	Benefits to retaining disabled employees?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	EO/disability policy	Yes	No	
Respondents who have an EO/disability policy	42	37	20	237
Respondents who do not have an EO/disability policy	29	47	24	690
Don't know	36	27	37	78
Total %	32	44	24	1,005

Table 5.6 shows that businesses with a formal, written policy on equal opportunities which covers disability were much more likely than organisations who did not, to identify benefits in the retention of disabled employees.

Interestingly, however, and in contrast to the earlier finding with regard to the benefits of *recruiting* employees, there was no evidence that having disabled employees made any difference to whether an employer perceived benefits in retaining existing employees (Table 5.7). Although, as with benefits of recruitment, it is the public sector which records the highest proportion identifying benefits of retention (Appendix – Table A.17), there is much less of a clear regional pattern (Appendix – Table A.18).

Thus it seems that positive attitudes towards the recruitment of disabled employees (in the sense of seeing benefits in it) may be

**Table 5.7: Perceived benefits to business of retaining disabled employees,**

(all respondents)	Benefits to retaining disabled employees?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Disabled employees	Yes	No	
Respondents who have disabled employees	31	47	22	349
Respondents with no disabled employees	32	43	26	626
Don't know	11	78	11	30
Total %	31	44	24	1,005

associated with labour market considerations and prior experience of employing disabled people, whereas positive attitudes towards the retention of existing employees who become disabled is both more common and associated with more evolved policies on equal opportunities.

### **Case-studies**

The case-studies were revealing about the attitudes towards employing disabled people. Some of the benefits cited fit with the findings from the survey, while others reveal additional (and sometimes not altogether well-informed) attitudes. The benefits elicited from the case-study organisations can be grouped as follows:

- productivity-related benefits
- benefits related to the quality of recruits
- benefits relating to a company policy of achievement of a diverse work force
- improving employment relations
- retaining valued employees
- ethical and moral considerations, and
- benefits relating to recruitment *ie* a greater probability of recruiting the right person to the right job.

The attitudes underlying these responses were explored in more depth. In Northern Ireland where some companies faced skill shortages, it was agreed that non-discrimination would ensure a wider pool of recruits and make it less difficult to employ the right person for the job (this applied, for example, in the case of an electrical design company in Northern Ireland). Some case-study organisations in Wales also suggested that labour shortages were a good reason to cast the recruitment net as widely as possible which would inevitably mean recruiting more disabled people if they had the necessary skills.

Occasionally a benefit was seen in terms of a disabled employee being able to enhance services for disabled customers — thus a travel agency cited a competitor agency who employed a wheelchair user, who had proved an asset in advising other disabled travellers of the suitability and accessibility of destinations and holidays.

Some employers believed that disabled employees represented better quality recruits. For one employer this was based on a belief that disabled people had often had to work harder than non-disabled people to counter their disabilities, and this was seen, therefore, as a positive signal of character and attitude. Similarly, two other respondents argued that disabled people often compensated for their disability by developing other strengths and perspectives, and that this could benefit an employer which was inclusive in its recruitment practices. Several employers stated that disabled employees are loyal, committed, reliable and have good attendance rates and low turnover rates. Having said this, one employer expressed some concern about the perceived wisdom that disabled people are loyal workers, believing this to be somewhat patronising and often creating difficulties for individual employees.

Other employers believed that the employment of disabled people was part of the company's desire to achieve a diverse workforce. As a voluntary sector employer commented: *"as diverse as it gets' is one of our slogans ... there would be real benefits in having somebody here who has a different perspective or experience of the world ... we'd have to be careful, though, that we didn't just set them up as an expert on disability."*

Benefits through improved staff relations and morale were also mentioned with one company believing that employing disabled people has a motivating effect on the employer and co-workers. They feel they are 'helping' the disabled person in a real and meaningful way.

The idea that there was a ethical or moral obligation around the employment of disabled people also emerged. Two employers in rural areas stressed that they felt a sense of responsibility to employ disabled people where they could. Stereotypical views of disabled people also emerged, however, with both businesses requiring a wide range of skills, which included (in the words of one respondent) *"repetitive, routine, bottom-end jobs, perfect for people about whom one has reduced performance expectations."* Both of these employers expressed an expectation that with increasing mechanisation and technology such jobs will disappear, thereby reducing the likelihood of their employing disabled people.

## 6. The DDA and the Employment Provisions (Part II)

### 6.1 Knowledge and awareness of the DDA

Nearly two thirds of respondents had heard of the DDA prior to the survey (Table 6.1).

**Table 6.1: Reported awareness of the DDA**

(all respondents) Has respondent heard of the DDA?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Yes	62	68	63	62
No	37	32	37	38
Don't know/not sure	1	0	0	1
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

Awareness was highest in the public sector, where 90 per cent of respondents had prior awareness of the Act (Appendix – Table A.19). There were also regional variations in awareness, with small employers in the West Midlands and Scotland having the highest level of prior awareness (75 and 74 per cent respectively had heard of the Act before the survey), and those in the North West and Merseyside having the lowest (47 per cent had heard of the Act) – see Appendix, Table A.20.

It is notable (Table 6.2) that although employers which have disabled employees are more likely to have heard of the Act than those who do not have disabled employees, the difference is only a small one (66 per cent compared with 61 per cent).

**Table 6.2: Reported awareness of the DDA, by whether business has or has had disabled employees**

(all respondents)	Heard of the DDA?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
<b>Disabled employees</b>				
Respondents who have disabled employees	66	34	0	349
Respondents with no disabled employees	61	38	1	626
Don't know	62	38	0	30
Total %	62	37	1	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

Those who had heard of the DDA prior to the survey were asked how aware they feel they are of the employment provisions of the Act. Fewer than half of this group felt they were aware or very aware of the employment provisions, and the level of awareness was somewhat higher in the medium-sized and large firms than among the smallest ones (Table 6.3).

**Table 6.3: Perceived level of awareness of the DDA's employment provisions**

(businesses that have heard of the DDA prior to the survey)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
<b>How aware is respondent of DDA employment provisions?</b>				
Very aware	6	13	12	6
Fairly aware	38	40	41	38
Not very aware	39	40	41	39
Not at all aware	15	7	6	15
Don't know/not sure	2	0	0	2
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	322	173	170	665

There are also higher reported levels of awareness of the employment provisions among employers who have disabled employees, compared with those who do not (Appendix – Table A.21), and among those who have a policy actively to encourage applications from disabled people, compared with those who do not (Appendix – Table A.22).

One of the clearest tests of an employer's awareness of the employment provisions is whether or not they know if they are covered by those provisions. Table 6.4 shows that a clear majority of employers (close to three quarters) in all three of the size categories are unsure whether or not they were covered by the employment provisions. Only

**Table 6.4: Employers' perceptions of whether they are covered by the DDA's employment provisions**

<b>(all respondents)</b>	<b>Organisation size (no. of employees)</b>			<b>All %</b>
	<b>Small (1-14) %</b>	<b>Medium (15-19) %</b>	<b>Large (20-49) %</b>	
<b>Does respondent believe they are covered or exempt from the employment provisions?</b>				
Covered	11	17	22	12
Exempt	16	13	7	16
Don't know/not sure	73	70	70	73
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

16 per cent of those employing fewer than 15 people know that they are exempt, while 11 per cent of them incorrectly believe that the employment provisions apply to them. Similarly only 17 per cent of those in the 15-19 employee group, and 22 per cent of those in the 20-plus employee group know that they are definitely covered, while 13 and seven per cent respectively in these groups incorrectly think they are exempt.

Looking at those who believe that they are covered by the provisions in Part II of the Act (irrespective of the correctness of that belief), only a very small minority believe that the size of the business is the reason for their being covered by the Act (Table 6.5).

**Table 6.5: Reasons for believing that businesses are covered by the DDA's employment provisions**

<b>(businesses believing they are covered by the employment provisions)</b>	<b>Organisation size (no. of employees)</b>			<b>All %</b>
	<b>Small (1-14) %</b>	<b>Medium (15-19) %</b>	<b>Large (20-49) %</b>	
<b>Why are they covered?</b>				
Reason to do with size of business	16	25	17	16
Reason to do with sector of business	12	0	17	12
Assumed that all businesses covered	30	25	17	29
No particular reason	2	0	0	2
Just assumed that this business covered	34	25	50	34
Told by another business/organisations that this business is covered	0	0	0	0
Other reason/Don't know	6	25	0	6
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	56	45	57	158

When it comes to those who believe they are exempt, the level of knowledge is slightly higher (Table 6.6). Thus nearly half of the small firms (fewer than 15 employees) correctly believing that they were exempt, understood that this was because of the size of the business. On the other hand, significant proportions of those with 15 or more employees who (falsely) think they are exempt, give a reason for their believed exemption which relates to their business activity or the sector they are in.

**Table 6.6: Reasons for believing that businesses are exempt from the DDA’s employment provisions**

(businesses believing that they are exempt from the employment provisions)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Why are they exempt				
Reason to do with size of business	45	33	0	44
Reason to do with sector of business	36	67	100	37
Don’t have any disabled staff	2	0	0	2
Lack of access/Lack of facilities	2	0	0	2
Just assumed that this business exempt	1	0	0	1
Told by another business/organisations that this business is exempt	0	0	0	0
Other reason/Don’t know	14	0	0	14
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	80	31	24	135

The small minority of businesses (of all sizes) who identified business size as a key reason for being covered or exempt, were asked what they believe the size threshold to be. As Table 6.7 shows, even among this small group, many of them do not give the correct size threshold (15 employees).

**Table 6.7: Employers’ knowledge of the size threshold for exemption from the DDA’s employment provisions**

(business citing business size as a reason for being covered or exempt)	
How many employees must a business have to be covered by the employment provisions?	All size groups %
15	15
20	5
Number greater than 20	6
Number between 15 and 20	0
Number smaller than 15	40
Don't know	34
Unweighted total (n=100%)	68

*Note: given the small number of cases, it is not appropriate to present these data separately by size group*

### **Case-studies**

The case-studies confirmed that knowledge and awareness of the Act was generally low among small employers. In line with the survey findings, although many claimed to have heard of the Act, when questioned further about their knowledge, few knew, or could remember, any details. Initial claims of knowledge varied across the case-study regions. Only one employer in Northern Ireland had heard of the Act (another two claimed a ‘vague awareness’ of the Act’s existence) This compares to all nine employers in London, who claimed some knowledge of the Act and around two-thirds of employers in Glasgow.

As we pointed out above, however, this awareness was not generally associated with detailed levels of knowledge. Only a small number of employers knew whether or not they were covered by the act (and if they did, this was often the only knowledge they possessed). Other employers were merely aware that they had duties under the Act, but were unable to cite the nature of these duties. The majority of employers in Sussex understood that the purpose of the Act was to legislate against the discrimination disabled people experience.

It is no surprise that the organisations that possessed the most extensive knowledge of the employment provisions of the act were two voluntary sector organisations. Very few of those respondents outside the voluntary sector had any understanding of the content of the DDA.

Where respondents had some insights into the content of the DDA, it was sometimes as a result of external factors, and often little to do with internal company policy. One employer, for example, knew about the content of the Act as it featured in a part-time degree for which he was studying. Similarly, a café proprietor (with five employees) knew about the Act and her obligations, through her previous role as a nurse, and contact with the mental health charity located next door. One interviewee, however, was able to pull out a one-page summary of the Act from their training manual.

