Disability in the workplace

Small employers’ awareness and responses to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the October 2004 duties

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A report of research carried out by BMRB Social Research on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions
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The Authors

Quantitative

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Qualitative

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Caroline Turley joined BMRB as a Research Executive in October 2004 after graduating from the LSE with an MSc in Criminology. During her degree she developed a keen interest in qualitative research and is particularly interested in researching sensitive issues, victimisation and rights. Since joining BMRB, Caroline has enjoyed working on a variety of projects for different clients including the Inland Revenue and Department for Constitutional Affairs.
Summary

The aim of this study was to measure how small employers were responding to the new duties under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) introduced on 1 October 2004. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used.

Method

The quantitative results were based on around 1000 telephone interviews with small employers, i.e. those with three to 14 employees. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had conducted a similar survey in 2003 which also looked at how employers of all sizes were preparing for the changes in legislation. Where possible, comparisons of the two surveys will be made. However, as different sampling frames and weighting profiles were used in the two surveys, any comparisons should be treated as broad indications, not precise measurement.

The qualitative research consisted of 36 face-to-face depth interviews with small businesses. The interviews followed the quantitative research, as the survey provided the means of identifying small businesses that fitted the criteria for inclusion in the qualitative stage. The respondents were therefore initially sampled directly from the quantitative survey. A ‘free find’ approach had to be adopted when some recruitment remained after the quantitative sample had been exhausted. The sample was structured to reflect a good mix of businesses in terms of industrial sector, number of employees and response to the DDA. The respondents interviewed were those with at least some responsibility for recruiting their employees. Each interview lasted approximately one hour.

Key findings

- Overall, nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of small employers were aware of Part 2 of the DDA either spontaneously or when prompted, an increase from 58 per cent in 2003. Small employers were most likely to say that ‘no discrimination on grounds of disability or ill health’ (38 per cent) was the main provision of the DDA. Although they were more likely to give more specific responses in the 2005 quantitative survey than in the 2003 survey, qualitative findings show that their views still tended to lack depth.
Small employers were shown a list of common impairments and they were more likely to acknowledge each of the conditions as a disability in 2005 than in 2003, perhaps indicating a slight improvement in their understanding of disability. Yet the qualitative study revealed that their understanding of disability was still lacking depth and little thought tended to be given to the employment of disabled people.

Only one in five small employers (20 per cent) said there had been a disabled employee at their workplace. The qualitative study similarly revealed that employers had limited experiences of employing disabled people, although sometimes they might have employed disabled staff without realising it.

Half of our respondents (50 per cent) said there had been a policy covering the rights of disabled employees and applicants, with 25 per cent claiming to now have a written policy for disabled people. Yet the qualitative research suggests that the term ‘policy’ may be interpreted very liberally as there was a marked lack of formal employment policies among small employers. Their reasons for not having a formal policy included a perceived lack of relevance to their business and a reflection of their informal recruitment practices.

Small employers were less likely to feel that their workplace would find it difficult to keep on employees who became disabled compared to two years ago (44 per cent in 2005 compared with 55 per cent in 2003). In the qualitative study, some employers were keen to retain disabled employees because of the investment they had spent on training and the desire to keep the knowledge and skills within the company.

Among those employers who had externally advertised at least once (61 per cent), three in ten (31 per cent) had mentioned an equal opportunities policy in their advertisement. However, findings from the qualitative research suggest that frequency of external advertising was low among small businesses and mentions of equal opportunities were almost non-existent in their advertisements.

Encouragingly, employers were less likely to say it would be difficult or impossible to help disabled job applicants by making adjustments. In general, those who had had a disabled employee were more likely than those who had not to say it would be easy to make adjustments for job applicants, suggesting that real experience of disability tends to lead to more positive attitudes.

When prompted with a list of disabilities, small employers were less likely to say it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with most of the conditions than in the 2003 survey. The qualitative study found employers were of the opinion that people with severe impairments would be the most difficult to employ. However, they also felt that as long as someone could do the job, disability is not an obstacle to employment.

One in ten small employers (11 per cent) had sought external advice about employing disabled people and they were less likely to say it was from government sources than in 2003. The qualitative study finds that employers generally thought they had heard about the DDA through non-government sources such as the media, lawyers, solicitors, trade unions or professional bodies. Small employers did not tend to seek information on the DDA proactively and most small businesses...
‘filed’ or discarded information on the DDA that was not of immediate use. A need for more information on and understanding of disabled people and the DDA is demonstrated, but it needs to be relevant at the time.

- Among small employers who had made some adjustments for their disabled employees (32 per cent), four-fifths (79 per cent) said it was easy, and three-fifths (61 per cent) said it had incurred additional cost. Employers were less likely, than in 2003, to say they had not made any changes because they could not afford to, 82 per cent making the adjustments because it was the right thing to do for the disabled person. The qualitative study indicated only limited changes had been made by small employers and changes tended to be small in scale.

- Employers who had never had a disabled employee were more likely to think it would be easy to make physical adjustments compared to two years ago, though the majority still thought it would be difficult or impossible to introduce flexible work organisation (62 per cent) or allow work from home (77 per cent). Perceived barriers to changes include the financial implications of making adjustments, the nature of the work premises and potential resentment amongst other members of staff as a result of adaptations.

- Compared to 2003, small employers were less likely to believe that taking on a disabled person would be a major risk for them (31 per cent in 2005 compared with 42 per cent in 2003) and that disabled people tend to be less productive than other employees (17 per cent in 2005 compared with 24 per cent in 2003).

- Spontaneous awareness of the DDA with regard to customer service provisions had risen from one per cent in 2003 to 15 per cent in 2005. Two-fifths of those aware of some legislation (39 per cent) said the main provision was to improve access to and movement around buildings. The qualitative research indicates that the customer service aspects of the DDA were generally seen as sensible as small employers were aware that by excluding disabled customers or clients from their business they were losing customers and therefore profit.

Summary

**Awareness and knowledge of the employment provisions of the DDA**

Spontaneous awareness of the DDA among small employers rose from four per cent in 2003 to 17 per cent in 2005. Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) were aware of the Act spontaneously or after being prompted, compared with 58 per cent in 2003. The qualitative study similarly found that while there was little awareness of the DDA by name, there was greater awareness that legislation existed to help prevent discrimination on the grounds of disability.

When asked what they thought were the main provisions of legislation with regard to employment, small employers were most likely to say ‘no discrimination on grounds of disability or ill health’ (38 per cent). Compared to 2003, employers were more likely to give more specific responses, rather than generalisations such as
‘equal opportunities’. This was not entirely reflected in the qualitative study, where respondents expressed general views that the Act would deal with issues of discrimination, equal rights for disabled people and access.

Small employers were shown a list of common impairments and they were more likely to regard each of the conditions as a disability in 2005 than in 2003, perhaps indicating a slight improvement in their understanding of disability. Yet the qualitative study revealed that employer understanding of disability was still poor, with definitions of disability focusing on mobility issues, people using wheelchairs and severe sensory impairments. However, it was clear that employers had generally given little thought to the employment of disabled people.

Employment of disabled people

One in five small employers (20 per cent) said there had been a disabled employee at their workplace and over one in ten (12 per cent) said they currently had at least one disabled employee. The qualitative study similarly revealed that experiences of employing disabled people were relatively limited; the people employed usually had minor impairments that required the minimum of changes being made to the workplace or the working conditions. However, unless a person’s impairment was visible, or the employee had brought it to the attention of the employer, it was quite possible for employers to have employed disabled staff without realising it. Experiences of employing disabled people were usually positive. However, a single negative experience tended to colour an employer’s perception of the employability of all disabled people.

Half of our respondents (50 per cent) said they had a policy covering the rights of disabled employees and applicants and this is a significant increase from 2003 (35 per cent). A quarter (25 per cent) said that they had a written policy. However, the qualitative research suggests that the term ‘policy’ may be interpreted very liberally, demonstrating a marked lack of formal employment policies covering either disability or equal opportunities in the workplace. While there was some indication that employers might produce such policies in the future, the primary reasons for not having them now were partly a perceived lack of relevance and partly a reflection of their informal recruitment practices.

Employers were less likely to feel that their workplace would find it difficult to keep on employees who became disabled (44 per cent in 2005 compared with 55 per cent in 2003) or that their workplace did not have flexible procedures that would allow it to employ disabled people (29 per cent in 2005 compared with 41 per cent in 2003). The qualitative study similarly showed that whilst employers had limited experiences of retaining staff who had become disabled, they were of the opinion that should this situation arise they would be keen to retain the employee because of the investment in training and the desire to keep the knowledge and skills within the company.
Recruitment and selection

Six in ten employers (61 per cent) said they had ever externally advertised at least one of their vacancies. Among those employers, three in ten (31 per cent) had mentioned an equal opportunities policy in their advertisements. However, findings from the qualitative research suggest that frequency of external advertising is low among such businesses and that the recruitment process was generally informal and mainly operated through word-of-mouth contacts. Even where formal recruitment processes were used, equal opportunities statements were almost non-existent and none of the sample had used the ‘Two Ticks’ symbol in their advertising.

Over a third of employers (35 per cent) required their applicants to give information about their health and disability at some stage during their application process. Interestingly, compared with two years ago, employers were more reluctant to state that the health information was for: assessing whether workplace would be suitable for the applicants (87 per cent in 2003 compared with 74 per cent in 2005), making practical arrangements for employees to allow them to do their job (84 per cent in 2003 compared with 68 per cent in 2005), assessing suitability of the job (81 per cent in 2003 compared with 66 per cent in 2005) and monitoring the composition of the workplace (58 per cent in 2003 compared with 44 per cent in 2005).

Encouragingly, employers were less likely than in 2003 to say it would be difficult or impossible to help disabled job applicants by making adjustments, such as providing staff with disability awareness information (24 per cent in 2003 compared with 15 per cent in 2005) and checking at interview for adaptations required (32 per cent in 2003 compared with 25 per cent in 2005). In general, those who had had a disabled employee were more likely than those who had not to say it would be easy to make adjustments for job applicants.

When prompted with a list of disabilities, small employers were less likely to say it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with most of the conditions than in the 2003 survey. Nonetheless, almost all employers (93 per cent) still found it difficult or impossible to employ someone with visual impairment and this has shown no improvement.

Questioned about whether they would employ a disabled person, employers in the qualitative study felt that provided the person could do the job, then there would not be any problem regarding their employment. Employers were of the opinion that people with severe impairments, including severe sensory impairment, severe mobility problems or psychological problems such as schizophrenia would be the most difficult to employ. Mostly, this was based on perception rather than experience and considered to reflect the reduced efficiency and potentially disruptive effects of a person’s disability.

One in ten employers (11 per cent) had sought external advice about employing disabled people and they were less likely to say it was from government sources than in 2003. The increase in non-government sources suggests that some degree of mainstreaming may be underway, with businesses seeking information from other sources used for more general business advice.
Employers in the qualitative study generally thought that they had heard about the DDA through the media, but could not be more specific about which media or when this might have been. Trade bodies were also said to distribute DDA-relevant information. However, none of the employers had sought any information about the DDA and neither did they consider that they particularly require any. However, in order to ensure that they were complying with the legislation there was a small demand for a very simple digest of the requirements of the Act.

Adjustments at the workplace

Compared with 2003, employers at workplaces that had had a disabled employee were more likely to say adjustments such as adapting work environment were in place to help their disabled employees. Overall a third of those employers (32 per cent) actually had to make some changes. Among those who had made some changes, four-fifths (79 per cent) said it was easy, and three-fifths (61 per cent) said it had incurred additional cost.

Compared to two years ago, employers at workplaces with a disabled employee were more likely to think it would be easy to make physical adjustments such as adapting work environment (33 per cent in 2003 and 49 per cent in 2005) and providing physical assistance (10 per cent in 2003 and 19 per cent in 2005) However, the majority still thought it would be difficult or impossible to introduce flexible work organisation (62 per cent), transfer people or jobs to other premises (76 per cent) or allow work from home (77 per cent) to help disabled employees.

The small employers participating in the qualitative study had generally made limited changes to their working environment and conditions either in direct response to the DDA or employee/customer need. This was often due to small businesses having had little experience of employing disabled people combined with a lack of awareness regarding the DDA. Where adaptations had been made they tended to be small in scale such as altering the employee’s seating and workstations rather than large scale structural alterations such as installing ramps and lifts.

There were three main difficulties that limited the extent to which small employers would make adjustments to their working environment and conditions. These were: the financial implications of making adjustments; the nature of the work premises; and potential resentment amongst other members of staff as a result of adaptations. The financial implications were of particular concern to small employers, as they assumed that adjustments would be expensive and as such detrimental to their business.
Attitudes towards employing disabled people

Compared to 2003, small employers were less likely to believe that taking on a disabled person would be a major risk for them (31 per cent in 2005 compared with 42 per cent in 2003) and less likely to think that disabled people tend to be less productive than other employees (17 per cent in 2005 compared with 24 per cent in 2003).

Over a fifth (22 per cent) said they did not know whether adjustment(s) for an employee who becomes disabled would cost less than recruiting a new one.

Awareness and knowledge of the customer service provisions of the DDA

Spontaneous awareness of the DDA with regard to customer service provisions had risen from one per cent in 2003 to 15 per cent in 2005. Not surprisingly, those who were public-facing were more likely to be able to specify the Act.

Two-fifths of those aware of some legislation (39 per cent) said the main provision was to improve access to and movement around buildings.

The qualitative research indicated that the customer service aspects of the DDA were generally seen as sensible as small employers were more likely to have made adjustments in response to the needs of customers and clients than they were for disabled employees. Respondents were aware that by excluding disabled customers or clients from their business they were losing custom and therefore profit.

Conclusions

Overall, awareness of the DDA has increased, and negative attitudes towards employing disabled people have declined since 2003. However, awareness levels and positive attitudes are still a long way from being universal, suggesting that there is a continuing need for communicating with small employers.

Attitudes towards employing disabled people have not changed considerably since 2003, but the changes that have occurred have been in a positive direction. However the research reveals that small businesses respond to situations concerning disabled people as they arise, and will not tend to be proactive in making adjustments to the application process or workplace. This suggests that the communication needs will be ongoing for some time, so that information is available when needed.

There appears to be a trend towards seeking information from non-government sources and this has implications for the dissemination of publicity and advice suggesting that an effective medium can be found through certain strategic organisations such as trade bodies and legal advisers.
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) was passed in 1995 to end the discrimination that many disabled people face. In general, the Act defines disability as:

‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’

(DDA, Part 1, s1(1))

Part 2 of the Act covers the employment field and includes provisions to prevent employers discriminating against disabled applicants and employees. It states that it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a disabled job applicant (DDA, Part 2, s4 (1)):

a) in the arrangements which he makes for the purpose of determining to whom he should offer employment;

b) in the terms on which he offers that person employment;

c) by refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering, him employment.

The Act also states that it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a disabled employee (DDA, Part 2, s4 (2)):

a) in the terms of employment which he affords him;

b) in the opportunities which he affords him for promotion, a transfer, training or receiving any other benefit;

c) by refusing to afford him, or deliberately not affording him, any such opportunity; or

d) by dismissing him, or subjecting him to any other detriment.
For the purpose of Part 2 of the DDA, an employer discriminates against a disabled person if ‘for a reason which relates to the disabled person’s disability, he treats him less favourably than he treats or would treat others to whom that reason does not or would not apply’ and ‘he cannot show that the treatment in question is justified.’ (DDA, Part 2, s3A(1))

Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to arrangements at work or physical features of premises so as to ensure that disabled employees will not be placed ‘at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled’ (DDA, Part 2, s4A). Failure to comply with a duty to make a reasonable adjustment also constitutes discrimination. (DDA, Part 2, s3A(2))

According to Section 7 (now repealed) of the 1995 Act, employers who had fewer than 20 employees were exempted from the duties under Part 2 of the Act and the Secretary of State had the power to reduce the threshold at a later stage. On 1 December 1998, the exemption threshold of 20 was reduced to 15. From 1 October 2004 onwards this threshold was removed, meaning that employers of all sizes are now covered by the Act – with the exception of the Armed Forces.

In Part 3 of the Act, it is unlawful for a provider of services to discriminate against a disabled person (DDA, Part 3, s19(1)):

a) in refusing to provide, or deliberately not providing, to the disabled person any service which he provides, or is prepared to provide, to members of the public;

b) in failing to comply with any duty imposed on him by section 21 in circumstances in which the effect of that failure is to make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for the disabled person to make use of any such service;

c) in the standard of service which he provides to the disabled person or the manner in which he provides it to him; or

d) in the terms on which he provides a service to the disabled person.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) commissioned BMRB Social Research to conduct a baseline survey to measure the effect of the new provisions of Part 2 of the DDA introduced in October 2004 that will impact on small businesses with fewer than 15 employees. The research aims to examine what adjustments are currently made in terms of policies, practices, procedures and premises for disabled people with special reference to recruitment, employment, retention, awareness of the new provisions of the Act and sources of advice about the Act or employment legislation. Follow-up survey(s), conducted later will enable the examination of how responses to the provisions develop over time.

The questionnaire and methodology of this survey is largely based on a previous survey conducted by the DWP in 2003 which explored how employers and service providers were responding to Parts 2 and 3 of the DDA. The results from that survey can be found in the report Disability in the workplace: Employers’ and service providers’ responses to the Disability Discrimination Act in 2003 and preparation for
2004 changes (Research Report No 202, hereafter known as the 2003 survey). At the time the 2003 survey was conducted, employers with fewer than 15 employers were exempted from Part 2 of the Act. However, they were still asked the questions relating to Part 2 of the Act to explore how they were preparing for the changes in legislation. The current report will compare results from the current survey with those from the 2003 survey. This will shed some light on how small employers were responding to Part 2 of the DDA compared to two years ago. However, as will be explained in the next section, any comparison should be treated with caution.

1.2 Research design and method

Similar to the 2003 survey, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. It was felt that while quantitative research would be able to measure small businesses’ awareness of, and response to, the employment aspects of the DDA, qualitative research would further explore the range of responses that small businesses have towards the DDA, together with the reasons for their responses. More details on both of these methods can be found in sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2.

1.2.1 Quantitative method

The quantitative survey was conducted by telephone using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). It is the most efficient method for a business survey of this kind and also the method used in the 2003 survey. Interviewers would ask to speak to the person responsible for the recruitment and management of employees in the organisation. In total, 1002 interviews were carried out and the average interview length was 23 minutes. Fieldwork was conducted from 1 January to 4 February 2005.

Organisations were randomly sampled within organisation size strata from the Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) database. Only organisations with three to 14 employees in total were included. We included only businesses with fewer than 15 employees because we wanted to measure how they were responding to the new provisions. A lower limit of three was set on the size of organisation in order to exclude self-employed people who include family members as their workforce, and to enhance comparability with the 2003 survey.

Quotas were set on both organisation size and the 1992 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code to ensure that sufficient interviews with groups of particular interests would be achieved. Two size bands – three to six employees and seven to 14 employees – were used. Larger organisations, i.e. those with seven to 14 employees, were over-represented in the sample so as to ensure we would achieve roughly equal numbers of interviews within each two size bands for analysis. Data were weighted by workplace size and SIC code to match the workplace profile of the D&B universe.
Table 1.1 shows the proportions of interviews achieved and the weighted proportions of interviews by the size of organisation.

### Table 1.1 Size of organisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column percentages</th>
<th>Interviews (%)</th>
<th>Weighted (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-6 employees in organisation</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-14 employees in organisation</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 shows the proportions of interviews achieved and the weighted proportions of interviews by SIC codes. We excluded employers from the public sector from this survey because they were being covered in a separate survey by the DWP.

### Table 1.2 Workplace Standard Industrial Classification code

<table>
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<th>Weighted (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, hunting and forestry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and Quarrying</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas and water supply</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wholesale, retail and repair</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotels and restaurants</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Transport, storage and communication</td>
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<td>Financial and intermediation</td>
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<td>Real estate, renting and business activities</td>
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<td>Private training providers</td>
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<td>Health and social work</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other community, social and personal services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base:</strong> all respondents</td>
<td>1,002</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the base sizes of most SIC groups are too small for meaningful analysis, this report will not compare results by SIC groups.

Table 1.3 shows the proportions of actual interviews achieved and the weighted proportions of interviews by country. Unlike the 2003 survey, we did not include businesses from Northern Ireland. Also, Scotland and Wales were not over-represented and data were not weighted by country as was done in 2003.
Table 1.3  Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews (%)</td>
<td>Weighted (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>88</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
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</table>

For the rest of this report, all quantitative results are weighted.

**Sample characteristics**

The sample was stratified by the size of organisation. By the term ‘organisation’, we mean the overall size of a business. This is different from the term ‘workplace’, which is defined as a single local unit. Both variables will be referred to in the report. When referring to multi-site businesses, the term ‘organisation’ is used to refer to the business as a whole and ‘workplace’ to a local unit within the organisation. When referring to single-site organisations, the terms ‘organisation’ and ‘workplace’ may both be used depending on the context.

Nine out of ten respondents (90 per cent) said they were ‘a single independent workplace not belonging to any other organisation’ and the rest (10 per cent) said they were ‘one of a number of workplaces belonging to the same organisation’. Businesses with more than 14 people in the whole organisation were excluded from the survey.

Respondents were also asked what type of workplace they belonged to and the results are shown in Table 1.4. Respondents who said their workplace is a franchised organisation were asked how much influence their franchising organisation had over their employment and recruitment policy. By franchising organisation, we mean an organisation that sells its trademark or trade name and business system to its franchises. Franchised organisations who said their franchising organisation had a lot of influence over their employment and recruitment policy were excluded from the sample, as such corporate influence suggests that they did not operate as a ‘small business’ in that respect.
Table 1.4 Type of workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of workplace</th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The head office</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A branch</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A franchised organisation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An area/regional office</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A division/subsidiary</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work from home</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other answers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,002</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of businesses in our sample (84 per cent) described themselves as head offices, which is what we would expect as nine out of ten (90 per cent) of them were a single independent workplace. Six per cent said they were a branch.

Table 1.5 shows the job title of employers interviewed.

Table 1.5 Employers’ job titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner/proprietor</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company director/director/partner</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General/duty manager</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager (any mention)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA/secretary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company secretary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other answers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,002</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were most likely to be the owner or proprietor (29 per cent), company director or partner (27 per cent) or general/duty manager (19 per cent). The nature of smaller businesses means they tend not to have line management structures or HR professionals to the extent of larger businesses, and this is shown in the absence of such job types from our sample in 2005. In the 2003 survey line managers and HR professionals made up 48 per cent of the whole sample (including businesses of all sizes, not only those with three to 14 employees), because they were the most common job titles among respondents from larger businesses.
Comparison with the 2003 study

The DWP conducted a similar survey in 2003, the results of which can be found in the report *Disability in the workplace: Employers’ and service providers’ responses to the Disability Discrimination Act in 2003 and preparation for 2004 changes* (Research Report No. 202). As the previous study had looked at how well prepared employers of all sizes were for the new provisions of the DDA, direct comparisons of the two surveys are not appropriate given the focus on small employers in 2005.

To improve comparability of the two surveys, we have taken the following measures. Firstly, the questionnaire of the new survey is largely based on that of the 2003 survey. Wording of common questions was left unchanged. Unlike in 2003, the current study mainly focused on employment provisions of the DDA (Part 2), not both the employment and customer service provisions (Parts 2 and 3). Secondly, at the previous survey, businesses of all sizes from the public sector and Northern Ireland were included. To compare the 2003 and 2005 surveys, we have filtered the 2003 data for the use of this report. Only organisations with three to 14 employees in the whole organisation, not from the public sector and not from Northern Ireland, are included. There are 733 organisations from the 2003 survey which satisfy such criteria.

Although we have taken all possible measures to enhance comparability of the 2003 and 2005 surveys, we should treat any comparisons as indicative only, for the following reasons. Firstly, at the 2003 survey, size bands were set on workplace size instead of organisation size. Hence, it is possible that some organisations with fewer than three employees at the workplace sampled were excluded in the 2003 survey, even though the whole organisation might have three to 14 employees in total. This may impact on the comparability of the data. However, since the overwhelming majority of small businesses have only a single workplace (90 per cent at the current survey), the impact should be minor.

Secondly, data from the previous survey were weighted by workplace size and country back to match the workplace profile of the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR). At the current survey, however, we weighted the data by workplace size and SIC codes back to the D&B universe profile. The different weighting profiles used mean that the data from the two surveys are not strictly comparable.

1.2.2 Qualitative method

The research approach

Qualitative research methods, such as the use of in-depth interviews, are ideal for exploring sensitive issues such as the employment and perception of disabled people. Consequently, this stage of the research adopted a wholly qualitative methodology of 36 face-to-face in-depth interviews with small businesses. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The interviews were conducted between March and May 2005 and followed the quantitative research, as the survey provided the means of identifying and recruiting some of the small businesses that fitted the
criteria for inclusion in the qualitative stage. The interview respondents were therefore initially sampled directly from the quantitative survey. A ‘free find’ approach - where our specialist sampling department provided additional sample - had to be adopted when some recruitment still remained after the quantitative sample had been exhausted. This was due to a combination of the criteria for inclusion diminishing the available sample and to some unwillingness to participate by potential respondents. The employers on the additional sample were contacted and their eligibility for inclusion in the study checked using a recruitment screener.

**Sample**

The sample consisted of 36 small businesses that were recruited to include a mix of the following characteristics:

- **Businesses’ industrial sector:**
  - manufacturing
  - retail
  - service
- **Number of employees:**
  - 3-5
  - 6-9
  - 10-14
- **Response to the DDA:**
  - fully embracing
  - partially embracing
  - not embracing

The ‘response to the DDA’ dimension was determined through answers to three questions from the quantitative survey that were subjectively considered to be most effective in identifying the extent to which the DDA had been embraced, whilst also giving sufficient sample from which to recruit the desired sample. The response given to the three questions by the survey respondent determined at what point on the continuum they were situated, as outlined in Table 1.6.
Two additional questions were also initially used to determine the ‘response to DDA’ variable, to ascertain how many disabled people were currently employed at the respondent’s workplace, and whether adjustments to the workplace were in place or planned in order to assist disabled employees. However, ultimately the questions could not be used as doing so resulted in a sample that was too small to be used for recruitment purposes.

Sample profile
The sample was structured to reflect a good mix of businesses in terms of industrial sector, number of employees and response to the DDA. The achieved sample composition is shown in Tables 1.7 and 1.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.7 Sample Profile (1). Industrial Sector: Number of employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Sector</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.8 Sample Profile (2). Industrial Sector: Response to DDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Sector</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was important to interview respondents that had direct involvement in, or knowledge of, recruiting people to their business in order to explore how decisions were made about:

- whom to employ;
- the creation of policies on recruitment of disabled people;
- making adjustments to the work environment and working conditions for disabled people and/or customers.

The respondents interviewed at the qualitative stage were those with at least some responsibility for recruiting their employees. The types of job description respondents had were as follows:

- Owner/Proprietor
- Manager
- Director/Partner
- Company secretary

The interview process

All the interviews were undertaken by experienced qualitative researchers, using the technique of non-directive interviewing. Interviews were guided by a topic guide, or aide-memoire, which was developed closely with the DWP. A copy of the topic guide may be found in Appendix B. The interviews were conducted in a convenient place of the respondents’ choosing, commonly in the respondents’ business premises.

The scope of qualitative research

It is important to note that the methods employed in this stage of the research are qualitative in nature. This approach has been adopted to allow for individual views and experiences to be explored in detail. Qualitative methods neither seek, nor allow, data to be given on the numbers of people holding a particular view nor having a particular set of experiences. The aim of qualitative research is to define and describe the range of emergent issues, and explore linkages, rather than to measure their extent.

1.3 Report

It is important to acknowledge that the two surveys used different sampling frames. While the quantitative survey used a GB representative sample, the qualitative survey used a mixture of free-find and quantitative respondents recontacted, specifically seeking a pre-defined mix according to attitudes, in order to explore the range of opinions, rather than to accurately represent the correct statistical proportions. Even though different sampling frames have been used, quantitative and qualitative findings will be integrated in this report so as to provide a more
holistic way of interpreting the data. However, the different sampling frames should be borne in mind in the instances where disparities with the survey’s findings arise.

The report is divided into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 2**: Awareness and knowledge of the employment provisions of the DDA (Part 1) – whether small employers were aware of any legislation giving rights to disabled employees and applicants; the nature and sources of any information, their information requirements; whether (and how) the provisions of the DDA should be enforced; and their perception of disability.

- **Chapter 3**: Employment of disabled people – what was the experience of disability at their workplace; and whether they had policies for disabled employees and applicants.

- **Chapter 4**: Recruitment and selection – whether they had encouraged disabled applicants to apply or sought advice on employing disabled people; whether applicants were required to give information on health; how easy they thought it would be to make adjustments to the application process; and accommodate disabilities at their workplace.

- **Chapter 5**: Adjustments at the workplace – whether adjustments were in place at their workplace; whether they had made any changes for disabled employees; and assessment of their motivations.

- **Chapter 6**: Attitudes towards employing disabled people – what were their attitudes towards employing disabled people across a range of related issues.

- **Chapter 7**: Awareness and knowledge of the customer service provisions of the DDA (Part 2) – whether they were aware of any legislation giving rights to disabled customers; and whether adjustments have been made for disabled customers.

- **Chapter 8**: Conclusions.
2 Awareness and knowledge of the employment provisions of the DDA (Part 2)

This section explores awareness and knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). First it looks at awareness of the DDA relative to other legislation. This will be followed by further probing of what small employers thought were the main provisions of the DDA and their perceptions of how disability is defined.