## 6.2 Responses to the DDA

Employers that had heard of the DDA prior to the survey were asked whether, since the introduction of the Act, the business had reviewed or revised its policy or practice relating to the employment of disabled people (or, if appropriate, has introduced such a policy). As Table 6.8 shows, the majority (more than four fifths of the smallest firms, and around 70 per cent of the firms in scope of the Act) have made no such changes.

**Table 6.8: Changes to policy or practice following the introduction of the DDA**

(businesses that have heard of the DDA prior to the survey)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Has the business reviewed/revised policy or practice towards employing disabled people since Dec. 1996?				
Yes, reviewed policy/practice	6	12	11	7
Yes, reviewed and changed policy/practice	5	6	6	5
Yes, introduced a policy	3	6	6	3
No	82	69	72	82
Don't know	3	6	6	3
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	322	173	170	665

As Table A.23 (in the Appendix) shows, the likelihood of having made such changes in response to the Act was slightly higher than average in the public sector, and the 'other services' sector.

Table 6.9 shows the aspects of policy or practice that have been reviewed or changed by the minority who have made such changes – the commonest relating to the promotion of disability awareness,

**Table 6.9: Areas of policy or practice changed or reviewed since December 1996**

(businesses that reviewed/changed policy/practice since Dec 1996)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Recruitment	20	14	33	20
Training and development	22	12	37	22
Promotion	10	12	20	10
Sickness or absence management	10	12	20	10
Redundancy or termination	7	8	12	7
Encouraging the retention of employees who become disabled or whose disability worsens	10	12	22	11
Promoting disability awareness among employees generally	24	12	26	24
Monitoring the number of disabled employees	8	12	17	8
Monitoring practices towards disabled employees	14	12	18	14
Equipment and/or personal support for disabled employees	13	16	37	14
Adapting working hours as necessary	18	16	30	19
Adapting working patterns as necessary	16	16	30	16
Consulting with disabled employees on their needs	18	11	32	19
Access to building	0	7	0	1
Reviewed everything	5	12	12	6
Other	48	46	17	47
Don't know/can't remember	3	0	0	3
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	42	37	34	113

*Note: columns total to more than 100% as respondents could cite more than one change*

followed by changes to training and development, changes to the recruitment process, and consultation with disabled employees.

As Table 6.10 shows, even among those who have made such changes, the majority do not attribute the changes wholly or partly to the DDA itself. Rather, the most frequent reason given for the changes was that they were part of the general and regular review of policies in the organisation.

**Table 6.10: Reasons for changes to policy/practice since December 1996**

(Businesses that reviewed/changed or introduced policy/practice since Dec 1996)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Entirely because of the provisions of the DDA	13	28	18	14
Partly because of the DDA	9	6	13	9
Business regularly reviews all (employment) policies	35	54	23	35
For the benefit of employees	6	7	11	6
We are a new business	5	0	11	5
We were advised to	2	4	0	2
Other reason	26	7	26	26
Don't know	7	0	1	7
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	47	41	40	128

### Case-studies

These patterns were again generally confirmed in the case-study interviews. No case-study employer had made adjustments or changes to policy or practice specifically as a result of the Act. Some changes had been made, but these were irrespective of the provision of the DDA. Two employers, for example, had recently moved to premises with greater disability access, but this was for other reasons, and the fact that the premises were more disability-friendly was seen as incidental.

Having briefly described the purpose of the Act and its obligations on employers (for the benefit of those not previously aware of it), employers surveyed were asked to describe their attitude towards the Act and the duties it places on employers.

As Table 6.11 shows, hardly any employers expressed a negative attitude towards the Act, with around two thirds saying they are broadly (or less often, strongly) in favour of the Act, and the remaining third saying that they are neither in favour nor against it.

There was some variation in this by sector, with yet again the public sector recording the most positive attitudes towards the Act, and the distribution and related sectors the least positive attitudes (Appendix – Table A.24). Further, there was some correlation between positive

**Table 6.11: Attitudes towards the DDA and the duties it places on employers**

(all respondents) Attitude towards the DDA and the duties it places on employers	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Strongly in favour of the Act	18	14	19	18
Broadly in favour of the Act	44	50	50	44
Neither in favour of, nor against the Act	33	27	31	32
Broadly against the Act	1	4	20	1
Strongly against the Act	1	0	10	1
Don't know	3	4	10	3
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

attitudes towards the Act and positive attitudes towards the recruitment of disabled people in general (Appendix – Table A.25).

### Case-studies

This picture was confirmed in the detailed case-studies, with the vast majority of employers expressing a favourable opinion of the Act and stating that they were supportive of its aims. Having said this, in Northern Ireland some respondents were more vocal in their support than others, and across all regions some qualifications and reservations were suggested.

For some, the positive view was conditional on the government providing financial assistance for adjustments *etc.* Only one employer in Glasgow took a strongly negative view, but this appeared to reflect their attitude towards regulation and government intervention in general, rather than the DDA in particular *“I’ll employ who I want to employ”*. Other small businesses, while supportive in principle, were concerned at over-regulation, and some expressed fears of being compelled to recruit a disabled person that would be unsuitable for the position. A significant number of organisations expressed a general concern that disability discrimination legislation, on its own, will not help significant numbers of disabled people into employment. Most argued that small businesses, already *“heaving under the strain of unnecessary red tape”* needed help rather than *“excess regulation”* when employing disabled people. A London-based employer said *“the government should stop casting everything in stone – digging narrow channels which create rigidity which don’t help anyone”*. On occasion, during the interviews, employers moderated these views on having

explained to them some of the details of the Act, and the fact that the Act explicitly allows for the size and resources of an employer to be taken into account in assessing its obligations under the Act.

It is notable that, in Northern Ireland, employers already have to comply with, and monitor employees' religion for Fair Employment legislation. This did not appear, though, to impact in any way on their feelings about the DDA. All employers knew their responsibilities under the Fair Employment legislation, and there was a clear contrast between this and their relatively poor awareness of the DDA and its obligations on employers.

### 6.3 Awareness of the Disability Rights Commission

Unsurprisingly, given its recent creation, awareness of the DRC was rather lower than awareness of the Act itself. Nevertheless, it is notable that over half of the employers in all size groups claim to have heard of the DRC prior to the survey (Table 6.12).

**Table 6.12: Awareness of the DRC**

(all respondents)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Had respondent heard of the DRC before participating in the survey?				
Yes	56	59	52	56
No	43	41	44	43
Don't know	2	0	4	2
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

There was no obvious pattern to the regional variation in reported prior awareness of the DRC (Appendix – Table A.26), with the North East-based employers reporting the highest level of awareness (67 per cent), and London-based ones the lowest (48 per cent). It is notable that employers in Northern Ireland, where the DRC does not operate, reported a level of awareness of the DRC only slightly lower than the average (54 per cent), which raises some questions about how reliable these responses may be (many respondents may, for example, in fact be reporting awareness of some other disability organisation than the DRC).

## Case-studies

Case-study evidence tended to confirm this picture. In general, in the case-study interviews, where more detailed questioning was possible than in the telephone survey, it was generally the case that case-study organisations were unaware of the existence of the DRC. Awareness was slightly higher than the average amongst employers in Wales and London and, contrary to the initial impression given by the survey, it turns out that, among the case-studies, knowledge was very low in Northern Ireland (with only one employer aware of the DRC), consistent with the fact that the DRC does not operate in the province.

## 6.4 Previous experience of employment legislation

The survey also looked at whether small employers have had experience of cases under other areas of employment legislation (in order to explore whether such experience influences their attitudes towards the DDA, and their policies and practices more generally). At this stage, it is worth noting simply that only a small minority have had such experience (although the incidence appears to increase with firm size) – Table 6.13. Most commonly, such experience relates to unfair dismissal (Table 6.14).

**Table 6.13: Experience of Employment Tribunal cases**

(all respondents)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Has organisation ever had case taken against it in Employment Tribunal?				
Yes	4	9	15	4
No	96	91	85	95
Don't know	0	0	0	0
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

**Table 6.14: Nature of Employment Tribunal cases experienced**

(organisations that have had ET case taken against them)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Unfair dismissal	67	53	80	68
Sex discrimination	0	6	0	1
Race discrimination	0	0	2	1
Disability discrimination DDA	0	0	4	1
Constructive dismissal	10	6	0	7
Redundancy	9	0	3	8
Other	13	35	14	14
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	20	18	35	73

## 6.5 Potential impact on exempt employers of lowering threshold

Table 6.15 shows that although just over half of currently exempt employers feel that lowering the threshold would have no impact on them, one in five think that it would have a limited impact, and almost as many believe that it would have a significant impact.

**Table 6.15: Impact on exempt employers of lowering the threshold**

(exempt employers – fewer than 15 employees – only)	
Would being covered by the Act have any impact on your business?	Small organisations (1-14 employees) %
Yes, a significant impact	18
Yes, a limited impact	21
No impact	54
Don't know	7
Unweighted total (n=100%)	504

There was little sectoral variation in whether or not an impact was anticipated (Appendix -- Table A.27), with between 48 and 60 per cent of respondents in each sector anticipating no impact. Among those who anticipated an impact, the proportion expecting that impact to be a significant one was greatest in the manufacturing and related sectors, and lowest in the public sector. The regional variation was rather

greater (Appendix – Table A.28), with exempt firms in Northern Ireland and the North East standing out as being least likely to anticipate a significant impact, and most likely to anticipate no impact. Whether or not an exempt organisation had disabled employees appeared to make no significant difference to whether they anticipated an impact of being brought into scope of the employment provisions (Appendix Table A.29)

Those anticipating an impact were asked what kind of impact they expect, and the largest category is those who believe they will incur extra costs due to making physical adjustments to the working environment (Table 6.16).

Similarly, those who anticipate no impact of lowering the threshold were asked why this was and, as Table 6.17 shows, just over half say that this is because they believe they do not currently discriminate against disabled people.

**Table 6.16: Nature of impact anticipated**

<b>(exempt employers anticipating an impact from the Act)</b>	
<b>What kind(s) of impact are anticipated?</b>	<b>Small organisations (1-14 employees) %</b>
Additional cost of making adjustments to the physical working environment (eg adapting premises or providing equipment);	58
Additional cost of making changes to work organisation (eg redesigning duties of job for disabled employees)	15
Additional cost of making changes to working time (eg reducing working hours or allowing disabled person to vary hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment purposes)	5
Additional cost of providing support or assistance to disabled employees (eg providing support worker, interpreter <i>etc.</i> )	9
Additional management or supervision time	2
Additional costs in the recruitment and selection process	3
Additional training costs	2
Lower output/lower productivity <i>etc.</i>	3
Cost of defending, avoiding or settling tribunal cases	1
Benefits through improved personnel practices (recruitment training <i>etc.</i> )	0
Benefits through improved retention and reductions in recruitment costs <i>etc.</i>	0
Benefits through improved absence and attendance records	0
Benefits through improved staff relations and morale	1
Benefits through improved image of the business to customers	2
Other	27
Unweighted total (n=100%)	193

*Note: columns total more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one impact*

**Table 6.17: Reasons for anticipating no impact from reducing threshold**

<b>(exempt employers not anticipating an impact from the Act)</b>	
<b>Why is no impact anticipated?</b>	<b>Small organisations (1-14 employees) %</b>
Business does not discriminate against disabled job applicants or employees	55
Business already makes any necessary adjustments for disabled employees	18
Disabled employees do not apply for employment with the business	13
The costs of complying with the Act will not be significant	3
Any costs can be offset through government grants/Access to Work <i>etc.</i>	1
Other reason	24
Unweighted total (n=100%)	272

*Note: columns total more than 100%, as respondents could cite more than one reason*

### **Case-studies**

Among the case-study employers in this size group, perceived impact of the Act was limited, but there were some concerns raised. One currently out-of-scope travel agency in Northern Ireland was concerned, on the basis of experience of Fair Employment legislation, that there might be an impact if they came into scope, and his main concern related to false claims of discrimination. He cited the example of his brother who works for a large organisation and reports that during every recruitment round, someone “*will try it on*”. He expressed concerns that it might be particularly difficult for a small employer to prove that they had not discriminated on grounds of disability.