2.1 Awareness of legislation with regard to employment

All respondents were asked whether they were aware of any legislation giving rights to employees and job applicants on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation and age, and the results are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Awareness of equality legislation with regard to employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the grounds of race</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the grounds of gender</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the grounds of sexual orientation</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the grounds of age</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: all respondents*
Employers were most likely to be aware of laws giving rights to employees and job applicants on the grounds of race (84 per cent) and gender (81 per cent).

We also asked employers whether they were aware of laws giving rights to employees and applicants with long-term health problems or disabilities, and if they did, whether they knew the name of the legislature. The results are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Spontaneous awareness of legislation with regard to employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes – DDA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – don’t know name</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total spontaneous awareness</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all respondents</strong></td>
<td>733</td>
<td>1,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Encouragingly, one in six (17 per cent) respondents could spontaneously name the DDA in 2005, an increase from 2003 (four per cent). Over half (56 per cent) of respondents said they were aware of some disability legislation with regard to employment but could not name it. In total, almost three-quarters (74 per cent) spontaneously said they were aware of some disability legislation, which is a substantial increase from 2003 (58 per cent).

The spontaneous awareness of legislation on the grounds of disability (74 per cent) is still slightly lower than that on other grounds such as race (84 per cent) and gender (81 per cent). This shows that there is still room for raising awareness of disability legislation amongst employers.

Among small employers, those with larger businesses were a little more likely to be spontaneously aware of some legislation giving rights to disabled employees or applicants, compared with smaller ones: 79 per cent of those with seven to 14 employees compared with 73 per cent of those with three to six employees. Not surprisingly, those whose workplace had had a disabled employee were more likely to be aware of it, compared with those who had not: 82 per cent of those who had, compared with 72 per cent of those who had not.

Respondents who did not name the DDA spontaneously were asked whether they had heard of Part 2 of the DDA, which gives rights for employees and job applicants with long-term health problems or disabilities, prior to the survey. A further 467 respondents said they had, bringing the total awareness (i.e. spontaneous and prompted awareness) of the DDA to 63 per cent, an increase from 58 per cent in 2003. Interestingly, 80 people who said they did not know any legislation that gives
rights to disabled employees and job applicants when asked spontaneously, subsequently said they were aware of the DDA when prompted.

Not surprisingly, total awareness of the DDA was higher among employers who were currently employing at least one disabled employee. Seven in ten of these employers (72 per cent) were aware of the DDA compared to six in ten of those who were not currently employing any disabled employee (62 per cent). There is no difference when we look at the results by size of organisation.

The findings for the sample of employers participating in the qualitative study are broadly similar to those of the quantitative survey. General awareness of the DDA by name was low, although there was a greater awareness of legislation that related to disabled people.

All who had heard of the DDA prior to the quantitative survey were asked when they had first heard of the DDA and the results are shown in Table 2.3.

### Table 2.3 When first heard of DDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When first heard of DDA</th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the last month</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2004</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2003</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2002</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2001</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 2000</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t remember</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base: all respondents</td>
<td>1,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Small employers who had heard of the DDA prior to the survey were most likely to have heard of it in 2004 as 28 per cent said they first heard of it last year. This may be due to the fact that the survey was carried out following an awareness campaign aimed at employers and service providers which was conducted between the end of March and September 2004. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) said they heard of it before 2000. However, we should not put too much emphasis on the exact year as it would be very difficult for employers to recall exactly in what year they had heard of something if it was not recent.

### 2.2 Sources of information and information needs

All employers who were aware of the DDA or some legislation giving rights to disabled employees and applicants were asked how they had first heard of the DDA and their responses are shown in Table 2.4.
Table 2.4  How first heard of DDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media (e.g. TV, newspaper)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflet</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/trade press</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work colleague</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of commerce/business link</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend/relative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During education studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal advisor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former workplace</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet/website</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other answers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: all who are aware of DDA or some legislation

Just under a third (32 per cent) of employers who had heard of the DDA or some legislation said they heard of it through the media, which is similar to the responses given in 2003 (33 per cent). Respondents were more likely to mention a leaflet as a source of information in the current survey (13 per cent in 2005 compared with eight per cent in 2003). As this was a telephone survey, we could not assess whether the leaflets were official ones distributed by the DWP.

The sources of information mentioned by the small employers in the qualitative study are very similar to those in the quantitative survey. Typically, respondents thought they had heard about the DDA through the media, although they could rarely be specific about which media, or when this might have occurred. There were also some mentions of a leaflet being received, but as none were able to produce the leaflet and recall was poor, the source of the leaflet is not known. The information received tended to be of little interest to the small employers in this study. While some might have read the information, the tendency was to discard it as irrelevant. Indeed, one small employer indicated that material that did not look immediately relevant ‘was filed in the wastepaper basket’.

A radio campaign was mentioned by a further respondent, although they were unsure as to whether the campaign was related specifically to the DDA or a more general ‘disability awareness raising’ campaign. Nevertheless, their view is interesting as it was felt that the campaign was too broad. The campaign indicated that employers had to provide access for disabled people, but this employer needed more specific information.
There were also mentions of trade bodies providing DDA and disability-related information to employers. Another employer also mentioned that they had noticed the DDA through the Croner business publications.

2.3 Awareness of the main provisions of legislation with regard to employment

In the quantitative survey, all employers who said they were aware of some legislation were then asked a series of questions to ascertain their level of knowledge as to what was covered by it. First of all, they were asked to describe, in their own words, what the main provisions of the legislation were with regard to employment. Their responses were then coded and presented in Table 2.5.

**Table 2.5  Main provisions of legislation with regard to employment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No discrimination on grounds of disability or ill health</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility to facilities/buildings</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable provisions and adjustments must be made in the workplace</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal rights</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled people have equal ability to do the job</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal opportunities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair chance for all</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal consideration for job applications</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety in the workplace</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: all who are aware of DDA or some legislation 708 831*

Overall, the responses given by employers at this survey were quite similar to the ones given in 2003. They were most likely to say that the main provision of the DDA is ‘no discrimination on grounds of disability or ill health’ (38 per cent of all who were aware of some legislation in 2005 compared to 42 per cent in 2003). Not surprisingly, employers whose organisations had had disabled employees were more likely than those whose organisations had not to mention most provisions. Those who were aware of the DDA were also more likely to mention most provisions compared to those who were not.

What can be observed, however, is that small employers were more likely to give more specific responses in 2005. By specific responses, we mean they could apply to disability-related issues only. A high proportion mentioned ‘reasonable provisions and adjustments must be made in the workplace’ (13 per cent in 2005 compared
with nine per cent in 2003), ‘accessibility to facilities/buildings’ (15 per cent in 2005 compared with 11 per cent in 2003), and ‘disabled people have equal ability to do the job’ (ten per cent in 2005 compared with 3 per cent in 2003).

Respondents were also less likely to mention general responses, and by that we mean they could apply to other equality strands. A lower proportion mentioned “equal opportunities” (nine per cent in 2005 compared with 14 per cent in 2003) and “equal consideration for job applicants” (four per cent in 2005 compared with 12 per cent in 2003), although they were also more likely to mention equal rights (11 per cent in 2005, up from seven per cent in 2003). Overall, the trend was still that small employers were becoming slightly more specific in their responses, perhaps indicating a small improvement in their understanding of the legislation.

What is interesting is that businesses which were not public-facing were more likely than those who were to mention accessibility to facilities or buildings (22 per cent of non-public facing compared with 14 per cent of public-facing). As we shall see in Section 7.3, businesses that were public-facing were more likely to mention accessibility to facilities or buildings than those who were not public-facing when they were asked what the main provisions of the legislation are with regard to customers. This seems to reflect the fact that, although public-facing businesses were better informed about the requirements of accessibility by the DDA, they were more likely to associate this requirement to their customers, instead of their employees and job applicants.

Employers were asked whether or not they thought they have to make changes in advance, even if they currently have no disabled employee or applicant. Only a quarter of them (26 per cent) chose the correct answer, which is that they do not have to make changes unless they have a disabled employee or applicant. Two-thirds (66 per cent) thought that they have to make changes in advance even if they do not have a disabled employee or applicant. However, as we shall see later in the report, this misconception might not be a very strong incentive for employers to make adjustments for disabled employees or applicants, as only a small proportion of them had actually made any adjustments.

One in seven of those whose customers are businesses only (14 per cent) said they did not know what the current status of the DDA was compared with just four per cent of those whose organisation was public-facing.

In the qualitative study respondents were generally unable to be specific about either the employer or service provider provisions of the Act although there were exceptions. Since respondents demonstrated little specific awareness of the DDA they consequently tended to have no awareness regarding the lifting of the small employers’ exemption and therefore it had little impact on their practices. Employers tended to think about the DDA in terms of ‘equal opportunities’ or needing to make adjustments to their premises, either for employees or customers.
'Be aware of people with disabilities and the need to deal with them on that basis.'

(Interview 26; service, 3-5 employees, not embracing)

'I am aware that we shouldn’t be discriminatory against disabled people, which I wasn’t anyway, so it hasn’t really changed.'

(Interview 23; retail, 6-9 employees, not embracing)

Overall, the Act was seen as having the following four requirements:

- Providing encouragement to apply equal opportunities policies and not to discriminate against disabled people.
- To encourage integrated workforces.
- To provide disabled access for employees and customers.
- To make reasonable adjustments to the work environment for both employees and customers.

2.4 Perceived relevance of the DDA to their business

Generally, small employers in the qualitative study saw themselves as being ‘fair employers’, operating informal equal opportunities towards employment. In this respect they did not therefore generally see the DDA as relevant to their business. There were those that saw the DDA as unnecessary legislation:

'I’m a bit of a cynic as far as anything to do with the Government is concerned. I can’t help feeling that in the main we do best when we do things ourselves…We do need to have some sort of information, but by and large, I don’t think our society has ever improved by having a lot of legislation put upon it.'

(Interview 12; manufacturing, 6-9 employees, fully embracing)

‘…Irrelevant, as it’s created by politicians who don’t know anything about small businesses.’

(Interview 39; manufacturing, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

‘I’m deliberately not aware [of the provisions of the Act] as I don’t feel like it’s a practical issue…I do not employ any disabled people.’

(Interview 30; manufacturing, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

However, whilst employers may not see themselves as acting in direct response to the legislation, they unknowingly may operate in the spirit of the Act for the benefit of their business. Therefore the Act may be deemed unnecessary by those who consider the legislation common-sense. In terms of the service provisions of the Act for example, it was generally considered intuitive that in order for the business to survive it would have to accommodate disabled customers:
‘…for people running a business they already know that they need to help these people – in stores like this. I don’t want to shut anybody out, whether disabled, able bodied, or whatever. Everyone’s welcome and we want you in, we want your money.’

(Interview 23; retail, 6-9 employees, fully embracing)

2.5 Enforcement of the DDA

The small employers in the qualitative study did not know whether the DDA was policed or enforced in any way, although the assumption was that as the DDA was legislation then it probably would be enforced. However, if it was enforced, the small employers did not know who was likely to carry out the enforcement, nor the methods of enforcement that they might use.

Views about whether the DDA should be enforced were mixed. On the one hand, there were small employers who felt that it should be enforced, for reasons of equality. Apart from a ‘moral duty’, however, none of the employers could think of any other notable reason to enforce the DDA.

‘It would make us all think, obviously, and make us less complacent and make us aware of what is going on.’

(Interview 35; manufacturing, 10-14 employees, partially embracing)

However, enforcement should be a ‘light touch’ (‘not draconian’) in order that they would not incur significant expenses in accommodating disabled people. Nor should employers be forced to employ a disabled person in a job role that was likely to be difficult for a disabled person to undertake.

‘Government should not be able to force employers to employ severely disabled people; people with minor disabilities such as diabetes, depression, one leg or an artificial limb, would be easier to employ.’

(Interview 16; retail, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

On the other hand, other small employers were strongly against the notion of enforcement as they saw this as further evidence of the ‘nanny state’, increasing ‘red tape’ and likely to cost them significant amounts of money. Small employers also appeared to feel patronised by the idea of such enforcement, the perception being that most businesses were ‘sensible enough’ to respond to DDA legislation unassisted.

Employers were asked what the likely consequences of enforcement of the DDA would be on their businesses. For the most part, the concern was a perceived increase in employment costs, partly in terms of reduced productivity of the disabled person and partly in terms of the increased costs of accommodating a disabled person into the workforce. Depending on what they expected to be the likely costs of accommodating disabled people into the workforce, some employers thought it would simply cut their profit margins; others felt that the costs could ruin their business.
‘...in a small business you have limited cash and if you have to make huge alterations then where does the money come from?’

(Interview 37; retail, 3-5 employees, not embracing)

At the other extreme, some considered that enforcement of the DDA would have no effect on their business at all, as they felt that any plausible adjustments (particularly in terms of expenditure) had already been made. However, due to the perceived high cost of adjustments, such changes were in reality very limited. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of workplace adjustments.

Small employers were therefore nervous about the idea of enforcement of the DDA, although as the DDA was a low-key issue to them it was difficult for them to know how they would react to enforcement. However, one employer was quite clear:

‘[If the DDA was enforced and I was prosecuted] at the first hint of prosecution I would sack everybody...and close the business down.’

(Interview 39; manufacturing, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

2.6 Awareness of what is meant by disability

In this section, we explore what small employers understood by the term ‘disability’ and whether it correlates with the Act’s definition of disability.

The DDA defines a disability as:

(a) physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

(Part 1, s1(2))

The Act does not specifically cover a list of conditions but defines disability as a condition that impacts on one or more of the following capacities and affects the person’s day-to-day activities.

The list of capacities, of which one must be affected, are:

- mobility – moving from place to place;
- manual dexterity – for example, use of the hands;
- physical co-ordination;
- continence;
- the ability to lift, carry or move ordinary objects;
- speech, hearing or eyesight;
- memory, or ability to concentrate, learn or understand;
- being able to recognise physical danger.
In addition to this, the Act can also cover people with severe disfigurements, people with progressive conditions and those who had a past disability.

In the quantitative survey employers were read a list of nine conditions which may qualify as disabilities under the Act and asked whether they considered somebody with that condition to be disabled. The results are shown in Table 2.6, along with the precise descriptions provided in the interview. The wording of the description avoided reference to degree of severity, as this is a subjective matter, and, aside from a disability being something which limits day-to-day activity, specific degrees of severity are rarely cited as qualifying criteria in the Act.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mobility problems – difficulty getting around or moving from place to place</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual impairment – not corrected by glasses</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifting/dexterity problems – difficulties using their hands to lift or carry everyday objects</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing impairment – which affects their ability to take part in everyday speech</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mental illness</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A learning difficulty – used to be called mental handicap</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A speech impairment – which affects their ability to take part in spoken conversation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A progress illness such as cancer or Parkinson’s disease</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial or skin disfigurement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all respondents</strong></td>
<td>733</td>
<td>1,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Encouragingly, respondents were more likely to regard each of the nine conditions as a disability in 2005 than in 2003. For conditions such as a speech impairment, the increase is quite substantial (from 40 per cent in 2003 to 54 per cent in 2005). Employers were most likely to recognise mobility problems (89 per cent), visual impairment (77 per cent), lifting/dexterity problems (76 per cent) and hearing impairment (70 per cent). This pattern is similar to that in 2003. Only one in ten (11 per cent) acknowledged facial or skin disfigurement as a disability, a slight increase from the seven percent seen in 2003.

In considering the DDA, respondents in the qualitative study were asked for their own spontaneous definition of ‘disability’. In the main, definitions were very narrow and tended to focus on mobility problems and wheelchairs. Learning difficulties (which used to be referred to as ‘mental handicap’) and dyslexia were also mentioned in this context. Psychological problems tended not to feature in their initial definition of disability. This does not reflect the quantitative findings, where
65 per cent of respondents considered mental illness to be a disability, but this could be due to the manner in which the question was put to respondents in each of the surveys; the quantitative survey asked whether a specific condition may qualify as a disability, whereas the respondent was asked for their spontaneous definition in the qualitative interview.

However, after having given the issue more thought, the general consensus was that almost any physical condition and any form of learning difficulty or psychological problem could be seen as a disability.

‘…not just physical, obviously mental disability and maybe it is even diabetes or, I don’t know, heart conditions.’

(Interview 6; service, 10-14 employees, not embracing)

Disabilities were then considered to be of three main types. First, there were those that would affect a person’s ability to work but could be accommodated. Typically, mobility problems, difficulties with gross or fine motor control, minor sensory impairments and some psychological conditions such as ‘nerves’ and depression were all seen in this light. If the person could do the job, or with adjustments to the work place or the working conditions, individuals with impairments of this nature could, in most circumstances, be accommodated.

‘If a person came [to interview] and they were labelled disabled but they had been doing a similar function then I would not see it as a disability because they are able to do it.’

(Interview 30; manufacturing, 10-14 employees, fully embracing)

Second, there were other conditions, such as facial disfigurement, diabetes and dyslexia that were only seen as disabilities in certain circumstances. For example, a person with dyslexia wanting an office job would be considered disabled, whereas if they wanted a job as a painter and decorator then they would not be, as the condition would not be seen to impinge on their ability to do the job.

Third, there were certain conditions that were seen as impossible to accommodate by small employers. These included severe psychological problems, such as schizophrenia, and severe sensory problems, such as severe or total blindness and deafness.

2.7 Chapter summary

Nearly two-thirds of small employers (63 per cent) were aware of Part 2 of the DDA either spontaneously or when prompted, a rise from 58 per cent in 2003. Small employers were most likely to say that ‘no discrimination on grounds of disability or ill health’ (38 per cent) was the main provision of the DDA. Although they were more likely to give more specific responses in the 2005 quantitative survey than in the 2003 survey, qualitative findings show that their views still tended to lack depth.
Media is still the main source of awareness (32 per cent) as in 2003, but leaflets accounted for 13 per cent, up from eight per cent. However qualitative evidence suggested the recollection and retention of such material was poor. The relevance and timeliness of information and awareness-raising material was demonstrated as some small businesses ‘filed’ or discarded information on the DDA that was not of immediate use.

Small employers were shown a list of common impairments and they were more likely to acknowledge each of the conditions as a disability in 2005 than in 2003, perhaps indicating a slight improvement in their understanding of disability. Yet the qualitative study revealed that their understanding of disability was still lacking depth and little thought tended to be given to the employment of disabled people.
3 Employment of disabled people

3.1 Disability in the workplace

The interviewer in the quantitative survey then specified the conditions that are covered by the Act, and respondents were asked whether or not their workplace had ever had a disabled employee.

One in five of all businesses (20 per cent) said that there had been a disabled employee at their workplace. Similar to the previous survey, larger workplaces were more likely to say there had ever been a disabled employee as three in ten of those with seven to 14 employees in the whole organisation (29 per cent) said there had been, compared with 17 per cent of those with three to six employees. Over one in ten (12 per cent) said that they currently had at least one disabled employee.

Employers who said there had been at least one disabled employee at the workplace were then asked whether any of them had been disabled before starting work there. Almost three-quarters (73 per cent) of these employers said their employee(s) was or were disabled before starting work.

Employers who said there had been at least one disabled employee at the workplace were also asked whether there had ever been somebody who became disabled after starting work at the workplace, and three in ten (29 per cent) said there had been.

The qualitative research revealed that there were a number of small employers who had, and were currently employing, disabled people, despite their marked lack of employment policies (see Section 3.3). Indeed, there was little evidence of employers automatically turning down disabled people who applied for work. At the same time however, there was also little evidence of employers actively encouraging disabled job applicants or seriously thinking about how they could adapt the workplace or the working conditions so that it could be made easier to employ disabled people. See chapter 5 for further discussion of workplace adjustments.
Reflecting a marked lack of knowledge, understanding and awareness of disability issues, small employers may not be aware that they employed people with a disability. This was very much an ‘Oh, unless you mean X, who works for us in the machine shop’, syndrome. The fact that the person they employed had an impairment but could do their job satisfactorily often meant that the person’s disability ‘disappeared’ and they were no longer seen as disabled. By way of example, with hindsight, employers realised that they had employed people with a wide range of impairments, including: breast cancer, partial sight, dyslexia, stammer, severe immune deficiency, depression, obesity, Down’s Syndrome, polio, arthritis, diabetes, a person with one arm, back pain, learning difficulties and epilepsy.

3.2 Employing disabled people

The qualitative research found that experiences of employing disabled people, although limited, were generally positive. Experiences, whether positive or negative, had lasting effects with regards to the employer’s willingness to employ a disabled person in the future. For example, the retailer who had employed a number of people with a wide range of impairments over the years had no problem with considering future potential employees if they indicated that they were disabled. As one employer said: ‘Disability is just a negative way of defining people’s skill levels’. By contrast, an employer who had found that an employee with severe depression had a high absentee rate was also discouraged from employing disabled people in the future.

When being asked to consider the advantages and disadvantages of employing disabled people, small employers were hard pressed to provide a response and it was clear that there were employers who had simply never given this any thought before.

Those with experience of employing disabled people thought that their main advantage was the skills they brought to the workplace. Those with less or no experience expressed the outdated perception that disabled employees were more likely to be obedient and loyal, to work harder in order to prove themselves and show gratitude for the work opportunity.

‘I think they’d work a lot harder for you ‘cos I think they’d think they’d got to prove themselves, so I think you would get a lot of loyalty from them and hard work.’

(Interview 15; retail, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

The moral argument for employing disabled people was voiced, albeit rarely:

‘…because it is good that they [disabled people] contribute. It’s good for them, it’s good for all of us…and it’s good for them to feel they contribute as well because it makes a much more fulfilling life for themselves, so all those aspects are positive.’

(Interview 14; service, 3-5 employees, partially embracing)
Overall the disadvantages of employing disabled people were largely perceptual. These included: an inability to perform the job role adequately, lower productivity, increased costs in the form of adaptations to the workplace, and the time costs involved in adjusting the job role and reduced output.

3.3 Policies for disabled employees and applicants

All employers in the quantitative survey were asked whether their business has a policy covering the rights of disabled employees and applicants. This question was asked in a generic way and did not specify that this needed to be a formal written policy.

Half of all employers (50 per cent) said they did have a policy covering the rights of disabled employees and applicants. This is considerably higher than in 2003, when 35 per cent of employers said they had a policy.

To assess how formal the policies were, a new question asking employers who had a policy whether their policy for disabled employees and applicants is written was added to the 2005 questionnaire. Half of those who said they had a policy covering the rights of disabled employees and applicants said that their policy was written. This means that a quarter (25 per cent) of all employers had a written policy. This level seems surprisingly high since this is a survey among small employers who are unlikely to have human resource (HR) professionals in their organisation. Also, this result is inconsistent with our qualitative findings, which indicated that hardly any employers, even among those who fully embraced the DDA, had a formal policy. It is possible that employers were using a more ‘flexible’ definition of policy.

In the qualitative study there was little evidence of small employers having written policies, or using formal procedures in their employment practices of people generally, and disabled people specifically. The qualitative research suggests that such policies are more likely to be of a fairly nebulous ‘equal opportunities’ form, and rarely written down or formalised in any way. One employer who did have a formal equal opportunities policy only did so because it was a strict requirement for affiliation to their trade body and was also often a requirement of organisations that contracted their services.

There was some evidence of employers mentioning ‘equal opportunities’ in their recruitment advertising, although this did not reflect a formal, written policy but more of a general approach to recruitment.

Small employers did not have a formal equal opportunities policy or a disability-specific policy because they did not perceive there to be a need for one. This core reason was expressed in one of five different ways:

- ‘Never thought about it’ – It was clear during the interviews that the issue of recruitment and employment policies had not been given any thought by some of the small employers in the study.
‘To be honest it hadn’t occurred to me. It hasn’t crossed my mind as being something I need to consider.’

(Interview 32; retail, 3-5 employees, fully embracing)

• **Not perceived to be relevant** – The small employers in this study, and particularly those with fewer than five employees, tended to have very stable workforces and very rarely recruited new staff. As a consequence they were rarely exposed to disabled people applying for work and so there appeared to be little necessity to have a policy that covered such a rare event.

‘We haven’t had to address any issues with disabled people.’

(Interview 11; retail, 10-14 employees, partially embracing)

‘I don’t think we have a policy at with regard to disabled people. We tend to cross bridges when we come to them.’

(Interview 23; retail, 6-9 employees, not embracing)

Employers were often the only person who undertook the recruitment of staff, and as such they would adopt the same process each time and did not need to write down a procedure that only they would use.

• **‘Equal treatment for all’** – The employers participating in the study liked to think that they were fair employers and as such would naturally be an ‘equal opportunities employer’. They did not perceive the need to formalise, in the form of a written policy, their informal practices.

‘…anybody who comes here, whether they are disabled or not, will still be treated as the normal everyday person.’

(Interview 29; manufacturing, 6-9 employees, fully embracing)

• **Insufficient time** was a reason given in some instances for not having a formal employment policy. Running the business, dealing with the associated paperwork and maintaining a family meant that time was at a premium. Only those issues that were seen as important for the business and for which they had time to deal with were attended to.

‘It’s just something that you have to be aware of that we work from home and we have three children and there just isn’t enough time to do everything…and it’s just one of those things that I haven’t got round to.’

(Interview 8; service, 3-5 employees, not embracing)

• **Recruitment based on skills and merits** was also another way in which small employers felt obviated from the need to have a formal policy.

‘My policy is to treat that person on their merits and judge them on their ability to do their job and nothing else.’

(Interview 26; service, 3-5 employees, not embracing)
‘Basically, the bottom line is, if you are keen, you want to work, well then we’ll look at all the other things that we’d call hurdles or hindrances and then work out how we can best address those whilst still servicing our employer.’

(Interview 4; service, 10-14 employees, fully embracing)

Considering the sample of small employers as a whole, there appeared to be no difference in their attitude towards, or use of employment policies, across industry sector or size of employer.

None of the employers had any plans to write, or adopt, a formal equal opportunities or disability-specific employment policy. However, there was some suggestion that if the business should grow and they needed to employ significantly more staff then they would consider doing so.

3.4 Business practices

Employers in the quantitative survey were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about business practices at their workplace and the results from the 2003 and 2005 surveys are shown in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1 Agreement with business statements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workplace has equal opportunities for disabled employees</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace has good practices towards disabled employees</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace would find it difficult to keep on employees who became disabled</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace does not have flexible procedures that would allow it to employ disabled people</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When comparing the results from the 2003 and 2005 surveys, there seems to be a positive shift in the attitudes of employers. For instance, employers were more likely to agree with the positive statement that their workplace has equal opportunities for disabled employees (79 per cent in 2005 compared with 75 per cent in 2003). They were also less likely to agree with the negative statements that their workplace would find it difficult to keep on employees who became disabled (44 per cent in 2005 compared with 55 per cent in 2003) and that their workplace does not have flexible procedures that would allow it to employ disabled people (29 per cent in 2005 compared with 41 per cent in 2005).
What is interesting is an increase in the proportion of employers answering ‘don’t know’ when asked whether they agreed with any statements, with an accompanying reduction in negative attitudes. This seems to indicate a subtle softening in attitudes among employers. This might indicate greater awareness that it is wrong to discriminate against disabled people but that many employers still do not feel confident enough in their own policies to give a positive response whilst being reluctant to give a negative response.

If we look at the subgroups, employers at workplaces which had had disabled employees were more likely to agree with the statement that their workplace has good practices (87 per cent) than those at workplaces which had never had disabled employees (64 per cent). Those who were not public-facing, i.e. whose customers were other businesses only, were less likely than those who were public-facing to say they had good practices (59 per cent compared with 72 per cent). Those who were aware of the DDA were also more likely than those who were not to agree with this statement (80 per cent of those aware compared with 61 per cent of those not aware).

Those who said there had been at least one disabled employee at their workplace were more likely to agree that their workplace has equal opportunities for disabled employees than those who said there had never been any disabled employee at their workplace (87 per cent compared with 77 per cent). Those who were aware of the DDA were also more likely than those who were not to agree (73 per cent compared with 63 per cent).

Seventeen per cent of employers at organisations that had had disabled employees agreed with the statement that their workplace does not have flexible procedures that would allow it to employ disabled employees, compared with just under a third of those whose organisations had never had disabled employees (32 per cent).

### 3.5 Chapter summary

Only one in five small employers (20 per cent) said there had been a disabled employee at their workplace. The qualitative study similarly revealed that employers had limited experiences of employing disabled people, although sometimes they might have employed disabled staff without realising it.

Half of our respondents (50 per cent) said there had been a policy covering the rights of disabled employees and applicants. Yet the qualitative research suggests that the term ‘policy’ may be interpreted very liberally as there was a marked lack of formal employment policies among small employers. Their reasons for not having a formal policy included a perceived lack of relevance to their business and a reflection of their informal recruitment practices.

Small employers were less likely to feel that their workplace would find it difficult to keep on employees who became disabled compared to two years ago (44 per cent in 2005 compared with 55 per cent in 2003). In the qualitative study, some employers were keen to retain disabled employees because of the investment they had spent on training, and the desire to keep the knowledge and skills within the company.
4 Recruitment and selection

4.1 Advertising of vacancies

Employers were asked whether vacancies at their workplaces had ever been advertised externally. By advertising externally, we include jobs that are posted with Jobcentres and recruitment services. Six in ten employers (61 per cent) said they had externally advertised at least one of their vacancies. The size of organisation played a role here, as organisations with seven to 14 employees were more likely than those with three to six employees to have ever advertised their vacancies (73 per cent compared with 57 per cent). Note that this does not imply that external advertising is standard, or even regular practice, but simply means that they have done so at some time.