## **6.6 Impact on employers which came into scope of the DDA in 1998**

Those employers (with 15-19 employees) who came into scope of the employment provisions when the threshold was reduced in December 1998 were asked, firstly, whether they are aware that they had come into scope. Just over a quarter of them were aware of this (Table 6.18).

**Table 6.18: Awareness of coverage by the employment provisions among employers in scope since 1998**

<b>(employers in scope since 1998 – 15-19 employees)</b>	
<b>Was business aware that it has come into scope of DDA employment provisions?</b>	<b>Medium-sized organisations (15-19 employees) %</b>
Yes	27
No	73
Unweighted total (n=100%)	241

Interestingly, there is no apparent correlation between awareness of having come into scope and whether or not the business has any disabled employees. If anything (Table 6.19), those with disabled employees are slightly *less* likely to be aware of having come into scope of Part II of the Act than are those with no disabled employees.

**Table 6.19: Awareness of coverage by the employment provisions among employers in scope since 1998, by whether business has or has had disabled employees**

<b>(employers in scope since 1998 – 15-19 employees)</b>	<b>Was business aware that it has come into scope of DDA employment provisions?</b>		<b>Unweighted totals (n=100%)</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>Disabled employees</b>			
Respondents who have disabled employees	22	78	104
Respondents with no disabled employees	31	69	124
Don't know	0	100	13
Total %	26	74	241

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

Those few who were aware of having come into scope in 1998 (twenty in total) were then divided into two groups: those who had mentioned making changes to policies or practices after the DDA's inception; and those who had not. Those who had made such changes (only twenty in total) were asked whether the changes pre-dated or post-dated their coming into scope of the Act (Table 6.20). As can be seen from the table, about two-thirds made these changes after coming into scope.

**Table 6.20: Timing of changes made to policy/practices (1)**

<b>(employers in scope since 1998 that had made changes to policy/practices after DDA introduced in 1996)</b>	
<b>Were changes made...</b>	<b>Medium-sized organisations (15-19 employees) %</b>
Before coming into scope in Dec 1998?	23
After coming into scope in Dec 1998?	69
Some before/some after	1
Don't know/can't remember	8
Unweighted total (n=100%)	20

Those who had not made such changes when the Act was introduced, were then asked whether they have done so after coming into scope (Table 6.21), and nearly all of them have not done so.

**Table 6.21: Timing of changes made to policy/practices (2)**

<b>(respondents in scope since 1998, not citing changes to policy or practice after Act's introduction in 1996)</b>	
<b>Were any policies/practices reviewed/changed as result of coming into scope in Dec 1998?</b>	<b>Medium-sized organisations (15-19 employees) %</b>
Yes	20
No	80
Don't know	0
Unweighted total (n=100%)	48

More generally, those who were aware of having come into scope of the Act in 1998 were asked whether this had any impact on their business. Without exception, once the sample has been weighted, all of them say it has had no impact on their business (Table 6.22), and it is interesting to contrast this with the significant proportion of currently exempt employers who *anticipate* an impact (see Table 6.15 above).

It should also be noted, however, when asked why no impact had been experienced, the most common response is that it is because disabled people do not apply for employment in the business in question (Table 6.23).

**Table 6.22: Impact on the business of coming into scope of the employment provisions of the DDA in 1998.**

(respondents in scope since 1998, and aware of having come into scope)	
Has there been any impact on business as a result of coming into scope?	Medium-sized organisations (15-19 employees) %
Yes, a significant impact	0
Yes, a limited impact	0
No	100
Don't know	0
Unweighted total (n=100%)	68

**Table 6.23: Reasons for no impact of coming into scope of the DDA**

(respondents citing that coming into scope in 1998 had no impact on the business)	
Why was there no impact on the business?	Medium-sized organisations (15-19 employees) %
Business did not discriminate against disabled job applicants or employees	40
Business already made any necessary adjustments for disabled employees	16
Disabled people do not apply for employment with the business	47
The costs of complying with the Act were not be significant	0
Any costs were offset through government grants/Access to Work <i>etc.</i>	0
Dangerous for disabled people due to nature of work	3
Other reason/Don't know	10
Unweighted total (n=100%)	64

### Case-studies

As in the survey, none of the case-study employers who had come into scope of the Act were of the view that this had had an impact on them. Although, on the one hand, this is positive in the sense that compliance with the Act may not appear burdensome to these employers, on the other hand, the case-studies often suggested that a lack of impact indicated (or was due to) a lack of knowledge. In line with the survey findings, most employers felt that the Act had had no impact (or would have little impact) because the business rarely (if ever) receives applications from disabled people.

## 6.7 Impact of the DDA on employers in scope of the Act since 1996

Finally we also asked similar questions about the impact of the Act on those employers (with 20 or more staff) who had been covered by the Act's employment provisions since their introduction in December 1996.

Once again, the vast majority (over 90 per cent) have seen no impact on their business (Table 6.24).

**Table 6.24: Impact of the DDA on businesses in scope since 1996**

<b>(respondents in scope since 1996)</b>	
<b>Has there been any impact on business as a result of the introduction of the DDA?</b>	<b>Large organisations (20-49 employees) %</b>
Yes, a significant impact	0
Yes, a limited impact	4
No	93
Don't know	3
Unweighted total (n=100%)	259

When asked why there had been no impact, the two most common responses were from those who argued that there was no impact because they did not discriminate, and those who said that was because disabled people do not apply for jobs in their organisations (Table 6.25).

**Table 6.25: Reasons for no impact of the DDA among those in scope since 1996**

<b>(respondents in scope since 1996, stating that the Act had no impact on the business)</b>	
<b>Why was there no impact on the business?</b>	<b>Large organisations (20-49 employees) %</b>
Business did not discriminate against disabled job applicants or employees	42
Business already made any necessary adjustments for disabled employees	18
Disabled employees do not apply for employment with the business	30
The costs of complying with the Act were not be significant	5
Any costs were offset through government grants/Access to Work <i>etc.</i>	0
Other reason	18
Unweighted total (n=100%)	208

## Case-studies

As for those employers that had been in scope since 1996, the Act had had little impact. One employer in Northern Ireland raised concerns that "*... the Government may force you to take someone on with a disability that is not suitable for the job*".

More generally, moreover, it was clear that the reported lack of impact was not due to the firms having had financial or other support in complying with the Act (rather it seemed related to ignorance of the Act and/or a view that it was not 'relevant' to the organisation). Indeed, as far as financial support is concerned, levels of awareness of Access to Work were generally low (though slightly higher in London). Employers in Northern Ireland expressed surprise that they were not aware of it, and were interested in receiving further information on it. Interestingly none of the employers in London said that knowledge or use of Access to Work would have helped them to accommodate a disabled job applicant or employee.

## 7. Part III of the DDA (goods, facilities and services)

**Table 7.1: Awareness of Part III provisions**

(businesses covered by Part III of the Act)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
How aware is respondent of the goods, services and facilities provisions of the Act?				
Very aware	14	18	17	14
Fairly aware	36	36	33	36
Not very aware	24	36	33	25
Not at all aware	24	9	17	24
Don't know	2	0	0	2
Unweighted total (n=100%)	299	131	134	564

Table 7.1 shows that 55 per cent of surveyed firms are covered by Part III of the DDA (relating to the provision of goods, facilities or services to members of the public), with the coverage being higher amongst the smallest organisations than amongst the medium-sized and larger ones.

Those covered by the Part III provisions were asked about their awareness of those provisions, and half believed they were fairly or very aware (Table 7.2).

**Table 7.2: Coverage by Part III of the DDA**

(all respondents)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Coverage by part III of the DDA (goods and services)				
Provides goods and services to members of public, and is not in an exempt sector	56	50	46	55
Provides goods and services to members of public, but is in exempt sector	9	9	11	9
Does not provide goods and services to members of the public	35	41	43	36
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

Once again, levels of awareness were higher in public sector organisations (Appendix – Table A.30), and there were some regional differences in awareness of the Part III provisions (Appendix – Table A.31).

Table 7.3 shows whether respondents who are covered by the Part III provisions, and who claim to be aware of the provisions of Part III, think they are covered or exempt from those provisions. Overall, only two thirds of those covered are aware of this. It is clear, moreover, that the smaller firms are more likely to think they are exempt, when they are not (perhaps because they know they are exempt from the employment provisions and think that this exemption also applies to Part III).

**Table 7.3: Whether businesses believe they are covered by Part III of the Act**

(businesses covered by part III of the Act, and claiming to be aware of the provisions)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Does respondent think the goods, facilities and services provisions of the DDA apply to his/her business?				
Yes	66	83	71	66
No	18	0	14	17
Don't know	16	17	14	16
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	156	77	74	307

Businesses covered by the Part III provisions, claiming to be aware of those provisions, and believing that the provisions apply to them were also asked whether they have made changes as a result of Part III (Table 7.4). Sixty per cent have made no changes and there is no clear pattern by size of firm in whether or not changes have been made.

**Table 7.4: Changes made as a result of Part III**

(businesses covered by part III of the Act, claiming to be aware of the provisions and believing that they are covered by the provisions)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Has business made any changes to policies, practices <i>etc.</i> , as result of part III provisions?				
Yes	38	40	33	38
No	60	60	67	60
Don't know	2	0	0	2
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	128	77	73	278

**Table 7.5: Effect on disabled employees of changes made for disabled customers**

(organisations covered by part III and having made changes as a result of part III provisions)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Have changes made in provision for disabled customers/clients made any difference to provision for disabled employees				
Yes	20	33	50	21
No	76	67	50	75
Don't know	4	0	0	4
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	50	34	30	114

A significant minority of those who have made changes as a result of being covered by Part III (just over one in five, with the proportion rising to one in two among the larger firms) believe that those changes in provision for disabled customers/clients have also made a difference to their provision for disabled employees (Table 7.5). Table 7.6 shows that this is mainly because the adjustments made have applied equally to disabled employees.

**Table 7.6: Nature of impact of Part III changes on disabled employees**

(organisations where changes made as a result of part III have also affected provision for disabled employees)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
How have part III changes affected provision for disabled employees?				
Adjustments made for disabled customers have also applied to disabled employees	79	68	74	79
Making adjustments for disabled customers has increased awareness of disability issues, leading to changes for disabled employees	48	18	8	45
Through becoming aware of obligations under the DDA as a service provider, business became aware of obligations as an employer	24	17	34	24
Other effect(s)	20	16	0	11
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	13	16	11	40

*Note: columns can total more than 100% as respondents could cite more than one type of effect*

## **Case-studies**

Even where businesses were covered by this element of the Act, specific knowledge of their obligations was extremely poor.

Only two of the nine Northern Ireland employers examined were aware of the goods and services provisions, and even these had only a sketchy understanding of the detailed obligations. None of the Northern Ireland case-study employers had made any changes or adaptations as a result of the part III provisions.

Two Glasgow case-study organisations were aware of Part III provisions, with only one believing they were bound by Part III duties (this organisation had sent off for a leaflet on duties/compliance).