All employers who said they had externally advertised at least one of their vacancies were then asked whether they had encouraged disabled applicants to apply for jobs by referencing an equal opportunities policy, the rights of disabled applicants or the Two Ticks disability symbol in their job advertisements. The results are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Policies referenced in job adverts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An equal opportunities policy</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rights of disabled applicants</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Two Ticks disability symbol</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base: all who had ever advertised vacancies</td>
<td>473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There had not been many changes since 2003. Three in ten employers who said they had ever advertised externally (31 per cent) mentioned an equal opportunities policy in their advertisements. Larger organisations with seven to 14 employees were more likely to do this compared with smaller organisations (34 per cent compared with 28 per cent). A third of those aware of the DDA (34 per cent) made reference to an
equal opportunities policy, compared with under a quarter of those who were not (23 per cent).

One in ten employers who had ever advertised their vacancies externally (10 per cent) said they made reference to the rights of disabled applicants in their advertisements and only four per cent said they made reference to the Two Ticks disability symbol.

Staff recruitment was not generally a major issue for the small employers in the qualitative study. With relatively low staff turnover, recruitment could be infrequent. For example, a three-person painting and decorating firm had not taken on new staff in five years. Similarly a manufacturing firm had not recruited any permanent staff for 10 years.

When recruitment did occur it tended to be informal. Consequently, recruitment could often be through word of mouth, through business contacts, or an advertisement in a local shop window or paper. The company’s own website, trade journals, recruitment agencies and the Jobcentre had all been used as sources of new staff, but again, relatively infrequently. The cost of advertising was the key issue here.

In the advertising process there was little use of equal opportunities statements and no use of the ‘Two Ticks’ symbol. Indeed, employers were often intrigued as to what the Two Ticks symbol was. Employers admitted that they generally did not think about equal opportunities or disabled people when looking for staff. They were simply interested in finding the best person for the job. Consequently, they neither actively sought job applications from disabled people; neither did they discard them. However employers rarely, to their knowledge, received applications from a disabled person.

4.2 Health information

Employers in the quantitative survey were asked whether applicants to the workplace are required to give information about health and disabilities at any stage in the application process. This was in order to understand how health information was used within organisations and whether it was being used to affect selection decisions or to help make adaptations for interviewees or potential employees.

Over a third of employers (35 per cent) said that applicants to the workplace were required to give information about their health and disability and a further four per cent said that applicants were sometimes required to give such information. This is similar to the results seen in 2003 when 37 per cent of respondents said applicants were required to give information and three per cent said they are sometimes required to do so.

Respondents who said their applicants were required at times to give information about health and disabilities were asked if the information was used for a number of purposes. The results in 2003 and 2005 are shown in Table 4.2.
Table 4.2  Purpose of health information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of health information</th>
<th>Multiple responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Column percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess whether the workplace would be suitable for the applicant</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help make practical arrangements to allow the employee to do their job</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess suitability for the job</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor the composition of the workforce</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all who ask questions about health/disability</strong></td>
<td><strong>388</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, respondents are less likely to mention each of the above purposes in 2005 than in 2003. They were still most likely to say that the information was used to assess whether the workplace would be suitable for the applicant, as three-quarters of employers (74 per cent) mentioned this reason, although this level is substantially lower than that in 2003 (87 per cent). Employers from organisations with three to six employees were more likely than those from organisations with seven to 14 employees to state this purpose (78 per cent compared with 69 per cent).

Close to seven in ten (68 per cent) said that the information was used to help make practical arrangements to allow the employee to do their job in 2005, compared with over four-fifths (84 per cent) in 2003. A similar proportion (66 per cent) said it was used to assess suitability for the job in 2005, while over four-fifths (81 per cent) cited this reason in 2003. The proportion of employers who said the information was used to monitor the composition of the workforce has dropped from 58 per cent in 2003 to 44 per cent in 2005.

Although a similar proportion of employers said that their applicants were at times asked to provide information on health and disabilities, it is interesting to note that they were less likely to state what the purposes of such information were in 2005. It is possible that they were less certain about what they could use the health information for under the new provisions of the DDA. This is an area that could be investigated through further research.

4.3  The ease of making adjustments to the application process

According to Part 2, Section 4(1) of the DDA, it is unlawful for employers to discriminate against a disabled applicant ‘in the arrangements which he makes for the purpose of determining to whom he should offer employment.’ They have a duty to ensure that disabled applicants are not placed ‘at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled’ (DDA, s4A(1)). To measure how
small employers perceive this statutory duty, we asked them how easy it would be to take certain steps to assist disabled job applicants. These questions were posed hypothetically in order to gauge how easily these steps could be made in the future, if not already taken. The results are shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 How easy it would be to help disabled job applicants

Overall, employers were less likely to say it would be difficult or impossible to help disabled job applicants by making the above adjustments than had been found in 2003. Employers were less likely to say it would be difficult or impossible to provide staff with disability awareness information (15 per cent in 2005 compared with 24 per cent in 2003). The proportion of employers saying it would be difficult or impossible to check at interview for adaptations that might be required for applicants had dropped from a third (32 per cent) in 2003 to a quarter (25 per cent) in 2005.

Employers were also slightly less likely to say it would be impossible to provide application forms in alternative formats (seven per cent in 2005 compared with 11 per cent in 2003), or help with communication (17 per cent in 2005 compared with 25 per cent in 2003).

Concurrently, there was an increase in the proportions of employers saying they ‘don’t know’ to each of the above adjustments. It seems that although employers were less likely to rule out steps that could be taken at this survey, they still needed more persuasion that those steps would be easy to make if needed. We might therefore conclude that although good practice is still far from universal, there is an increasing acknowledgement among small employers that they should not be ruling out such adjustments.

Looking at the subgroups, employers in organisations that had had a disabled employee were more likely than those who had not to say it would be easy to provide
disability awareness information for staff involved in recruitment (80 per cent compared with 72 per cent). Those aware of the DDA were more inclined to say it would be easy to do so (78 per cent of those aware compared with 69 per cent of those not aware).

Over seven in ten employers who had had disabled people working for them (72 per cent) said it would be easy to check at interview for adaptations that might be required for disabled job applicants, compared with 64 per cent who had not.

Over two-fifths of employers in organisations with seven to 14 employees (41 per cent) said it would be easy to provide application forms in alternative formats, compared with 35 per cent of employers in organisations with three to six employees. Whether organisations had had disabled employees also played a role, as 44 per cent of employers in organisations that had had disabled employees said it would be easy, compared with a third of those who had not (34 per cent).

Those who had had disabled employees were more likely than those who had not to say it would be easy to provide applicants help with communication (22 per cent compared with 14 per cent).

### 4.4 Recruitment

While employers in the qualitative survey were not necessarily averse to employing a disabled person, they did not necessarily agree with the notion of positive discrimination. Having now gained awareness of the DDA, equal opportunities statements and the Two Ticks symbol, they would continue as they always had done. Their view was that if a person could do the job then they should apply for the job in the usual manner and would be treated in the same way as any other job applicant.

The recruitment process itself tended to be informal with employers adopting a range of approaches. At its simplest this could be purely presenting oneself for interview after demonstrating interest in the job position. CVs could also be requested. Overall there was a marked lack of application forms or health questionnaires used in the recruitment process. Where they were in use, it tended to be in the larger of the small employers.

Turning now to the interview process, with one or two exceptions, the small employers in the study tended to operate on the basis of how people presented themselves at interview. Employers were not generally aware of whether a job candidate was disabled unless it was clearly noticeable, such as a visually apparent mobility or sensory impairment, or if the person specifically mentioned it.

Employers tended to be of three different types in terms of how they might handle disability issues. Some would not ask about disability at all; others might ask if there was anything that might make it difficult for them to accomplish their job role; yet others might ask specifically about health issues and/or disabilities.
‘Recruitment is always verbal with no forms filled in. I don’t ask if they’ve got any disabilities. As long as they can read/write, you know.’

(Interview 7; retail, 6-9 employees, not embracing)

‘We never ask people if they are disabled. It never occurred to us to do so.’

(Interview 16; retail, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

‘I ask them if there is anything that might get in the way of them doing the job.’

(Interview 33; retail, 6-9 employees, fully embracing)

In this respect, employers realised during the course of the research that they could have employed, or currently be employing, disabled staff without realising it. In general, this was of little concern to them. If the person could do the job as well as the next person, then this was not an issue. However, there were employers who began to worry about this state of affairs and thought that they should probably know more about the health of their employees from a ‘health and safety’ perspective.

Although the issue had not arisen in the recent past, employers were confident that they would be able to deal with the issue of disability, should it arise either in a CV or during the interview process, in a professional and fair manner.

‘[If there were two people with similar skills, one of whom was disabled] I wouldn’t make a judgement because one person was disabled and one wasn’t…if I liked their CV and I thought they were capable in every other respect then I would be more then happy to interview them and find out whether they were able to do the job or not.’

(Interview 11; retail, 10-14 employees, partially embracing)

‘If they were capable and obviously they could do the job, well that’s what counts isn’t it.’

(Interview 35; manufacturing, 10-14 employees, partially embracing)

There were, however, employers who were quite certain that if there was a competition between a disabled person and an able-bodied person applying for the same job, it would be the able-bodied person who would be favoured:

‘Oh! I’ll be completely honest with you because we have such a lot of applicants I would not have employed a dyslexic person because there would have been two or three other people who weren’t dyslexic…I wouldn’t have chosen them out of choice.’

(Interview 15; retail, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

Such views appeared to be based on negative perceptions of disabled people as less productive and of greater financial expense than able-bodied people. Whilst it is not possible to ascertain where these perceptions stem from, it is important to highlight that these stereotypes are still held by some small employers.
4.5 The ease of accommodating specific impairments

Employers were then asked how easy they believed it would be to employ people with certain conditions at their workplaces. This was in order to explore how easy employers perceived it to be to accommodate specific impairments and reasons for these perceptions. In total, employers were asked about 11 conditions which can be covered by the Act. This did not attempt to cover all conditions that might be covered under the DDA but rather a cross-section of different conditions, in order to explore how different conditions were perceived. The 2003 and 2005 results for each condition are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Proportions saying it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with a disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impaired vision</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profound deafness</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair user</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkinson’s disease</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning difficulties</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe stammer</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical depression</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexic</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facial scarring</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all respondents</strong></td>
<td>733</td>
<td>1,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2005 small employers were less likely to say it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with most of the above conditions than two years ago. While close to four-fifths of employers (78 per cent) said it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with Schizophrenia in 2003, only three-fifths (61 per cent) said so in 2005. Only four in ten (41 per cent) said it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with clinical depression in 2005, compared with 55 per cent in 2003.

An overwhelming majority of employers (93 per cent) still found it difficult or impossible to employ someone with severely impaired vision who needs to use Braille or other such aids, and this showed no change since 2003. A significant proportion (73 per cent) still thought it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with profound deafness that is not helped by hearing aid, down a little from 78 per cent in 2003.
To probe in more detail barriers to disabled people with non-physical disabilities, we have added two new open-ended questions to the survey. Respondents who said it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with schizophrenia were asked why they said so. The most common responses are shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4 Reasons it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with schizophrenia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Multiple responses 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job involves dealing with public/customers</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are unpredictable</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the nature of work</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on the level of disability/medication</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are sharp objects/dangerous equipment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It will be risky for other staff</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not understand schizophrenia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety issues</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They can be violent</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: all who said it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with schizophrenia 600*

Respondents cited a mixture of responses focused fairly equally on the job/workplace and on the condition itself. A quarter of employers who said it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with this condition said it was because the job involves dealing with the public or customers (25 per cent), and twelve per cent said it was because of the nature of their work. One in five cited perceived unpredictability of people with schizophrenia (20 per cent), one in ten (10 per cent) believed it would be difficult because there were sharp objects or dangerous equipment in their workplace, and nine per cent thought it would be risky for other staff. These latter points are perhaps referring to cases that have received widespread media attention following physical attacks by people with schizophrenia on other people.

Some of those regarding it as difficult or impossible to employ someone with schizophrenia were less strident when asked to explain their view. Six per cent admitted that they found it difficult because they did not understand schizophrenia. One in ten (ten per cent) suggested that it would depend on the level of disability and medication.

As all employers are legally obliged to provide a safe environment to their employees, health and safety issues were raised by some employers. Almost one in ten (nine per cent) thought it would be difficult or impossible to employ people with schizophrenia because of the threat to the safety of other staff and six per cent said it was because of health and safety issues.
Responses given by employers who were aware of the DDA or had ever employed disabled employees were similar to those given by the rest of the employers.

Respondents who said it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with learning difficulties were asked why they said so. Their most common responses are shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 Reasons it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with learning difficulties**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column percentages</th>
<th>Multiple responses 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job involves dealing with public/customers</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety issues</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They would not be able to learn</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the nature of work</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot give them adequate supervision</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical nature of work</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depends on the level of disability</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation is small</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job involves computer</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They would not be able to deal with cash</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They would not have the necessary communication skills</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Base: all who said it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with learning difficulties 599*

Here the reasons focused more on the job/workplace and less on the condition. A fifth (19 per cent) believed it would be difficult because their job involved dealing with the public. Over one in ten (12 per cent) said it was because of the nature of their work and same proportion (12 per cent) said it was because their work was of a technical nature. Health and safety issues were mentioned by 17 per cent of employers who were worried that their environment was too dangerous for people with learning difficulties.

Seven per cent also pointed out that their workplace was too small to accommodate someone with learning difficulties. There seems to be a perception that people with learning difficulties will require extra supervision, as 12 per cent of those who said it would be difficult to employ someone with this condition said it was because they would not be able to provide adequate supervision.

People with learning difficulties were also perceived to be incapable of learning or understanding information (14 per cent) and dealing with money (five per cent). It was also thought they would not have the necessary communication skills (five per cent).
Employers in the qualitative survey considered people with psychological conditions, such as schizophrenia and severe clinical depression, to be difficult to accommodate, largely because small employers did not understand these conditions.

‘[People with schizophrenia] could cause more harm to their colleagues or get irritated by another colleague and then cause disturbance or harm to the other person during which process all sorts of things can happen. They could start interfering with the machinery there...he would be more of a harm and a hindrance for me rather than getting the work done.’

(Interview 19; service, 3-5 employees, partially embracing)

The perceived severity of an impairment was of major concern to the employers. Overall, they could envisage employing a person with a ‘mild’ impairment who could be accommodated with modest changes to the workplace (or working conditions) and with limited expenditure. However, irrespective of the nature of the impairment, if it was likely to have an effect on the person’s ability to do the job and was described as ‘severe’, small employers felt that they would not be able to employ such an individual. The critical issues in these instances were two-fold: the ability to be as productive as other employees; and necessitating the minimum of expenditure in order to make adjustments to the workplace.

It was clear, however, that for most of the employers participating in the qualitative study, this was the most thought they had ever given to the issue of disability.

4.6 Retention of staff

The ease of accommodating specific impairments is particularly relevant with regards to the retention of staff. The small employers participating in the qualitative research had very little experience of retaining a member of staff who became disabled during the course of their employment. Views about what they had done, and what they thought they would do, to retain a disabled member of staff were broadly similar.

The critical factor in employers’ thinking was whether the employee could continue in their job role and without too much compromise over their productivity. If the impairment had little effect on the person’s ability, employers were keen to retain a disabled employee because of the intrinsic value of their skills and knowledge.

‘Unless the disability absolutely stopped them from doing the job, then there’s no reason why I would not continue to have them... if we can get round it we’ll get round it...we just want people to do a good job and if they can do a good job I’m not really too concerned.’

(Interview 23; retail, 6-9 employees, not embracing)

‘So long as the company was making profit you would bend over backwards to help anybody if they needed it.’

(Interview 39; manufacturing, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)
In addition, employers balanced the recruitment and training costs of recruiting a new employee with retaining an existing employee who had become disabled. In general, employers thought it likely to be more cost-effective to retain staff.

A concern for employers was the nature of the impairment that their employee had sustained. With much less flexibility than a large employer to adapt job roles or move people between roles, small employers were concerned that the nature of the person’s impairment – and the severity – would largely determine whether it would be possible to retain them in employment.

‘It would be impossible to retain someone who became blind or partially sighted as I have no jobs that a blind person can do.’

(Interview 39; manufacturing, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

4.7 Seeking advice

All employers were asked whether they had ever sought advice on any aspect of employing disabled people - this could include advice about making physical adjustments to the workplace or advice about legal requirements. This was in order to identify both how easily people had found information and what the areas of uncertainty were.

Just over one in ten employers (11 per cent) said they had sought external advice about employing disabled people, down from 15 per cent in 2003. We did not ask about the ‘depth’ of this advice, nor how recently it was obtained. It is therefore interesting to note that the qualitative research found nobody who had sought external information or advice, and this might suggest that the 11 per cent identified in the quantitative research may have been referring to very limited or very general information, perhaps obtained some time ago.

We asked those who had ever sought external advice about employing disabled people where they had sought advice from. The results are shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Source of external advice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of external advice</th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitor/legal advice</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/employers’ organisation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government department/bodies/local councils</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job centre/employment services</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability charity/organisation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department for Trade and Industry</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base: all who had ever sought external advice about</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employing disabled people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Compared to 2003 employers were less likely to go to government sources when they sought external advice. A lower proportion mentioned any government departments or bodies in 2005 (a decrease from 18 per cent of those who had sought external advice in 2003 to seven per cent in 2005).

In 2005, the proportion mentioning Jobcentre/employment services had dropped substantially from a quarter of all who had sought external advice (25 per cent) in 2003 to just seven per cent in 2005.

Employers who had ever sought external advice were more likely to mention non-governmental sources such as solicitor/legal advice (14 per cent in 2005 compared with 10 per cent in 2003) and trade/employers’ organisation (13 per cent in 2005 compared with five per cent in 2003). Internet had also become a more important source of information for employers (seven per cent in 2005 compared with three per cent in 2003). The move from government to private sector sources may indicate a degree of ‘mainstreaming’ of this issue over the last two years, with businesses seeking information from sources used for more general business advice such as trade organisations.

None of the businesses in the qualitative study had sought information about the DDA, disability issues, or equal opportunities. Few of the employers felt in need of such information either. When asked where they might seek information from, should they require it, the following potential sources were mentioned: an internet search, Business Link, their local council, DWP, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Jobcentre.

While employers did not generally feel in need of any information about disability, there was some interest expressed for a very simple, short, digest of the key requirements of the DDA – ‘to make sure we are complying with the law’. This should list the key requirements of the Act, making the legislation relevant to small businesses.

The reason for the difference between the quantitative and qualitative findings is difficult to identify with any certainty. However, the list of information sources provided by respondents is at least a useful guide to likely sources to be used should information needs arise. This is an important guide for small employers since the non-anticipatory nature of information needs makes the Government difficult to plan for them.

4.8 Chapter summary

Among those employers who had externally advertised at least once (61 per cent), three in ten (31 per cent) had mentioned an equal opportunities policy in their advertisement. However, findings from the qualitative research suggest that frequency of external advertising was low among small businesses and mentions of equal opportunities were almost non-existent in their advertisements.
Encouragingly, employers were less likely to say it would be difficult or impossible to help disabled job applicants by making adjustments. In general, those who had had a disabled employee were more likely than those who had not to say it would be easy to make adjustments for job applicants, suggesting that real experience of disability tends to lead to more positive attitudes.

When prompted with a list of disabilities, small employers were less likely to say it would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with most of the conditions than in the 2003 survey. The qualitative study found employers were of the opinion that people with severe impairments would be the most difficult to employ. However, they also felt that as long as someone could do the job, disability is not an obstacle to employment.

One in ten small employers (11 per cent) had sought external advice about employing disabled people and they were less likely to say it was from government sources than in 2003. The qualitative study finds that employers generally thought they had heard about the DDA through non-government sources such as the media, lawyers, solicitors, trade unions or professional bodies. Small employers did not tend to seek information on the DDA proactively.
5 Adjustments at the workplace

5.1 Adjustments at the workplace

Part 2 of the DDA requires an employer to make reasonable adjustments to assist disabled employees and job applicants. Section 18b(2) provides illustrative examples of steps which an employer may have to take to accommodate a disabled employee and they include:

- making adjustments to premises;
- allocating some of the disabled person’s duties to another person;
- transferring him to fill an existing vacancy;
- altering his working hours;
- assigning him to a different place of work;
- allowing him to be absent during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment;
- giving him, or arranging for him to be given training;
- acquiring or modifying equipment;
- modifying instructions of reference manuals;
- modifying procedures for testing or assessment;
- providing a reader or interpreter;
- providing supervision.

(DDA, s 6(1))
To ascertain how well small employers are responding to the needs of disabled employees, employers at workplaces where there had ever been a disabled employee were read a list of adjustments and asked whether any of those adjustments were currently in place to specifically help disabled employees. After being read the list, employers were then asked if there was anything else at the workplace specifically to help disabled employees. The results are combined and presented in Table 5.1.

### Table 5.1 Adjustments at the workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple responses</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible working time or varying hours for disabled employees</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing car parking space for disabled people</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt work environment to help disabled employees (e.g. adapting premises, furniture, lighting)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work organisation (e.g. transferring disabled people to other jobs, rearranging work duties)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing working from home for disabled employees</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing appropriate physical assistance (e.g. interpreters for a person who is deaf)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferring people or jobs to other premises to assist disabled employees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all where there had ever been disabled employees</strong></td>
<td>285</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Encouragingly, employers who had had a disabled employee were more likely to say they had made all but one adjustment on the list. For instance, a higher proportion of those employers had adapted the work environment to help disabled employees (35 per cent in 2005 compared with 20 per cent in 2003).

Half of employers who had ever had a disabled employee (50 per cent) said they had flexible working time or varying hours for disabled employees, and the same proportion (50 per cent) said they had provided car parking space for disabled people. The high level of employers who said those adjustments were in place could be because employers were thinking of flexible working hours and parking space that were available to all employees and not specifically for disabled employees.

Only five per cent of employees who had had disabled employees said that they could transfer people or jobs to other premises to assist disabled employees, which is not surprising since most businesses were single-site. Only eight per cent said they had a system in place to provide appropriate physical assistance to disabled employees. This is probably because most disabled employees did not require physical assistance.

Base sizes are too small for subgroup analysis.
5.2 Changes at the workplaces with disabled employees

All employers in the quantitative study who had had disabled employees at their workplace were then asked whether they had to make any changes to the workplace or working practices. This section, unlike the previous one, focused on changes that had to be made in practice rather than adjustments that were already in place.

Only one third of employers at workplaces that had had a disabled employee said that they had to make changes for disabled employees. Those who said they had made changes to their workplace or working practices to assist disabled employees were asked a series of questions about what was involved in making these changes. First they were asked how easy it was to make the changes. The results are shown in Table 5.2. Please note small base sizes mean that the results should be treated as indicative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2 Ease of making changes to the workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column percentages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither easy or difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base: all made changes for disabled employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Close to four-fifths of employees (79 per cent) of employers who had made changes said it was very easy or quite easy. Only 15 per cent said it would be quite or very difficult. The results are similar to those in the 2003 survey. However, given the small base sizes, the confidence level is low and this comparison should be treated as indicative. This, perhaps, is something that needs to be investigated through further targeted research. However, this research will not be easy to conduct as such a small minority has made changes for disabled employees.

Employers were also asked whether there was a direct cost incurred for the changes to the workplace and three-fifths (61 per cent) of those who had made adjustment said it was done at an additional cost. Since only 48 businesses reported such cost, this base size is too small to provide reliable and representative data on the scale of cost.

5.3 Reasons for making changes

It is important to understand the motivations behind employers who make adjustments at their workplace for their disabled employees; in particular to understand whether changes are as a result of legislation or more generally in
response to the needs of employees. Employers were given a number of statements and asked which of them applied to why they went ahead with changes at their workplace. The proportions of employers choosing each of the statements are shown in Table 5.3. Please note small base sizes means that the results should be treated as indicative.

Table 5.3 Why changes were made at the workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was the right thing to do for the disabled employee(s)</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The costs were small</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We assumed the benefits would exceed the cost</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The change had wider benefits for employees at their workplace</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The law required us to make the change.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In response to a request from an employee</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company policy required us to make changes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments were made as part of general refurbishment</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all made changes for disabled employees</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employers were most likely to say that they made adjustments because it was the right thing to do for the disabled employee(s) (82 per cent). Other common reasons include small cost (42 per cent), benefit exceeding cost (37 per cent) and wider benefits for employees at the workplace (37 per cent). Only about one quarter (27 per cent) cited legislation, an increase from 17 per cent.

There are some notable differences between the results from the 2003 and 2005 surveys. For instance, small employers who had made changes were less likely to agree that statements such as ‘We assumed the benefits would exceed the cost’ or ‘In response to a request from an employee’ applied to them. This may indicate a genuine shift in attitude. However, the small base sizes mean that the results should be treated as merely indicative and further research specifically among those making changes would be needed before firm conclusions could be drawn.

5.4 Changes made in direct response to the DDA

The qualitative research found that adaptations to the work environment and working conditions may be made either in direct response to the DDA, or be prompted by an employee or customer need either perceived by or verbalised to the employer. See Appendix B for the qualitative topic guide, which sets out the distinction between the working environment and working conditions.

Adjustments made by small businesses to their workplace and working conditions in direct response to the DDA were very limited. Adaptations made for both employees
and customers consisted of:

- Reorganising a shop floor so that wheelchair users could access the shop more easily. Cost approximately £2,000.

  ‘What we did was to move things away from round the door so that it opens straight up so that a wheelchair, somebody in a wheelchair looking in would think ‘oh that’s going to be easy for me to get in.’

  (Interview 15; retail, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

- Installing a ramp to create easier access to the offices for wheelchair users. Cost £379.

Minimal changes were therefore made in direct response to the DDA, often due to small businesses having little or no experience of ever employing disabled people and a lack of awareness and specific knowledge regarding the DDA itself. Employers that demonstrated some reluctance in adhering to the DDA felt that any adjustments they made to their workplace or working conditions would be made as a result of employee need, not DDA legislation and required only some ‘common sense’.

There were also employers who said they had not taken any action with regards to the DDA, but in the course of the interview it transpired that they were planning to make adjustments in direct response to unspecified legislation:

  ‘...all buildings that can have access to people should have some sort of disabled access from last October as far as I’m aware but we are a bit slow...but it is going to be dealt with.’

  (Interview 35; manufacturing, 10-14 employees, partially embracing)

However, there seemed to be little recognition that this legislation was part of the DDA, therefore emphasising small businesses’ lack of awareness regarding the provisions of the Act. See Section 2.1.

5.5 Changes made to the working environment in response to employee need

Small businesses may make adjustments to the work environment in response to an employee need that was either identified by the employer or verbalised by the employee. The following changes had been made in response to employee need:

Changes made in response to need identified by employer:

- Seating provided for an employee with mobility impairments. This employee had one leg shorter than the other:

  ‘...we gave her the option to have a sit down, we don’t give able bodied people (the option) because there really isn’t room to have a stool, but we did for this lady.’

  (Interview 23, retail, 6-9 employees, not embracing)
• Wrist rests and foot rests provided to prevent repetitive strain injury among members of staff.
• Back rests that clip on to workstation chairs were provided.
• Disabled toilet installed.

Changes made in response to need identified by employee:
• Orthopaedic chair required by employee with a weak back.
• A wooden platform provided for physically disabled employee to stand on.
  ‘...we had a concrete floor, which was very hard to stand on...And he said can I have some sort of wooden platform, and we said yeah no problem. It has a bit of spring in it. So we did that for him and he said it made a hell of a difference.’
  (Interview 36; manufacturing, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)
• Seating required by an employee with mobility impairments.

Whilst an employer may perceive a need for a specific adaptation, there were rare occasions where the employee may not see the adjustment as being necessary. The suggestion of a specialist fire alarm was refuted by a disabled employee with a severe hearing impairment due to the employee not wanting to have attention drawn to their disability.

5.6 Adjustments made to working conditions in response to employee need

Fairly limited changes had been made to the working conditions for disabled employees and consisted of:
• allowing time off for doctors/hospital appointments, particularly for chemotherapy treatment. Employee shifts were covered and their position held open for them, particularly within retailers;
• allowing flexible working hours. Where possible working hours could be adapted to meet the specific needs of the disabled employee. One employee required extra time travelling to and from work due to having agoraphobia. Some businesses already operated flexible working hours for all employees anyway;
• allowing disabled employees to work from home if necessary. Such an arrangement proved financially beneficial for one business. An employee had a mobility problem and required taxis to and from work costing on average £400 per week. As the employee’s work was computer based it was relatively easy to work from home, which ultimately saved the business money;
• adapting the disabled employee’s job role to accommodate their impairment. One respondent employed a person with impaired mobility in their construction company:
‘Obviously we can’t put him on ladders and things like that…we give him the jobs that suit his disability.’

(Interview 42; manufacturing, 6-9 employees, partially embracing)

- ensuring a disabled employee with a learning disability had a ‘work buddy’ so that they did not work on their own.

Overall, changes that were made to either the work premises or working conditions tended to be made with either mobility or sensory impairments in mind. Employers had rarely made adjustments with regards to either learning difficulties or psychological conditions.