At least five of the London case-study employers were covered by the Part III provisions (one being covered by the premises provisions). However, only one was aware of their basic responsibilities under Part III. One (a retailer) had made, and was planning to make adjustments to premises, including wheelchair access, although this was not in direct response to Part III obligations.

None of the Wales or Sussex-based case-study organisations claimed any real awareness of Part III provisions. However, unrelated to the DDA, three service sector organisations in Wales had recently made changes to premises in order to improve access for disabled customers.

## 8. Information, Advice and Support

Only a minority (12 per cent across the sample as a whole) of businesses in the survey have ever sought or received external information, advice or support about employing disabled people (Table 8.1).

**Table 8.1: Use of external information, advice and support**

(all respondents)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Has business ever sought or received external information, support or advice about employing disabled people				
Yes	12	17	15	12
No	86	78	85	86
Don't know	2	5	0	2
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

The use of external support in this way varied according to the characteristics of the business, and its policy and attitudes towards disabled people as follows:

- Public sector organisations were significantly more likely to have made use of external support (Appendix – Table A.32).
- Organisations which have disabled employees were more likely to have made use of external support than those who have not (Appendix – Table A.33).
- Organisations which actively encourage applications from disabled people were much more likely to be users of external support, information and advice (Appendix – Table A.34).
- Similarly, organisations with a formal EO policy covering disability were much more likely to be users of external support, advice and information than were those who did not have such a policy (Appendix – Table A.35).

- Those organisations with a high level of awareness of the employment provisions of the DDA were much more likely to have used external support, than were those with lower awareness levels (Appendix – Table A.36).

Amongst business in all the size categories, the most common reason for seeking external support was in order to understand the business’s obligations under the DDA itself (Table 8.2). For the medium and larger-sized firms in particular, however, important reasons for seeking external inputs also related to support in making adjustments for disabled employees, and disability awareness training.

**Table 8.2: Nature of external information, advice and support**

(businesses receiving external information, support or advice)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All* %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
To what did the information support or advice relate?				
Business’s obligations under the DDA	49	54	37	48
Making adjustments to enable business to employ a disabled person	18	22	30	19
Making adjustments to enable business to retain an existing employee who became disabled	9	29	14	10
Obtaining financial support or other assistance in making adjustments	8	15	9	8
Disability awareness training for managers or staff	17	24	26	18
Other	30	27	24	
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	60	46	44	

*Note: columns can total more than 100% as respondents could cite more than one type of support need*

The most common sources of external help were written information, followed by the various Employment Service resources (Table 8.3).

### Case-studies

Only five of the case-study employers had made use of external sources of advice and support. Evidence of employers seeking help in making adjustments comes almost entirely from organisations with 20 or more employees.

One of the organisations in each of the case-study regions, excluding Northern Ireland, reported that they had either sought or received external help relating to the needs of a particular employee or job applicant. A Glasgow-based employer sought advice on the

**Table 8.3: Sources of external information, support and advice**

(businesses receiving external information, support or advice)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Literature, leaflets, guidance notes <i>etc.</i>	35	24	12	34
Information helpline ( <i>eg</i> DDA helpline, DRC helpline)	6	4	10	6
JobCentre	7	8	19	7
Employment Service Disability Service Teams (formerly known as PACTs), or Disability Employment Advisers	11	15	19	12
Press/radio/TV advertisements	2	1	1	2
TEC/LEC, Chamber of Commerce,	2	4	9	2
Business Links, Small Business Service	8	14	11	9
ACAS	0	0	0	0
Citizens Advice Bureaux	4	1	1	3
Voluntary sector, charity, disability organisation	7	7	0	6
Employer organisation	0	0	5	1
Trade Association	5	4	4	5
Local Employer Networks on disability/Employers' Forum on Disability	1	0	0	1
Solicitors	7	0	1	7
Professional advisor	2	8	4	2
Other	9	8	4	8
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	53	40	37	

*Note: columns can total more than 100% as respondents could cite more than one source*

employment of a person with dyslexia. A Sussex-based employer sought advice on improving building accessibility and a Wales-based employer obtained advice on employing someone with a hearing impairment. One of the London employers had completed the process of receiving advice and support from the Employment Service, relating to the identification and acquisition of low vision aids (for the respondent himself), although another reported an Access to Work application pending. Another Glasgow employer who had not sought advice could identify where help could be obtained from. A further Glasgow-based employer encouraged staff to attend deaf clubs, in order to facilitate deaf awareness and help communication with a hearing-impaired employee.

Three employers in both Wales and London and one in Glasgow subscribe to external HR and/or legal services and those using these services felt they would be the first port of call in determining any course of action relating to the DDA or locating help in accommodating a disabled employee. A small number of organisations across each region reported receiving information about the DDA from trade associations and a Sussex-based employer reported that the local Chamber of Commerce had provided a briefing on DDA duties.

In so far as a pattern was observable, it seems that case-study organisations looking to achieve the integration of a specific disabled individual into work, tend to seek advice from the Employment Service or voluntary organisations on ways of accommodating individual disabled job applicants or employees. On the other hand, employers looking to ensure they comply with the DDA and other employment legislation or looking for an understanding of best practice are more likely to seek advice from employment lawyers and HR specialists. It also appears that informal sources of information are used, as it was clear that some employers some had also learned of the Act through informal personal contacts (*eg* partners or friends who are accountants, lawyers and social workers). Such information as had been received generally related to the employment provisions rather than to their obligations as providers of goods and services.

Specific examples of advice and help received by employees and case-study organisations include: a CCTV for an employee with visual impairment; a PC for an employee with dyslexia; an employer receiving detailed advice on making and funding structural changes to premises; and employer receiving advice and funding to install a modified fire alarm system to make premises safe for a deaf employee. One employer who reported that an employee had an Access to Work application pending, did not specify the nature of advice/help required or anticipated.

## **8.1 Needs of businesses currently covered by the employment provisions**

Businesses currently in scope of Part II (*ie* with 15 more employees) were asked about likely future needs for external information, support or advice (Table 8.4). Such needs were anticipated to a greater extent among those in the 15-19 employee group (39 per cent) than among those in the 20-49 employee group (30 per cent).

**Table 8.4: Anticipated future needs for information, support and advice**

(businesses covered by employment provisions of the DDA)	Organisation size (no. of employees)		All %
	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Is there any information, support or advice relating to the employment of disabled people, likely to be required in the future			
Yes	39	30	34
No	57	63	60
Don't know	4	7	6
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	241	260	501

Public sector employers within scope of the employment provisions were more likely than those in other sectors to anticipate support needs (Appendix – Table A.37).

Once again, the main area in which a support need was anticipated related to businesses' obligations under the DDA (Table 8.5).

Among employers in the medium-sized (15-19 employee) group there is a strong preference for traditional media (leaflets *etc.*) in meeting their information needs (Table 8.6), followed by telephone helplines. A preference for written information is also evident, albeit less marked, among larger (20-49 employee) businesses, and nearly half of this group also state a preference for internet-based information.

**Table 8.5: Nature of anticipated future support needs**

(employers covered by the employment provisions, and anticipating future need for information, support or advice)	Organisation size (no. of employees)		All %
	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
What kind of information, support or advice would be required?			
Business's obligations under the DDA	84	78	81
Making adjustments to enable business to employ a disabled person	38	44	41
Making adjustments to enable business to retain an existing employee who became disabled	35	43	39
Obtaining financial support or other assistance in making adjustments	44	37	41
Disability awareness training for managers or staff	35	45	40
Other	16	7	7
Don't know	0	0	0
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	95	90	185

*Note: columns can total more than 100% as respondents could cite more than one type of support need*

**Table 8.6: Preferred formats for information provision**

(employers covered by the employment provisions, and anticipating future need for information, support or advice)	Organisation size (no. of employees)		All %
	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
What would be the most useful way of making available information about the DDA and making adjustments for disabled people?			
Leaflets, posters and similar literature	79	62	70
Television advertising	18	23	20
Radio advertising	16	17	16
Advertisements in the local and national press	25	20	23
The internet	31	46	38
A telephone helpline	32	29	30
Other methods	9	6	8
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	96	91	187

*Note: columns can total more than 100% as respondents could cite more than one method*

### Case-studies

Case-study organisations currently covered by the Act were asked what kind of information, support and advice on the employment of disabled people they needed in the future and where they thought they might get it.

Of the thirty case-study organisations covered by the DDA, ten said they required specific information about the Act and the employment of disabled people. In part as a response to the general lack of knowledge about DDA provisions among case-study organisations, respondents wanted information on the workings of the DDA, together with information and practical advice on how to accommodate job applicants and employees with disability.

There is a general expectation among case-study organisations that information on the DDA will be provided by government departments/agencies and large voluntary organisations.

A London-based employer suggested the Government should prioritise the provision of advice on making physical adjustments to premises, and would expect to receive appropriate technical advice through government departments and independent agencies, for example, DfEE, DTI, DETR, HSE, DRC, local Tec and Business Link. Another London-based employer stated that they would welcome more information on accommodating people with specific disabilities.

One Sussex-based, and one London-based employer said that disabled job applicants themselves might provide information about specific disabilities and associated work related needs. There may be an assumption on the part of case-study organisations that individual employees with a disability or a health problem may be a useful source of information regarding the work-related effects of their disability, but only two said that obtaining information from individual employees would be helpful.

Case-study employers sometimes gave mixed messages about their needs for information. This can be illustrated by the Northern Ireland case-studies. In all of these, the respondents stated that they did not have enough information and that more would be appreciated. On the other hand, they had a negative response to the idea of leaflets being distributed, arguing that small employers in particular *“do not have time to wade through lots of paper, and non-essential material will go straight into the bin”*.

Similarly, seven of the nine London case-study respondents expressed a wish to receive more information from government sources, professional or trade bodies about accommodating disabled job applicants. Four expressed an interest in receiving disability information via the internet and all said they would welcome leaflets and other literature.

In so far as such information is distributed, it should be punchy, not too detailed, and carry the weight of the law behind it. Several employers in different regions felt that it would be appropriate to disseminate information through small business organisations or sectoral, professional and trade bodies.

While some employers did not believe that awareness-raising campaigns would help employers to any extent others said that there should be an on-going DDA awareness campaign (delivered possibly through Chambers of Commerce and other business organisations).

The internet generated mixed views – it was seen as easy to update, and readily accessible (although it was pointed out that not all small employers have access). On the other side there was a concern about how it would be possible to ensure that people looked at a site (many might seek it out only if they have a particular issue to tackle).

On the whole, responses to the draft Equality Direct website pages shown to employers during the case-study interviews were positive and it is worth noting that most of the interviewees had access to the internet and were regular users. At least half the employers interviewed saw the website as a helpful development. However a common view tended to be that the pages looked a little too complicated, and that they might be difficult to navigate. Employers provided some useful suggestions for the Equality Direct website (or anything similar). Specific comments/queries which came up included the following:

- it was seen as rather 'wordy' and 'corporate'
- it did not appear to be specifically targeted at employers
- it might benefit from some 'talking heads' clips (case-studies)
- it should be made clear if it applies to Scotland (raised by Glasgow respondents)
- it should be provided in different languages, and in different formats (*eg* for those with sight difficulties).

Among most of the employers, views on the literature shown<sup>11</sup> were generally positive, although only one respondent had seen any of the material before ("What employers need to know", which he had heard about in the national press, and he admitted that he had not got round to reading it.