5.7 Reasons for not making changes

Respondents who had had a disabled employee but had not made any adjustments were asked why they had not made any changes at the workplace. The results are shown in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4 Why no change was made at the workplace**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disabled employees did not require adjustments</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never had any disabled employees</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary facilities already in place</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premises are rented</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes are planned but have not been completed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be done but not priority to date</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments are planned but not yet completed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could not afford to make necessary adjustments</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all who had had disabled employees but made no adjustment</strong></td>
<td><strong>166</strong></td>
<td><strong>151</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employers were most likely to say that disabled employees did not require any adjustments in both the 2003 and 2005 surveys (47 per cent in 2003 and 57 per cent in 2005).

Interestingly, a significant proportion of employers who had had a disabled employee but made no adjustment said that this was because they never had any disabled employees (22 per cent) and among those people, eight had previously said they were currently employing at least one disabled person. It is possible that employers’ definition of disability had changed during the course of the interview, perhaps because adjustments are associated with physical disabilities, but their employees were not physically disabled.
Costs seem to be less of a deterrent at this survey as employers were less likely to say that they had not made any changes because they could not afford to make the necessary adjustments (dropped from 12 per cent in 2003 to two per cent in 2005). It is interesting to note that these employers do not mention the lack of information for not changing. The reasons specified would suggest that change was not on their agenda or at least not near the top of the priority list.

Base sizes are too small for sub-group analysis.

5.8 Difficulties in making adjustments to the work environment

In the qualitative study, small businesses identified three main problems that would arise in making adjustments to their work premises, which would ultimately discourage them from carrying out any alterations.

5.8.1 Financial implications

The financial implications of making adjustments to the work environment were of considerable concern to the majority of small businesses. Most made the assumption that making such adjustments would involve large-scale structural alterations such as installing lifts, ramps or adopting Braille throughout the workplace that would inevitably result in spending money that the business could not afford:

‘If we’re talking thousands of pounds in order to put a ramp outside, then I shall have to come unhinged because we don’t make that sort of money.’

(Interview 23; retail, 6-9 employees, not embracing)

Costs that were seen as acceptable to incur in making adjustments to the workplace ranged from £500 to £2,000, or in other instances, one per cent of turnover. Employers still generally considered these to be quite large sums of money relative to the profits they made, which if exceeded would have a very negative impact on the business:

‘If I bankrupt the company by putting in all sorts of gizmos, who benefits?’

(Interview 38; manufacturing, 10-14 employees, partially embracing)

One business was not willing to incur any expense at all in making adaptations, whilst others did not know how much they would be willing to incur. Employers were of divided opinion over who should meet the costs, with a general view that the government should meet these costs if the business was not able to. One respondent suggested a grant that met a minimum of 50 per cent of the cost of the adaptation should be implemented. Another proposed that the government could reward businesses that made adaptations to their premises by reducing the amount of corporation tax they had to pay. It was felt that government assistance would mean that adaptations could be made with greater immediacy.
It was generally perceived to be less of a financial risk to make adjustments to accommodate an existing member of staff than a new member, as it was felt the existing member of staff would have demonstrated greater loyalty to the business and therefore make the money spent on alterations more justifiable.

5.8.2 Work premises

The nature of the work premises used by small businesses sometimes had a limiting effect on the adjustments employers were able to make to the work environment. It was highlighted that limited space within the work premises, particularly for retailers, meant that there was not always sufficient space to be able to widen aisles by altering fittings or moving promotional stands elsewhere.

Some small businesses’ work premises were listed buildings, leading employers to believe they were not permitted to make structural alterations to the building. Others rented their work premises so the property was not theirs to alter structurally. One employer described how a request to install a lift to help assist disabled employees and customers access an upstairs shop floor had been rejected, and conceded that ultimately ‘it’s up to the landlord, not me’. Similarly, construction companies had no control over the sites they worked on in terms of making adjustments:

‘We are at the very end of the queue of people on site, we are the lowest of low. It would be up to the main contractor to make any changes, or even the client. Not us. We have no say at all.’

(Interview 2; manufacturing, 10-14 employees, fully embracing)

5.8.3 Resentment amongst members of staff

There was evidence of employers feeling that making adaptations to the work environment may cause resentment amongst their other staff members. It was perceived that some employees might consider such changes unnecessary and consider that the businesses’ money could be better spent elsewhere and to greater benefit. Employers were keen to avoid any workplace disharmony and consequently would not make adaptations if they felt that doing so would evoke such feelings in their existing members of staff.

5.9 Difficulties in making adjustments to working conditions

It was considered by some small businesses to be ‘impossible’ to have flexible working hours, particularly when shifts were covered by one employee – this was especially so with retailers. Similarly it was not practical for construction-based businesses to allow employees to work flexible hours. Building sites tended to operate a set working day with a team of employees with specific skills.
Small businesses would not make changes to their working conditions if doing so had a negative impact on staff. For example, there were employers who considered that altering working conditions for specific members of staff might be construed as favourable treatment, even if such adjustments were implemented with an employee’s disability in mind:

‘...we run a small team, if I thought that one person was getting unfair treatment, albeit due to a disability, if I thought that it was upsetting morale then it would be addressed.’

(Interview 11; retail, 10-14 employees, partially embracing)

5.10 Perceived ease of implementing different measures

All employers at workplaces which had never had disabled employees were presented with a number of measures that could be taken to enable them to employ disabled people. They were asked to comment on how easy or difficult it would be for them to implement each measure in their own workplace. These measures have been grouped into themes below to assist in analysis.

In reading these results, it should be noted that employers tended to answer questions based on the practicalities of making these adjustments, rather than their willingness to do so.

Figure 5.1 describes the measures that relate to physical adjustments that employers could make to assist disabled employees.

**Figure 5.1 How easy it would be for workplace to make physical adjustments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing car parking spaces</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapted work environment to help disabled employees</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing appropriate physical assistance</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Small employers were more likely to think it would be easy to make physical adjustments in 2005 compared to two years ago. In particular, there was a substantial increase in the proportion of employers saying that it would be easy to adapt their work environment to help disabled employees (49 per cent in 2005 compared with 33 per cent in 2003), and those aware of the DDA were more likely to say so (54 per cent of those aware compared with 45 per cent of those not aware).

At this survey, small employers were also more likely to think it would be easy to provide car parking spaces (64 per cent in 2005 compared with 58 per cent in 2003) and appropriate physical assistance (19 per cent in 2005 compared with 10 per cent in 2003) to help disabled employees. Looking at the size of organisation, employers in larger organisations were more likely to say it would be easy to provide car parking space, as over three-quarters (77 per cent) of those with seven to 14 employers said it would be easy, compared with three-fifths (59 per cent) of those with three to six employees.

Figure 5.2 shows how easy or difficult employers thought it would be to change certain working practices.

**Figure 5.2  How easily workplace could change working practices**

Compared to two years ago, small employers were slightly more likely to think it would be easy to introduce flexible working hours (62 per cent in 2005 compared with 55 per cent in 2003), adopt flexible work organisation (28 per cent in 2005 compared with 22 per cent in 2003), and transfer people or jobs to other premises (17 per cent in 2005 compared with 11 per cent in 2003) to assist disabled employees.

Employers from larger organisations were more likely to say it would be easy to introduce flexible work organisation, such as transferring people to other jobs or
rearranging work duties, than those from smaller organisations (26 per cent of those
with three to six employees compared with 34 per cent of those with seven to 14
employees).

Those aware of the DDA were slightly more likely than those who were not to think
it would be easy to introduce flexible working time or varying working hours for
disabled employees (64 per cent of those aware compared with 60 per cent of those
not aware).

Whether or not a workplace is public-facing is an important factor for determining
how easy employers thought it would be to allow employees to work from home.
Close to three in ten employers (28 per cent) whose customers were other
businesses only said that it would be easy, compared with 14 per cent of those
whose customers included the general public.

5.11 The potential for future adjustments

Despite the fairly limited adaptations made by small businesses, employers in the
qualitative study demonstrated a willingness to make changes if they were
necessary (whether in direct response to DDA legislation or due to employee need)
as long as the changes were not detrimental to the business in terms of financial
outlay or employee response. Employers who had never employed any disabled
people could not envisage what adaptations they would be able to make and would
require the disabled person to inform them as to their needs. For those who could
imagine making changes to the workplace, there was little mention of the possibility
of making adjustments to working conditions, and so possible future adjustments
were suggested only with regards to the work environment:

- Installing specialist workstation equipment.
- Seating for people with impaired mobility.
- Installing an automatic door to work premises to assist people with mobility
  impairments.
- Moving a boardroom to the ground floor for wheelchair users.
- Ramp installation to assist wheelchair users.
- Installing a counter at a lower height for wheelchair users at a retailers.

Whilst there were employers who were planning to implement the changes they
suggested, others gave little indication of whether the alteration(s) they described
would ever come to fruition. Therefore it is difficult to ascertain the genuine intent
behind such suggestions.

Whilst the financial outlay involved in making adjustments was a critical consideration
for small businesses, employers also highlighted the importance of exploring the
cost of making changes alongside the value of the employee that the adaptations
would benefit:

‘Each case is different. If somebody that hasn’t got any legs is a fantastic employee for a particular company and wins them millions of pounds worth of contracts, then you’re going to be prepared to go out of your way to make sure they are looked after.’

(Interview 11; retail, 10-14 employees, partially embracing)

Therefore, for some small businesses the skills the disabled employee would bring to the workforce would ideally outbalance the cost of adaptations necessary to their employment.

5.12 Chapter summary

Among small employers who had made some adjustments for their disabled employees (32 per cent), four-fifths (79 per cent) said it was easy, and three-fifths (61 per cent) said it had incurred additional cost. Employers were less likely, than in 2003, to say they had not made any changes because they could not afford to, 82 per cent making the adjustments because it was the right thing to do for the disabled person. The qualitative study indicated only limited changes had been made by small employers and changes tended to be small in scale.

Compared to two years ago, employers without a disabled employee were more likely to think it would be easy to make physical adjustments compared to two years ago, though the majority still thought it would be difficult or impossible to introduce flexible work organisation (62 per cent) or allow work from home (77 per cent). Perceived barriers to changes include the financial implications of making adjustments, the nature of the work premises and potential resentment amongst other members of staff as a result of adaptations.
6 Attitudes towards employing disabled people

Employers in the quantitative survey were asked to agree or disagree with six statements about their views on the employment and retention of disabled employees. This was designed to try to understand the spectrum of opinion among employers. Three of the statements related to the employers’ experiences at their workplace, and three were about the recruitment and retention of disabled employees in general. Figure 6.1 shows the agreement with the statements relating to the employer’s workplace.

Figure 6.1 Agreement with statements – recruitment and retention of disabled employees
Agreement with the statement ‘We always seek to recruit the best person for the job, irrespective of whether they have a disability or not’ was almost universal (93 per cent), which is similar to the results in 2003. Three quarters agreed it is very rare that they have a disabled person applying for a job, a slight drop from 2003 (73 per cent agreeing strongly in 2005 compared with 78 per cent agreeing strongly in 2003). Close to a quarter (23 per cent) said that taking on a person who has a disability or severe illness in the past but has now recovered would be a risk for this business, a slight drop compared to two years ago (27 per cent).

There is very little difference between the responses given by relevant sub-groups, reflecting that it was a consistent picture across all groups.

Small employers were also asked to agree or disagree with three statements about the recruitment and retention of disabled employees in general, not necessarily about the practices at their workplace. Their responses are shown in Figure 6.2.

**Figure 6.2 Agreement with statements – recruitment and retention of disabled employees**

Three in ten employers (29 per cent) disagreed with the statement ‘Adjustment(s) for an employee who becomes disabled usually cost less than recruiting a new one’ in 2005, a slight drop from 34 per cent in 2003.

Encouragingly, a substantially smaller proportion of employers agreed that taking on a disabled person is a major risk for the employer (31 per cent in 2005 compared with 42 per cent in 2003). Those whose workplace had had a disabled employee were more likely to disagree than those who had not (68 per cent of those who had compared with 58 per cent of those who had not).
Compared to two years ago, small employers were also slightly less likely to agree that disabled people tend to be less productive than other employees (17 per cent in 2005 compared with 24 per cent in 2003). Smaller workplaces were more likely to agree than larger ones (20 per cent of those with three to six employers compared with 14 per cent of those with seven to 14 employees). The employers who had never had a disabled employee were also more likely to be concerned about productivity (20 per cent of those who had not compared with 12 per cent of those who had).

Overall, employers were more likely to say ‘don’t know’ to all the above statements. This seems to indicate a softening of attitudes among employers, with a reduction in negative attitudes not yet fully translating into positive views.

The attitudes towards employing disabled people have not changed greatly since 2003, but this is perhaps not surprising since attitudes generally change relatively slowly on most social issues. The changes that we have observed have been in the positive direction, particularly in the substantial fall in the proportion regarding the recruitment of a disabled person as a major risk for employers. The research cannot specifically pinpoint reasons for these changes in attitude. However, it is possible that legislative change, media coverage and associated influences across society in general were behind these observations.

6.1 Chapter summary

Compared to 2003, small employers were less likely to believe that taking on a disabled person would be a major risk for them (31 per cent in 2005 compared with 42 per cent in 2003) and that disabled people tend to be less productive than other employees (17 per cent in 2005 compared with 24 per cent in 2003).
7 Awareness and knowledge of the customer service provisions of the DDA (Part 3)

Although this survey mainly focuses on the employment provisions of the DDA, we also asked respondents a few questions about their awareness of the customer service provisions of the DDA.

7.1 Types of customers

First of all, we asked employers what type of customers they had. Their responses are shown in Table 7.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Customers</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other businesses or organisations only</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the public only</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mixture of the general public and other businesses or organisations</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>733</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,002</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-fifth of employers (21 per cent) said that their customers were other businesses or organisations only. Over three-quarters (77 per cent) were public-facing, meaning that their customers were either members of the public only or a mixture of the general public and other businesses or organisations.
7.2 Spontaneous awareness of legislation with regard to customer service provisions

Small employers were asked whether they were aware of any legislation giving rights to disabled customers and if they were, whether they knew the name of the legislation. Their responses are shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Spontaneous awareness of the DDA with regard to customer service provisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – disability discrimination act</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes – don’t know name</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability act</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: Aware of employment aspects of DDA</strong></td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spontaneous awareness of the DDA with regard to customer service provisions has risen from one per cent in 2003 to 15 per cent in 2005. The proportion saying that they were aware of some legislation but did not know the name of it also increased from one-fifth (20 per cent) to a third (34 per cent).

Small employers who were public-facing were more likely than those who were not to be able to name the DDA spontaneously (17 per cent of public-facing businesses compared with 10 per cent of non public-facing businesses). They were also more likely to say they were aware of some legislation but could not recall the name (36 per cent public-facing businesses compared with 25 per cent non public-facing businesses).