A common general view among case-study respondents was that support and advice would only be sought should the need arise (*eg* in a case where an employer was wishing to recruit a particular disabled person and needed some advice). It was unlikely that small employers would seek advice and information proactively in the absence of a specific need.

In essence then more information would be welcomed by employers, but care should be taken as to the format and style in which this information is presented.

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<sup>11</sup> *Disability Rights Commission — who we are and what we do ; The Disability Discrimination Act — what employers need to know ; The DDA — what employees and job applicants need to know ; Employing Disabled People — a good practice guide for managers and employers.*

## 8.2 Needs of businesses currently exempt from the employment provisions

Small employers currently exempt from the employment provisions of the DDA were asked whether, if the threshold were removed, their businesses would need any extra information, support or advice to help them deal with their obligations under the Act. Most of them (78 per cent) believe that they would need some such assistance (Table 8.7).

**Table 8.7 Anticipated needs of currently exempt employers, if threshold removed**

<b>(businesses currently exempt from the employment provisions of the DDA)</b>	
<b>If the exemption was removed, would the business need any extra information, support or advice to help them deal with their obligations under the Act?</b>	<b>Small organisations (1-14 employees) %</b>
Yes	78
No	18
Don't know	4
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504

Similar levels of anticipated need for support were expressed by exempt respondents in nearly all sectors (Appendix – Table A.38). There was little difference in anticipated need according to whether businesses have disabled employees (Appendix – Table A.39) or whether they were aware of the employment provisions, although those claiming a high awareness of the latter saw somewhat less need for external support than others (Appendix – Table A.40).

Once again the main area of help required relates to information about the business's obligations under the Act (Table 8.8), and the preferred formats are dominated by written materials, followed by telephone helplines and the internet (Table 8.9).

**Table 8.8: Nature of anticipated support needs**

<b>(employers currently exempt from the employment provisions, and anticipating future need for information, support or advice)</b>	
<b>What kind of information, support or advice would be required?</b>	<b>Small organisations (1-14 employees) %</b>
Business's obligations under the DDA	72
Making adjustments to enable business to employ a disabled person	57
Making adjustments to enable business to retain an existing employee who became disabled	43
Obtaining financial support or other assistance in making adjustments	50
Disability awareness training for managers or staff	43
Other	4
Don't know	4
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	400

*Note: columns can total more than 100% as respondents could cite more than one type of support need*

**Table 8.9: Preferred formats for information provision**

<b>(employers currently exempt from the employment provisions, and anticipating future need for information, support or advice)</b>	
<b>What would be the most useful way of making available information about the DDA and making adjustments for disabled people?</b>	<b>Small organisations (1-14 employees) %</b>
Leaflets, posters and similar literature	66
Television advertising	21
Radio advertising	13
Advertisements in the local and national press	21
The internet	31
A telephone helpline	38
Face to face visit	1
Video presentation	1
Seminar	1
Don't know	1
Other methods	4
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	400

*Note: columns can total more than 100% as respondents could cite more than one method*

## Case-studies

Case-study employers currently exempt from the Act generally reiterated the points made in the previous section by those currently in scope, regarding their need for information and preferred formats. Thus they stated that they would generally welcome information on the employment of disabled people and, if anything, expressed a somewhat stronger need for information, and a similar (but possibly stronger) concern about the accessibility and/or complexity of information provided.

This category of organisations were among those most unlikely to be aware of sources of advice and help regarding the employment of disabled people, in particular, help provided under the Access to Work Scheme. When informed about Access to Work, a number of case-study organisations suggested that more should be done to publicise the scheme.

Most of the Glasgow, Wales and the London-based employers felt that they would need considerable practical advice from the Government about DDA provisions and illustrative case-studies on successful practice. One London employer suggested that in the event of the Part II threshold being reduced, all new businesses should receive information on their duties/obligations under the Act. Another London employer said he would require *“chapter and verse on what our new duties/obligations were”*.

One Sussex-based employer said that *“the form of education which I receive needs to be clear and relevant to our business”*. The informant provided the recent *“See the Person”* campaign as an example of an effective business-related initiative. In addition, he thought short films, adverts with images of disabled people working in familiar situations would be helpful together with case-studies on successful practice – *“and narratives about disabled people in work”*.

A London-based employer commented that *“What employers need to know”* and *“Employing disabled people”* were good for reference purposes, but felt that small business needed condensed versions of booklets and other printed material together with specific written guidance for small businesses.. The same informant thought the DfEE disability web pages should be more widely publicised. Another London case-study employer said that information on disability and other equal opportunities issues should be displayed across government web sites

providing a range of information to businesses, *eg* Customs and Excise, DTI and Inland Revenue web sites.

There was wide support among case-study organisations for a telephone helpline, although a number of informants said that they would need expert advice from a helpline. Some suspected that a helpline would be limited to general 'one size fits all' service. A Northern Ireland-based employer expressed a strong preference for one-to-one information giving, suggesting that individual advice makes employers more inclined to understand and take-on-board change.

## 9. Future Developments and Issues

### 9.1 Planned developments

The surveyed small firms were asked about any future plans they might have to make changes in order to improve access for disabled employees, or to make it easier to recruit or retain disabled staff. Only seven per cent of employers (with slightly larger percentages among the larger businesses) have any such plans (Table 9.1), and once again the existence of such plans is most marked among respondents in the public sector (Appendix – Table A.41). Those with disabled employees are slightly more likely than those without, to have such plans in mind (Appendix – Table A.42). There is also some correlation between positive attitudes to the recruitment of disabled people and planning future changes (Appendix – Table A.43), and between a business's having a formal equal opportunity policy, and its having plans to make changes for disabled employees (Appendix – Table A.44).

**Table 9.1: Plans for future changes**

(all respondents)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
<b>Does business have any plans to make changes in the future to improve access to disabled employees, or to make it easier to recruit or retain disabled staff?</b>				
Yes	7	9	11	7
No	88	86	85	88
Don't know	6	5	4	6
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

The most often cited area of anticipated change relates to the provision of equipment or personal support for disabled employees (Table 9.2).

**Table 9.2: Nature of anticipated future changes**

	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Changes to recruitment and selection methods	3	0	0	2
Encouraging the retention of employees who become disabled or whose disability worsens	8	0	4	7
Promoting disability awareness among employees generally	7	4	14	7
Monitoring the number of disabled employees	0	0	0	0
Monitoring practices towards disabled employees	0	0	2	1
Providing equipment and/or personal support for disabled employees	44	22	50	44
Adapting working hours as necessary	0	0	0	0
Adapting working patterns as necessary	1	1	2	1
Consulting with disabled employees on their needs	4	0	0	3
Improvements to access	13	14	13	13
Changing or upgrading building	26	45	19	26
Other	9	15	6	12
Unweighted totals (n=100%)	48	37	36	121

*Note: columns can total more than 100% as respondents could cite more than one type of change*

### Case-studies

The case-study employers again reinforced the impression drawn from the survey of little planned development in this area. Virtually no case-study employers had any plans to make changes or to improve access for actual or potential disabled employees. Nevertheless, a small number of case-study organisations were aware that future business plans may create opportunities to be 'more disability friendly'. A Glasgow-based employer also plans to review all HR policies in the near future and will take disability and employment issues into account as part of the process. Another is planning to develop technical support call centre employing 20 staff and is *"keen that people with disabilities should apply"*.

## 9.2 Other issues

Case-study employers were asked, in particular, if there were other issues which concerned them, relating to the DDA or to employing disabled people in general.

A few employers (including those in scope of the Act), stated that they would not welcome further regulation in this area. In the majority of cases, however, case-study organisations were supportive of the DDA and had little concern about its extension, even among employers with 14 or fewer employees.

Some of the other issues raised by employers included the following:

- concerns that the changing nature of work and the employer-employee relationship is likely to reduce the opportunities for disabled people;
- concerns that the law is weighted towards employees rather than employers;
- a view that more needs to be done to encourage disabled people to apply for jobs: "... you are asking me would I employ a disabled person. How can I when they don't apply?";
- a view that schemes such as Access to Work and the Job introduction scheme should be better marketed: "It is no use sending me leaflets in the post. I want these people to come to me, and I want clear examples of how they have placed disabled people in work I can relate to". One employer with experience of such schemes argued that improving the time scales on Access to Work applications would make a great difference in helping disabled people and employers.

A small number of respondents made miscellaneous comments about the Act and the role of the DRC. In particular:

A London employer said,

*"... if the threshold is reduced we need to be clear about why it is being done – it must be done in the interests of the employer, the employee or the customer, otherwise it is not going to be successful"*

An employer in Glasgow said,

*"I just don't think the DDA has been advertised, certainly not to people like myself."*

*"I don't have a problem with taking on disabled people. I'd want to make clear that they are able to do the job. If there are difficulties like transport or spending money we would be prepared to help."*

A Sussex-based employer, covered by the DDA Part II provisions, commented,

*"... the Disability Rights Commission should be concerned that we have no knowledge of the Act or provisions of help to implement it".*

## 10. Concluding Remarks

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The purposes of the study reported here were twofold:

- First, to add to knowledge and understanding about the behaviour, attitudes and experiences of small employers with regard to the employment of disabled people. Most of the existing evidence on employer behaviour in this area has focused on large employers, and even in surveys where small firms have been included in the sample, their specific experiences and attitudes have not generally been focused on. This study has aimed to redress this balance.
- Second, to address specific policy-relevant questions related to the exemption of small employers from the DDA's employment provisions, via the employer threshold. In particular the study aimed to examine the likely impact on small employers if the threshold were to be lowered or removed, and the support and information needs which small employers might have as a result.

In this final brief chapter, it is not our intention to summarise the detailed findings of the report. For that the reader should refer to the 'Executive Summary' with which the report begins. Rather we aim briefly to draw some conclusions (sometimes tentative ones) from these findings, which address the two purposes identified above.

### 10.1 How important is employer size?

Looking first at the question of how small employers behave with regard to the employment of disabled people, we may ask 'are small employers different from large ones in this respect?', and the general answer would seem to be 'not very much'.

Rather than their being a qualitative difference between small employers and large ones, it is more appropriate to see small employers as lying at one end of a continuum, a continuum which was evident in

many respects *within* our sample of small businesses. If, for example, we compare the smallest ones (fewer than 15 employees) with the largest ones (20-plus employees), we find that the former are less likely than the latter to have a personnel management structure, less likely to have a formal approach to equal opportunities or disability, and less likely to have any disabled employees.

The picture is, however, much more complex than this. So, for example, whether or not a employer has any disabled employees varies a lot with the definition of disability used, as well as by size of employer. Within our current sample we have the extremes of 12 per cent of the smallest employers recording disabled employees under their own definition, rising to 53 per cent of the largest employees under a broader definition. For the sample as a whole (all sizes of small employer) we find that between 13 and 30 per cent have at least one disabled employee. This makes it difficult to compare findings with previous studies of firms in general (which themselves record wide variations in the proportions with disabled employees – from 25 to 42 per cent<sup>12</sup>).

The matter is further complicated because it is unclear whether differences between surveys reflect changes over time (*eg* due to changes in policy or awareness) or differences between samples. Although, therefore, our survey produces estimates of the employment of disabled people which are towards the lower end of the range compared with previous studies, it is certainly not possible to assert that disabled people are less likely to be employed in small firms. Indeed evidence from the Labour Force Survey suggests a slightly higher incidence of disabled people in employment in smaller workplaces<sup>13</sup> than in larger workplaces. Thus according to the LFS for Summer 2000, some 12.7 per cent of employees in workplaces with 1-

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<sup>12</sup> Thus Honey *et al.* (*Employers' Attitudes towards the Employment of People with Disabilities*, Brighton, Institute of Manpower Studies, 1993), in an organisation-based survey (all size groups), found that 25 per cent of firms had disabled employees. Two more recent studies both found that 42 per cent of employers had disabled employees: Dench *et al.* (*The recruitment and retention of people with disabilities*, Brighton, IES report no. 301 Institute for Employment Studies, (1996) – an establishment-based survey, excluding those with ten or fewer employees; and IES (1997), *MPSE: Disability Module*, report to the DfEE – also establishment-based and excluding those with nine or fewer employees.

<sup>13</sup> Note that the LFS data are based on size of establishment/workplace, whereas our data are based on size of organisation/enterprise.

10 employees had a long-term health problem or disability, compared with 11.5 per cent in workplaces with 11-49 employees, and 10.9 per cent in workplaces with more than 50 employees.

It also needs to be noted that a very small business is less likely to have any disabled employees simply because it *is* small. An employer with five employees and a ten per cent labour turnover rate will recruit one person every two years, whereas an employer with 100 employees and a similar turnover rate will recruit ten people a year and is statistically more likely, therefore, to have at least one disabled employee, even in the absence of any discriminatory processes.

It is also clear from our study that the smallest firms do not have significantly less 'positive' attitudes towards disabled people on many measures than their larger counterparts. If there is a barrier to be faced in changing employer practice and perception, it is one which is present as much or nearly as much in the largest firms in our sample as in the smallest (we found, for example, that both groups are extremely unlikely to have a policy of actively encouraging applications from disabled people).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the study shows that size is by no means the only important characteristic in determining employer behaviour. Sector, for example, is often crucial, as evidenced throughout the study by the contrast in most respects between small employers in the public sector, and those in some other sectors (*eg* retailing and catering *etc.*). It is clear from the study that a 'small firm' in one sector or industry may be worlds apart from a firm of the same size in another sector or industry when it comes to attitudes, policies and experiences which affect its employment of disabled people. A small public sector employer may well have more in common in this respect with a large public sector employer, than it does with a small independent retailer or construction firm.

## **10.2 What does the study tell us about the DDA and the impact of the employee threshold?**

### **Awareness of the Act and attitudes towards it**

Our findings show that, despite a high level of claimed awareness of the Act among small employers, detailed knowledge of the Act's

provisions and the obligations they place on employers is often sketchy at best.

Indeed a majority of small employers are not even sure whether they are covered by the employment provisions, and many of those who think they know whether they are covered or exempt get it wrong. Hardly any of them are aware that employment size is a criterion for being covered or exempt from the employment provisions, and many (incorrectly) think they are exempt because of the nature of their business or what they do.

Despite the low level of awareness of the detail of the Act, however, the vast majority of small firms, on having the Act explained to them, indicate that they are in favour of the Act and its objectives, and, at worst, neutral about them.

### **Responses to the Act, and the impact of the Act**

In line with this low level of awareness, the vast majority of employers have not reviewed or changed any of their policies or practices affecting the employment of disabled people since the introduction of the Act. Even those who have made such changes do not, for the most part, attribute them to the Act.

It is clear that among those currently covered by the Act, the impact to date has been minimal. Over 90 per cent of those covered by the Act's inception in 1996 say that they have seen no impact on their business as a result of the Act.

As far as those who came into scope of the employment provisions in 1998 (when the threshold was lowered from 20 to 15 employees) are concerned, only a quarter of them were even aware of having come into scope. And of this group hardly any have made any changes as a result, and none of them see the Act as having had any impact on their business.

Turning to the anticipations (and fears) of the currently exempt group, more of them (but still less than a half) anticipate that coming into scope will affect their business, but only one in five anticipate a significant impact.

It is notable that the actual impact of the Act on those who are covered is much less than the impact anticipated by those who are currently exempt.

There is, therefore, scant evidence that the Act is having a deleterious or burdensome impact on those who are currently covered. Such concerns about the Act which are expressed by those currently exempt from the Act (and only by a minority of these) do not appear, therefore, to be justified by the experience of those who are already covered.

### **Costs of compliance and adjustment**

Does this mean that the burden and costs on small firms of compliance with the Act are low or insignificant?

Not necessarily, because what is also abundantly clear from our study is that the main reasons that small firms have not felt an impact from the Act is because they are not aware of its obligations, have taken no steps to comply with it (perhaps because they believe they already comply), or because they believe it is 'not relevant' to them.

The dominant reason for not anticipating any impact of the Act among those who are exempt is that they already believe they do not discriminate against disabled people. Similarly, the dominant reason given by those covered by the Act for its having had no impact is that 'disabled people do not apply for employment in their business'.

It is possible, therefore, that levels of anticipated and/or experienced impact would increase if the detailed obligations of the Act were to be more effectively disseminated among small firms, and small firms were to feel that those obligations would be enforced. Indeed one message of our study is that there may be a case for better dissemination and enforcement here.

To explore this issue a little further, however, it is worth noting that where concrete concerns were expressed by small employers, particularly by those currently exempt (albeit by a small minority of those) they related to the extra costs which might be incurred as a result of having to make adjustments for disabled employees (especially adjustments to the physical environment).

To look at how justified those concerns are, we can consider the experience of those small employers who did have disabled employees, the adjustments they have made, and the costs they have incurred.

The first point to note is that over half of all the employers who have or have had disabled employees, have had one or more disabled employees for whom they have had to make no adjustments

whatsoever (although they may have also have had employees for whom they did make adjustments).

Second, only 22 per cent of those who have or have had disabled employees report having made adjustments or providing additional support (and in most of these cases the adjustments relate to the retention of disabled employees who became disabled).

Moreover, even among the minority who have needed to make adjustments for their disabled employees, there is no evidence that the adjustments made have been costly or difficult. Most of the adjustments made are not physical adjustments to the workplace *etc.* (as anticipated by some currently exempt employers), rather they relate to changes in working patterns or hours, or adaptations to the organisation of work. Most of those who have made adjustments have found it easy or very easy to do so, and only a third of those who have made adjustments say that they incurred a direct financial cost in doing so. Where those costs can be estimated, they are relatively low – averaging £772 per person for whom adjustments have been made in the last year. If we take account of the numbers for whom the adjustments cost nothing, the average cost of making adjustments per disabled employee falls to £184.

Again this suggests that the concerns of the minority of exempt employers anxious about possible costs of compliance with the Act may not be justified. Were they to be covered by the Act, and were this to lead to an increase in the numbers of disabled people they employ, there is no evidence from the experience of other small businesses that the necessary adjustments would be widespread, burdensome or costly.

As always, there are alternative interpretations of the findings which can be entertained. It is possible, for example, that those disabled people who currently succeed in getting or retaining jobs in small firms are those who require little or nothing in the way of adjustment to the workplace or working arrangements. The experience of employing these disabled people might not, therefore, be a reliable guide to the impact of the DDA's employment provisions on small firms. In particular, if those provisions were to be more widely enforced, the effect might be that disabled people with more extensive adjustment needs might enter employment.

Nevertheless, we should also recall that in cases where adjustment is extensive or expensive, the 'reasonable' nature of that adjustment under the Act depends on the circumstances of the employer (including the costs of the adjustment, the financial and other resources of the employer, and the availability of external support and assistance). It is clear, moreover, that awareness of, and use of external support (*eg* through Access to Work) is low among small employers, and that their concerns about the financial cost of adjustments in specific cases may be mitigated by the availability of such support.

### **Information, advice and support**

To conclude, it is worth noting that the study revealed a significant and widespread need for better information, advice and support on the Act, obligations under it, and on the implications for employers of employing disabled people. This need was evident both indirectly (because many small employers had such low levels of knowledge and awareness of these issues) and directly (because many of them expressed a wish for more help and information).

Whilst such needs were, perhaps, most strongly expressed by the smallest firms (currently exempt from the Act), it is important to stress that such needs were not confined to this group. Irrespective of whether the threshold is lowered, there is also a clear unmet need among those employers with 15 or more employees currently in scope of the employment provisions. It is important, however, that information and support is appropriately targeted and delivered, in a 'small firm-friendly' manner, and our findings include some pointers on this.

# Appendix 1: Case-study Sample and Employee Interviews

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## 1. Structure of case-study sample

The case-study material used throughout the report is based on in-depth interviews with managers in 45 small organisations in five selected local areas. In addition, interviews were conducted with eight employees of these firms (some key points arising from the latter interviews are summarised in Section 2 below).

The table below shows the distribution of the case-study sample firms between the five geographical areas, and the three size groups which the study focused on.

### Structure of case-study sample

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	E. Sussex	Greater London	Belfast & County Antrim	Greater Glasgow	Powys	Total
<b>Employer interviews</b>						
fewer than 15 employees	3	4	4	3	3	17
15-19 employees	2	2	1	2	4	11
20-49 employees	4	3	4	4	2	17
<i>Total employers</i>	9	9	9	9	9	45
<b>Employee interviews</b>	4	2	0	1	2	9

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The case-study sample was also structured to include a broad spread of employers in different sectors. Thus the sample covered the following sectors (number of case-study firms in parentheses):

- Agriculture (1)
- Manufacturing (7)

- Construction (1)
- Wholesale, retail distribution *etc.* (7)
- Hotels and restaurants (4)
- Financial services (4)
- Business services (9)
- Transport and communications (4)
- Public sector, education and health (3)
- Other community, social and personal services (5).

## **2. Views of disabled employees – key points**

It proved difficult to obtain interviews with disabled employees, although a total of nine was achieved. Two people were interviewed in London, one in Glasgow, two in Wales and four in Sussex. There are a number of reasons for the difficulty we have experienced in taking to disabled employees, which include:

- most employers said that they do not have disabled employees (this was consistent with the survey findings – see Chapter 3 above);
- employers were often reluctant to let us speak to disabled employees, particularly in cases where the individual had not identified their disability to the employer;
- the only means of approaching a disabled employee was by asking the employer (in a number of instances the employer would not permit us to approach the employee but said they would ask the employee if they would be willing to participate in the study, and this approach rarely resulted in an employee interview);
- in a number of cases, employees were identified as disabled during the course of an interview, using a wide definition of disability, but neither the employer, nor the individual had previously identified them as such; and

- in some cases, interviewers made a decision not to request an interview with an employee with disability (for example interviews were not pursued in the London area with an employee with a terminal illness and with another whose employment was precarious because of the deterioration of his physical condition as a result of long-term disability).

Key points gathered from the nine employees who participated in the study, included the following.

### **Type of disability/impairment**

Our informants had a range of disabilities including:

- arthritis
- blindness
- dyslexia
- hearing impairment
- learning disability, and
- mental illness.

### **When disability acquired**

All informants had long-term disabilities which had lasted for at least ten years. Eight had a disability prior to working for their current employer and one had acquired a disability within the course of their current employment.

### **When disability declared**

Three informants informed their employer of their disability during employment and six did so prior to commencement (either prior to interview, at interview or before start of employment).

### **Confidence in declaring disability**

Five informants said they had little or no difficulty in telling their employer about their disability. One felt nervous and unsure of how their employer would react, and two talked about difficulties in the past and another about fear of discrimination.

## **Impact on job**

Generally, informants said that their disabilities had very little impact on their work. One of the two informants from London-based organisations said that acquiring a sight impairment meant that he had difficulty in performing a number of essential administrative tasks and relating to customers. Only two informants said they had received any form of adjustment to help them overcome the work related effects of a disability.

Five said that having a disability had no impact whatsoever on their job.

## **Awareness of DDA**

Four had awareness of the DDA and were strongly in favour of the Act. One thought it irrelevant, and others did not express any awareness. None of the informants in companies currently covered by the Act thought it had made any difference to their working lives; and others, in exempt organisations, did not envisage that the Act would make a difference to them.

## Appendix 2: Supplementary Tables

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This appendix contains further, more detailed tables which are referred to in the main text.

**Table A.1: Employees recruited in last 12 months, by region**

(all respondents) Region	Employees recruited			Unweighted totals
	Mean no. of employees	Minimum no. of employees	Maximum no. of employees	
North East	.8	0	30	34
North West & Merseyside	1.6	0	24	111
Yorkshire & Humberside	2.3	0	17	65
East Midlands	3.0	0	25	48
West Midlands	2.0	0	16	83
Eastern	1.7	0	20	102
London	1.9	0	65	71
South East	1.7	0	50	193
South West	1.5	0	25	91
Scotland	.9	0	15	89
Wales	1.6	0	10	47
Northern Ireland	1.8	0	15	42
All	1.7	0	65	976

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.2: Employees recruited in last 12 months, by sector**

(all respondents) Sector (standard industrial classification)	Employees recruited			Unweighted totals
	Mean no. of employees	Minimum no. of employees	Max. no. of employees	
Primary and extractive	.7	0	30	34
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	1.6	0	30	205
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, transport, storage & communication	2.1	0	65	366
Financial intermediation & business services	1.7	0	40	125
Public administration, education, health and social work	1.9	0	25	177
Other including private households	1.4	0	15	69
All	1.7	0	65	976

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.3: Existence of Equal Opportunities policies**

(all respondents) Does the business have an equal opportunities policy?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Yes	74	82	81	75
No	24	15	16	23
Don't know	2	3	3	2
Unweighted total (n=100%)	504	241	260	1,005

**Table A.4: Existence of equal opportunities policy, by sector**

(all respondents) Sector (standard industrial classification)	Equal opportunities policy			Unweighted totals
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Primary and extractive	53	43	4	34
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	82	16	2	208
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, transport, storage & communication	72	25	3	382
Financial intermediation & business services	82	18	0	127
Public administration, education, health and social work	90	10	0	181
Other including private households	75	25	0	73
All	75	23	2	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.5: Formality of Equal Opportunities policies**

(businesses with an EO policy only) Is the EO policy written or unwritten?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Written	27	39	42	27
Unwritten	70	57	51	69
Don't know	4	4	7	4
Unweighted total (n=100%)	381	204	215	803

**Table A.6: Whether equal opportunities policy written or unwritten, by sector**

(all respondents) Sector (standard industrial classification)	Is the policy written or unwritten?			Unweighted totals
	Written	Unwritten	Don't know	
Primary and extractive	34	66	0	21
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	29	65	6	176
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, transport, storage & communication	18	81	2	275
Financial intermediation & business services	31	62	6	105
Public administration, education, health and social work	67	33	0	166
Other including private households	41	59	0	57
All	28	69	4	800

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.7: Coverage of disability issues in Equal Opportunities policies**

(businesses with a written EO policy only) Does the policy specifically cover the employment of disabled people?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Yes	63	61	69	64
No	11	27	19	12
Don't know	26	12	12	24
Unweighted total (n=100%)	113	101	113	327

**Table A.8: Coverage of disability issues in EO policies, by sector**

(all respondents) Sector (standard industrial classification)	Does the policy cover disability?			Unweighted totals
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Primary and extractive	50	0	50	7
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	61	15	24	66
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, transport, storage & communication	54	20	25	60
Financial intermediation & business services	69	6	25	38
Public administration, education, health and social work	80	20	0	128
Other including private households	81	12	8	28
All	64	12	24	327

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.9: Coverage of disability issues outside formal EO policies**

(businesses with no EO policy, or an unwritten EO policy or a written EO policy which does not cover the employment of disabled people) Is there any formal written policy which covers the employment of disabled people?	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Yes	1	3	3	2
No	97	95	93	97
Don't know	1	1	5	1
Unweighted total (n=100%)	385	157	154	696

**Table A.10: Whether business has disabled employees (DDA definition), by region**

(all respondents) Region	Does the business have any disabled employees?			Unweighted totals
	Yes	No	Don't know	
North East	23	77	0	35
North West & Merseyside	26	73	1	115
Yorkshire & Humberside	17	83	0	67
East Midlands	38	62	0	50
West Midlands	24	76	0	86
Eastern	25	73	2	102
London	24	76	0	75
South East	27	71	1	198
South West	30	70	0	94
Scotland	33	67	0	92
Wales	17	79	4	48
Northern Ireland	9	91	0	43
All	25	74	1	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.11: Whether business has disabled employees (DDA definition), by sector**

(all respondents) Sector (standard industrial classification)	Does the business have any disabled employees?			Unweighted totals
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Primary and extractive	26	74	0	34
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	25	74	0	208
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, transport, storage & communication	27	72	1	382
Financial intermediation & business services	16	83	0	127
Public administration, education, health and social work	40	60	0	181
Other including private households	42	55	2	73
All	25	74	1	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.12: Disabled employees in the past**

(businesses reporting no disabled employees on either definition)	Organisation size (no. of employees)			All %
	Small (1-14) %	Medium (15-19) %	Large (20-49) %	
Have there ever been disabled employees in the business?				
Yes	21	34	39	21
No	76	61	53	76
Don't know	3	5	7	3
Unweighted total (n=100%)	350	116	122	588

**Table A.13: Attitudes towards recruitment of disabled people, by sector**

(all respondents)	Attitudes towards recruiting disabled people						Unweighted totals
	Sector (standard industrial classification)	Actively encourage applications	No view for or against	Would not consider recruiting	Depends on disability	Other	
Primary and extractive	4	78	13	4	0	0	34
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	6	88	6	1	0	0	208
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, transport, storage & communication	5	87	3	3	2	0	382
Financial intermediation & business services	7	90	1	0	2	0	127
Public administration, education, health and social work	19	78	2	2	0	0	181
Other including private households	13	79	2	3	0	2	73
All	6	86	4	2	1	0	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.14: Attitudes towards recruitment of disabled people, by whether business has or has had employees with disabilities**

(all respondents)	Attitudes towards recruiting disabled people						Unweighted totals
	Disabled employees?	Actively encourage applications	No view for or against	Would not consider recruiting	Depends on disability	Other	
Yes	7	88	4	2	0	0	580
No	6	86	4	2	2	0	425
All	6	86	4	2	1	0	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.15: Benefits of recruiting disabled employees, by sector**

(all respondents)	Benefits to recruiting disabled employees?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Sector (SIC)				
Agriculture, hunting & forestry	5	90	5	30
Fishing	33	67	0	3
Manufacturing	13	66	21	136
Electricity, gas & water supply	15	69	15	12
Construction	15	63	22	60
Wholesale & retail	11	71	18	220
Hotels & restaurants	19	63	17	102
Transport, storage & communication	17	71	12	60
Financial intermediation	24	55	21	31
Real estate	15	62	22	96
Public administration	100	0	0	18
Education	0	100	0	40
Health & social work	25	62	12	123
Other community & personal service	14	58	28	61
Private households	100	0	0	6
Other	0	60	40	6
Total %	15	66	19	1,005

Note: percentages are row percentages in this table

**Table A.16: Benefits of recruiting disabled employees, by region**

(all respondents)	Benefits to recruiting disabled employees?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Region				
North East	8	56	35	35
North West & Merseyside	9	73	18	115
Yorkshire & Humberside	7	70	23	67
East Midlands	0	75	25	50
West Midlands	17	57	26	86
Eastern	8	83	9	102
London	15	64	22	75
South East	29	55	16	198
South West	18	75	7	94
Scotland	13	70	18	92
Wales	13	66	21	48
Northern Ireland	21	51	28	43
Total %	15	66	19	1,005

Note: percentages are row percentages in this table

**Table A.17: Benefits of retaining disabled employees, by sector**

(all respondents)	Benefits to retaining disabled employees?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Agriculture, hunting & forestry	30	51	19	30
Fishing	67	33	0	3
Manufacturing	34	46	21	136
Electricity, gas & water supply	31	54	15	12
Construction	36	29	36	60
Wholesale & retail	26	49	25	220
Hotels & restaurants	28	52	19	102
Transport, storage & communication	17	58	24	60
Financial intermediation	42	26	33	31
Real estate	35	39	27	96
Public administration	100	0	0	18
Education	50	50	0	40
Health & social work	38	50	12	123
Other community & personal service	27	46	28	61
Private households	100	0	0	6
Other	0	100	0	6
Total %	32	44	24	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.18: Benefits of retaining disabled employees, by region**

(all respondents) Region	Benefits to retaining disabled employees?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
North East	28	21	51	35
North West & Merseyside	31	45	24	115
Yorkshire & Humberside	39	37	24	67
East Midlands	45	30	25	50
West Midlands	28	43	29	86
Eastern	24	54	21	102
London	33	46	21	75
South East	27	45	27	198
South West	42	47	10	94
Scotland	22	47	31	92
Wales	45	42	13	48
Northern Ireland	30	51	19	43
Total %	31	44	25	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.19: Reported awareness of the DDA, by sector**

(all respondents) Sector	Has respondent heard of the DDA?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Primary & extractive	65	35	0	34
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	59	40	1	208
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, Transport, Storage & communication	59	41	0	382
Financial intermediation & business services	70	29	1	127
Public administration, education health and social work	90	10	0	181
Other including private households	59	39	2	73
Total %	63	37	1	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.20: Reported awareness of the DDA, by region**

(all respondents) Region	Has respondent heard of the DDA?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
North East	70	30	0	35
North West & Merseyside	47	51	2	115
Yorkshire & Humberside	65	32	3	67
East Midlands	61	39	0	50
West Midlands	75	25	0	86
Eastern	71	29	0	102
London	49	51	0	75
South East	67	31	2	198
South West	51	49	0	94
Scotland	74	26	0	92
Wales	55	45	0	48
Northern Ireland	58	42	0	43
Total %	63	37	1	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.21: Perceived level of awareness of the DDA's employment provisions, by whether business has disabled employees**

(businesses that have heard of the DDA prior to the survey) Disabled employees	How aware is respondent of DDA employment provisions?					Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Very aware	Fairly aware	Not very aware	Not at all aware	Don't know/ not sure	
Respondents who have disabled employees	8	45	34	11	2	258
Respondents with no disabled employees	5	35	42	16	2	387
Don't know	33	33	17	17	0	21
Total %	6	38	39	15	2	666

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.22: Perceived level of awareness of the DDA’s employment provisions, by attitudes towards recruiting disabled people**

(businesses that have heard of the DDA prior to the survey)	How aware is respondent of DDA employment provisions?					Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Very aware	Fairly aware	Not very aware	Not at all aware	Don't know/not sure	
We actively encourage applications from disabled people	8	56	32	5	0	67
We have no view for or against recruiting disabled people	6	37	39	15	2	570
We would not consider recruiting a disabled person	12	16	40	32	0	13
Depends upon their disability	0	50	50	0	0	9
Other	0	30	70	0	0	5
Don't know	0	100	0	0	0	2
Total %	6	38	40	15	2	666

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.23: Changes to policy or practice following the introduction of the DDA, by sector**

Sector	Has the business reviewed/revised policy or practice towards employing disabled people since Dec. 1996?					Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes, reviewed our policy/practice	Yes, reviewed and then changed/revised our policy or practice	Yes, introduced a policy	No	Don't know	
Primary & extractive	0	13	0	87	0	22
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	8	6	0	84	3	132
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, Transport, Storage & communication	6	1	1	87	5	223
Financial intermediation & business services	6	6	8	77	4	91
Public administration, education health and social work	11	11	0	67	11	153
Other including private households	14	10	4	72	0	45
Total %	6	5	3	82	3	666

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.24: Attitudes towards the DDA and the duties it places on employers, by sector**

(all respondents)							
Sector	Attitude towards the DDA and the duties it places on employers						Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Strongly in favour of the Act	Broadly in favour of the Act	Neither in favour nor against the Act	Broadly against the Act	Strongly against the Act	Don't know	
Primary & extractive	22	40	34	0	0	4	34
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	16	44	33	1	3	3	208
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, Transport, Storage & communication	17	43	35	1	1	3	382
Financial intermediation & business services	18	47	29	2	0	4	127
Public administration, education health and social work	30	50	20	0	0	0	181
Other including private households	21	43	31	2	0	2	73
Total %	18	44	32	1	1	3	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.25: Attitudes towards the DDA and the duties it places on employers, by attitudes towards recruitment of disabled people**

(all respondents)	Attitude towards the DDA and the duties it places on employers						Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Strongly in favour of the Act	Broadly in favour of the Act	Neither in favour nor against the Act	Broadly against the Act	Strongly against the Act	Don't know/not sure	
Attitudes towards the recruitment of disabled people							
We actively encourage applications from disabled people	56	33	11	0	0	0	83
We have no view for or against recruiting disabled people	16	46	33	1	1	3	869
We would not consider recruiting a disabled person	15	28	41	5	10	0	27
Depends upon their disability	0	26	37	0	0	37	14
Other	0	62	38	0	0	0	7
Don't know	0	50	50	0	0	0	5
Total %	18	44	32	1	1	3	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.26: Awareness of the DRC, by region**

(all respondents)	Heard of DRC?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Region	Yes	No	
North East	67	33	0	35
North West & Merseyside	57	43	0	115
Yorkshire & Humberside	49	48	3	67
East Midlands	58	32	10	50
West Midlands	61	39	0	86
Eastern	52	46	2	102
London	48	48	4	75
South East	59	40	1	198
South West	51	50	0	94
Scotland	59	39	2	92
Wales	55	45	0	48
Northern Ireland	54	46	0	43
Total %	56	43	2	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.27: Impact on exempt employers of lowering the threshold, by sector**

(exempt employers – fewer than 15 employees – only)	Would being covered by the Act have any impact on your business?				Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes, a significant impact	Yes, a limited impact	No impact	Don't know	
Sector					
Primary & extractive	17	22	48	13	23
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	23	12	59	7	89
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, Transport, Storage & communication	18	24	48	10	215
Financial intermediation & business services	14	25	58	3	76
Public administration, education health and social work	10	20	60	10	63
Other including private households	18	18	59	5	38
Total %	18	21	54	7	504

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.28: Impact on exempt employers of lowering the threshold, by region**

(exempt employers – fewer than 15 employees – only)	Would being covered by the Act have any impact on your business?				Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes, a significant impact	Yes, a limited impact	No impact	Don't know	
Region					
North East	9	13	65	13	22
North West & Merseyside	19	26	43	12	56
Yorkshire & Humberside	18	37	37	8	35
East Midlands	13	20	62	5	21
West Midlands	24	12	58	6	48
Eastern	19	28	46	7	50
London	17	19	64	0	34
South East	17	24	53	5	90
South West	18	21	51	10	42
Scotland	21	11	59	9	53
Wales	21	14	58	8	32
Northern Ireland	4	26	65	6	21
Total %	18	21	54	7	504

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.29: Impact on exempt employers of lowering the threshold, by whether business has disabled employees**

(exempt employers – fewer than 15 employees – only)	Would being covered by the Act have any impact on your business?				Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes, a significant impact	Yes, a limited impact	No impact	Don't know	
Disabled employees					
Respondents who have disabled employees	19	18	56	7	132
Respondents with no disabled employees	17	22	53	8	367
Don't know	40	0	60	0	5
Total %	18	21	53	7	504

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.30: Awareness of Part III provisions, by sector**

(businesses covered by Part III of the Act)	How aware is respondent of the goods, services and facilities provisions of the Act?					Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Very aware	Fairly aware	Not very aware	Not at all aware	Don't know	
Primary & extractive	33	50	0	17	0	15
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	10	22	32	36	0	72
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, Transport, Storage & communication	14	38	28	19	1	260
Financial intermediation & business services	8	32	23	34	3	66
Public administration, education health and social work	40	40	20	0	0	111
Other including private households	21	52	14	10	4	41
Total %	14	36	25	24	2	565

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.31: Awareness of Part III provisions, by region**

(businesses covered by Part III of the Act)	How aware is respondent of the goods, services and facilities provisions of the Act?					Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Very aware	Fairly aware	Not very aware	Not at all aware	Don't know	
North East	18	18	41	23	0	18
North West & Merseyside	18	35	32	16	0	70
Yorkshire & Humberside	10	50	21	19	0	39
East Midlands	32	25	21	21	0	34
West Midlands	15	26	21	32	6	40
Eastern	2	40	33	25	0	51
London	5	34	22	39	0	41
South East	18	36	17	25	4	96
South West	19	17	21	43	0	56
Scotland	10	43	22	22	3	63
Wales	8	40	32	14	5	32
Northern Ireland	20	43	30	7	0	24
Total %	14	36	25	24	2	564

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.32: Use of external information, advice and support, by sector**

(all respondents)	Has business ever sought or received external information, support or advice about employing disabled people?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Primary & extractive	14	86	0	34
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	14	83	3	208
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, Transport, Storage & communication	11	87	2	382
Financial intermediation & business services	9	88	3	127
Public administration, education health and social work	20	80	0	181
Other including private households	14	84	2	73
Total %	12	86	2	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.33: Use of external information, advice and support, by whether business has disabled employees**

(all respondents)	Has business ever sought or received external information, support or advice about employing disabled people?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
<b>Disabled employees</b>				
Respondents who have disabled employees	19	79	2	349
Respondents with no disabled employees	9	88	3	626
Don't know	0	100	0	30
Total %	12	86	2	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.34: Use of external information, advice and support by attitudes towards recruitment of disabled people**

(all respondents)	Has business ever sought or received external information, support or advice about employing disabled people?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
<b>Attitude towards recruitment of disabled people</b>				
We actively encourage applications from disabled people	33	67	0	83
We have no view for or against recruiting disabled people	10	87	3	869
We would not consider recruiting a disabled person	15	85	0	27
Depends upon their disability	10	90	0	14
Other	14	86	0	7
Don't know	0	100	0	5
Total %	12	86	2	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.35: Use of external information, advice and support by whether business has formal EO/disability policy**

(all respondents)	Has business ever sought or received external information, support or advice about employing disabled people?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
EO/disability policy				
Respondents who have an EO/disability policy	25	70	5	237
Respondents who do not have an EO/disability policy	9	89	1	690
Don't know	12	83	5	78
Total %	12	86	2	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.36: Use of external information, advice and support, by awareness of the DDA's employment provisions**

(businesses that have heard of the DDA prior to the survey)	Has business ever sought or received external information, support or advice about employing disabled people?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Awareness of the employment provisions				
Very aware	23	77	0	67
Fairly aware	20	77	2	274
Not very aware	9	89	2	252
Not at all aware	12	82	6	58
Don't know/not sure	17	83	0	15
Total %	15	83	2	666

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.37: Anticipated future needs for information, support and advice, by sector**

(businesses covered by employment provisions of the DDA)	Future support needs?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Sector				
Primary & extractive	0	100	0	11
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	27	67	7	118
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, Transport, Storage & communication	37	58	5	167
Financial intermediation & business services	33	67	0	51
Public administration, education health and social work	50	50	0	118
Other including private households	33	67	0	35
Total %	33	63	4	501

Note: percentages are row percentages in this table

**Table A.38: Anticipated needs of currently exempt employers, if threshold removed, by sector**

(businesses currently exempt from the employment provisions of the DDA)	If the exemption was removed, would the business need any extra information, support or advice to help them deal with their obligations under the Act?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Sector				
Primary & extractive	65	35	0	23
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	81	17	2	89
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, Transport, Storage & communication	83	13	4	215
Financial intermediation & business services	76	18	5	76
Public administration, education health and social work	78	22	0	63
Other including private households	77	18	5	38
Total %	78	18	4	504

Note: percentages are row percentages in this table

**Table A.39: Anticipated needs of currently exempt employers, if threshold removed, by whether they have disabled employees**

(businesses currently exempt from the employment provisions of the DDA)	If the exemption was removed, would the business need any extra information, support or advice to help them deal with their obligations under the Act?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
<b>Disabled employees</b>				
Respondents who have disabled employees	75	19	5	132
Respondents with no disabled employees	79	17	4	367
Don't know	67	33	0	5
Total %	78	18	4	504

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.40: Anticipated needs of currently exempt employers, if threshold removed, by awareness of the employment provisions**

(businesses currently exempt from the employment provisions of the DDA)	If the exemption was removed, would the business need any extra information, support or advice to help them deal with their obligations under the Act?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
<b>Awareness of employment provisions</b>				
Very aware	60	40	0	22
Fairly aware	76	22	2	135
Not very aware	76	19	5	117
Not at all aware	83	14	2	41
Don't know/not sure	83	0	17	7
Total %	76	20	3	322

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.41: Plans for future changes, by sector**

(all respondents)	Plans to make changes to improve access to disabled employees, or to make it easier to recruit or retain disabled staff?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
<b>Sector</b>				
Primary & extractive	4	96	0	34
Manufacturing, utilities and construction	5	87	8	208
Wholesale & retail trade, Hotels & restaurants, Transport, Storage & communication	7	85	7	382
Financial intermediation & business services	4	91	5	127
Public administration, education health and social work	30	70	0	181
Other including private households	16	82	2	73
Total %	7	88	6	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.42: Plans for future changes, by whether business has disabled employees**

(all respondents)	Plans to make changes to improve access to disabled employees, or to make it easier to recruit or retain disabled staff?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
<b>Disabled employees</b>				
Respondents who have disabled employees	10	87	3	349
Respondents with no disabled employees	6	87	7	626
Don't know	0	100	0	30
Total	7	88	6	1,005

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.43: Plans for future changes, by attitudes towards recruitment of disabled people**

(all respondents)	Plans to make changes to improve access to disabled employees, or to make it easier to recruit or retain disabled staff?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Attitude towards recruitment of disabled people	Yes	No	Don't know	Unweighted totals (n=100%)
We actively encourage applications from disabled people	14	78	8	83
We have no view for or against recruiting disabled people	7	87	6	869
We would not consider recruiting a disabled person	0	95	5	27
Depends upon their disability	0	100	0	14
Other	0	100	0	7
Don't know	0	100	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1,005</b>

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*

**Table A.44: Plans for future changes, by whether business has formal EO/disability policy**

(all respondents)	Plans to make changes to improve access to disabled employees, or to make it easier to recruit or retain disabled staff?			Unweighted totals (n=100%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
EO/disability policy	Yes	No	Don't know	Unweighted totals (n=100%)
Respondents who have an EO/disability policy	14	73	13	237
Respondents who do not have an EO/disability policy	11	78	11	690
Don't know	6	90	4	78
<b>Total %</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,005</b>

*Note: percentages are row percentages in this table*