7.3 Awareness of the main provisions of legislation with regard to customer service provisions

Respondents who were aware of the DDA or some legislation with regard to employment were also asked what they thought were the main provisions of legislation with regard to customer service provisions. Their responses are shown in Table 7.3.
Table 7.3 Knowledge of the Act with regard to customer service provisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Column percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve access to and movement around buildings</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal treatment/don’t treat them any differently</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal provision of services for all</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t discriminate against disabled people</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled toilets</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special provision should be made for people with disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It doesn’t affect us/we don’t deal with customers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve communication with disabled customers/hearing loops</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have someone there to help if needed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal opportunities/equal changes for all</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Base: all aware of some DDA or some legislation</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,002</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four in ten employers (39 per cent) who were aware of some legislation said that the main provisions of the Act with regard to customer service provisions was to improve access to and movement around buildings. Those who had had a disabled employee were more likely than those who had not to be able to describe this (46 per cent compared with 36 per cent). One in ten businesses that were public-facing (10 per cent) mentioned accessibility, compared with five per cent of those that were not public-facing.

One in ten (nine per cent) said that the Act requires employers to treat disabled people equally. Thirty six per cent did not know what the provisions were.

7.4 Adjustments made as a service provider

The qualitative study revealed that far more adjustments were made in response to the needs of customers and clients than were made with disabled employees in mind. This may in part be due to employing relatively few disabled people and also due to the view that by creating better access for disabled people they may increase their customer base and consequently their profit. The changes made to assist customers were as follows:

Changes to work environment:

- Convenience store refitted to make aisles wider and better lit for disabled customers.
- A partition created on clothes shop floor so that wheelchair users were able to access a changing facility. No cost involved.
- Wheelchair access to make a farm for people with learning disabilities more accessible to visitors. Cost £500.
- Ramp and grab handles installed to replace steps to entrance of retailers.
- Steps to art gallery entrance removed and a ramp and double doors installed in direct response to the need of a paralysed customer.
- Temporary changes made to construction sites for disabled clients to use when they have been visiting, such as temporary ramps:

  ‘...someone had told us that there was a disabled councillor coming, so Tony immediately thought quickly get on and put something up or it would be dead embarrassing for them…it probably cost Tony about £60 that’s all. Negligible.’

  (Interview 6; service, 10-14 employees, not embracing)

Changes to work conditions:
- Clothing retailer, pharmacy and opticians offered home delivery service for housebound customers or those in nursing homes. The owner of the opticians considered the service they offered off-site to be less refined than in-store, but felt that the customers were content.
- Taking purchases/orders out to a customer’s car.
- An employment agency was in the process of developing a website link to help disabled people with learning difficulties use the technology.

7.5 Chapter summary

Spontaneous awareness of the DDA with regard to customer service provisions had risen from one per cent in 2003 to 15 per cent in 2005. Two-fifths of those aware of some legislation (39 per cent) said the main provision was to improve access to and movement around buildings. The qualitative research indicates small employers were aware that by excluding disabled customers or clients from their business they were losing customers and therefore profit. Complying with the service aspect of the DDA made business sense to small businesses.
8 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to measure how small employers were responding to the new duties under the DDA introduced on 1 October 2004. The DWP had conducted a similar survey in 2003 which also looked at how employers of all sizes were preparing for the changes in legislation. Where possible, comparisons of the two surveys would be made. However, as different sampling frames and weighting profiles were used in the two surveys, any comparisons should be treated as broad indications, not precise measurement. Qualitative research was conducted after the quantitative survey, and aimed to further explore the range of responses that small businesses have towards the DDA, together with the reasons for their responses.

8.1 Awareness and knowledge of the employment provisions of the DDA

Spontaneous awareness of the DDA among small employers rose from four per cent in 2003 to 17 per cent in 2005. After being prompted, nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) said they were aware of the act, a slight increase from the 2003 survey (58 per cent). The qualitative research similarly suggested employers tend to have relatively little spontaneous awareness of the DDA by name, yet may be aware that legislation existed to help prevent discrimination on the grounds of disability.

Media is still the main source of awareness (32 per cent) as in 2003, but leaflets accounted for 13 per cent, up from 8 per cent. However qualitative evidence suggested the recollection and retention of such material was poor. The relevance and timeliness of information and awareness-raising material was demonstrated as some small businesses ‘filed’ or discarded information on the DDA that was not of immediate use.

When asked what they thought are the main provisions of legislation with regard to employment, small employers were most likely to say ‘no discrimination on grounds of disability or ill health’ (38 per cent). Compared to 2003, employers were more likely to give more specific responses, rather than generalisations such as ‘equal opportunities’. Qualitative research revealed that employers held the view that the
Act would deal with issues of discrimination, equal rights for disabled people and access.

Employers were more likely to regard some common impairments as disabilities in 2005, such as speech impairment, mobility problems and visual impairments. However, the qualitative research revealed a narrower definitions of disability, with respondents tending to focus on mobility and sensory disabilities. Psychological impairments tended not to feature in their initial definitions. This discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative findings could be due to the manner in which the question was put to respondents in each of the surveys; the quantitative survey asked whether a specific condition may qualify as a disability, where as the respondent was asked for their spontaneous definition in the qualitative interview. Respondents’ perceptions of disability did appear to broaden in scope as the interview progressed.

8.2 Employment of disabled people

One in five small employers (20 per cent) said there had been a disabled employee at their workplace and over one in ten (12 per cent) said they currently had at least one disabled employee.

Half of our respondents (50 per cent) said there had been a policy covering the rights of disabled employees and applicants and this is a significant increase from 2003 (35 per cent). A quarter (25 per cent) said that they had a written policy. However, this was not borne out by the qualitative research which suggests that ‘a policy’ may be interpreted very liberally.

Employers were less likely to feel that their workplace would find it difficult to keep on employees who became disabled (44 per cent in 2005 compared with 55 per cent in 2003) or that their workplace did not have flexible procedures that would allow it to employ disabled people (29 per cent in 2005 compared with 41 per cent in 2003).

8.3 Recruitment and selection

Six in ten employers (61 per cent) said they had ever externally advertised at least one of their vacancies. Among those employers, three in ten (31 per cent) had mentioned an equal opportunities policy in their advertisements. However, findings from the qualitative research suggest that the frequency of external advertising is very low among such businesses. More common were informal methods such as advertisements in the window of work premises and ‘word of mouth’ recruitment.

Over a third of employers (35 per cent) in the quantitative survey required their applicants to give information about their health and disability at some stage during their application process. Interestingly, compared to two years ago, employers were more reluctant to state that the health information was for assessing whether the workplace would be suitable for the applicant, making practical arrangements to
allow the employee to do their job, assessing suitability of the job and monitoring
the composition of the workplace. However, the qualitative research suggested that
the onus was on the person himself or herself to raise the issue of their disability, with
employers tending either to have not thought about the issue or be reluctant to raise
the issue themselves.

Encouragingly, employers were less likely to say it would be difficult or impossible to
help disabled job applicants by making adjustments, such as providing staff with
disability awareness information and checking at interview for adaptations required,
than had been found in 2003. In general, those who had had a disabled employee
were more likely than those who had not to say it would be easy to make
adjustments for job applicants.

When prompted with a list of impairments, small employers were less likely to say it
would be difficult or impossible to employ someone with most of the conditions
than the 2003 survey. Nonetheless, almost all employers (93 per cent) still found it
difficult or impossible to employ someone with visual impairment and this has
shown no improvement. The qualitative research also found that people with
certain impairments were more likely to be perceived as difficult to accommodate in
the workplace. Severe sensory impairments, mobility impairments and psychological
conditions such as schizophrenia were all mentioned in this context. The more
severe the impairments the greater the perceived difficulties were in a person’s
employment.

One in ten employers (11 per cent) had sought external advice about employing
disabled people and they were less likely to say it was from government sources or
Jobcentre than in 2003. The increase in non-government sources suggests that
some degree of mainstreaming may be underway.

8.4 Adjustments at the workplace

Compared with 2003, employers at workplaces that had had a disabled employee
were more likely to say adjustments such as adapting work environment were in
place to help their disabled employees. Overall a third of those employers (32 per
cent) actually had to make some changes. Among those who had made some
changes, four-fifths (79 per cent) said it was easy, and three-fifths (61 per cent) said
it had incurred additional cost. Employers were less likely, than in 2003, to say they
had not made any changes because they could not afford to, 82 per cent making the
adjustments because it was the right thing to do for the disabled person.

Employers at workplaces that had never had a disabled employee were more likely to
think it would be easy to make physical adjustments such as adapting work
environment and providing physical assistance compared to two years ago. However,
the majority still thought it would be difficult or impossible to introduce flexible work
organisation (62 per cent), transfer people or jobs to other premises (76 per cent) or
allow work from home (77 per cent) to help disabled employees.
8.5 Attitudes towards employing disabled people

Compared to 2003, small employers were less likely to believe that taking on a disabled person would be a major risk for them (31 per cent in 2005 compared with 42 per cent in 2003) and less likely to think that disabled people tend to be less productive than other employees (17 per cent in 2005 compared with 24 per cent in 2003). The qualitative research revealed that the perceived lower productivity and financial implications of making adaptations to the workplace for disabled employees were major concerns to respondents which would discourage them from employing a person if it necessitated making adjustments.

8.6 Awareness and knowledge of the customer service provisions of the DDA

Spontaneous awareness of the DDA with regard to customer service provisions had risen from one per cent in 2003 to 15 per cent in 2005. Not surprisingly, those who were public-facing were more likely to be able to specify the Act.

Two-fifths of those aware of some legislation (39 per cent) said the main provision was to improve access to and movement around buildings.

The qualitative research highlighted that more adjustments were made in response to the needs of customers and clients than were made for disabled employees, suggesting employers may have held the view that by creating better access for disabled people they may ultimately increase their profit.

8.7 Concluding remarks

Overall, awareness of the DDA has increased, and negative attitudes towards employing disabled people have declined since 2003. However, awareness levels and positive attitudes are still a long way from being universal, suggesting that there is a continuing need for communicating with small employers.

Attitudes towards employing disabled people have not changed considerably since 2003, but the changes that have occurred have been in a positive direction. However the research reveals that small businesses respond to situations concerning disabled people as they arise, and will not tend to be proactive in making adjustments to the application process or workplace. This suggests that the communication needs will be ongoing for some time, so that information is available when needed.

There appears to be a trend towards seeking information from non-government sources and this has implications for the dissemination of publicity and advice, suggesting that an effective medium can be found through certain strategic organisations such as trade bodies and legal advisers.
Appendix A
Quantitative questionnaire

DDASEMP  Good afternoon/evening, my name is....calling from the British Market Research Bureau on behalf of the Department of Work and Pensions. We are conducting a survey about disability issues amongst businesses. Can I speak to someone at this workplace who has responsibility for the recruitment or management of employees with disabilities?

IF YES, PLEASE ATTEMPT AN INTERVIEW. IF NOT THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON, PLEASE ATTEMPT TO TALK TO THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON AND REPEAT ABOVE INSTRUCTION.

Would you be able to spare some time to speak to us? Please be assured that everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence.

IF ASKED

The interview should take no more than 15 minutes.

IF UNABLE TO TAKE PART IN INTERVIEW AT PRESENT TIME, PLEASE ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE A MORE SUITABLE TIME.

QUANCEPT ITEM:

QUANCEPT ITEM:

Some of the information we need will require you to estimate numbers. Please answer as best you can as even an estimate will help us.
qjobt  Firstly, could tell me what your position or job title is?

- General/duty manager 1
- Assistant manager 2
- Human resources/Personnel manager 3
- Supervisor 4
- Owner/proprietor 5
- Don’t Know Y
- Refused Z
- Other 0

Other specify...

qorg  Is this workplace...........?

READ OUT

One of a number of workplaces belonging to the same organisation 1 (276)
A single independent workplace not belonging to any other organisation 2
Don’t Know Y
Refused Z

IF qorg = One of a number of workplaces belonging to the same organisation

Most of the questions I will ask you are about your particular workplace, i.e. the premises that you are based in and the employees that are based there even if they work from home or spend a lot of their working time travelling. Some questions will refer to your business/organisation as a whole. I will make this clear at the appropriate questions.

End of Filter lorg
qemporg And can you tell me how many people are there in the organisation as a whole?

**IF RESPONDENT IS NOT SURE ASK THEM TO ESTIMATE**

(308 - 312)

Numeric Range ___________  
Don’t Know Y (308)

Permitted Range  
0 TO 99999 (Numeric Range)

zsmal  
**IF qemporg < 3 - Termination with data (Quit)**

I’m sorry we only need to speak to people at businesses with more than two employees. Thank you for your time.

Zbig  
**IF qemporg > 14 - Termination with data (Quit)**

I’m sorry we only need to speak to people at businesses with less than 15 employees. Thank you for your time.

**IF qorg = One of a number of workplaces belonging to the same organisation**  
**THEN ASK: Qnumwp2**

Qnumwp2 Can you tell me how many people are currently employed at this workplace?

**IF RESPONDENT IS NOT SURE ASK THEM TO ESTIMATE**  
REMEMBER TO INCLUDE RESPONDENT IN TOTAL

(1218 - 1219)

Numeric Range  
Don’t Know Y (1218)  
Refused Z

Permitted Range  
0 TO 14 (Numeric Range)

**End of Filter Inumb**
ASK ALL

qwptype  Can I just check, is this workplace...........?

READ OUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A branch</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(313)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A division/subsidiary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An area/regional office</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The head office</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A franchised organisation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something else (specify)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other specify... (314 - 317)

IF qwptype = A franchised organisation
THEN ASK: Qfranc

Qfranc  How much influence does the franchising organisation have over the employment and recruitment policy of your workplace?

BY ASKED

By franchising organisation, we mean an organisation that sells its trademark or trade name and business system to its franchises (for example, the Body Shop).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A lot</td>
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<td>(1220)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a lot</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

End of Filter Ifran

Zfranch

IF Qfranc = A lot - Termination with data (Quit)

I’m sorry but we only need to interview businesses that have some control over their employment and recruitment policy.

Thank you very much for your time.
**qpublic**

Does your organisation belong to the public sector? By that I mean part of, or owned by, the government, local authority or other government agency...........?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 (1221)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Zpublic**

**IF qpublic = Yes - Termination with data (Quit)**

I’m sorry but we only need to interview private businesses. Thank you very much for you time.

---

**Qprivol**

Would you say your workplace was privately owned, or run by the voluntary sector?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private sector</td>
<td>1 (1222)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary sector</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**qsic**

What service do you provide?

**IF NECESSARY: What is the nature of your business?**

**PROBE**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y (319)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Qservp**

Are your workplace’s customers.......?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other businesses or organisations only</td>
<td>1 (1223)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the public only</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A mixture of the general public and other businesses or organisations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now I would like to ask you some questions about the laws on recruitment and employment.

Qempapp  Are you personally aware of any laws that gives rights to employees and job applicants ....?  

Yes  
No  
Don’t Know  
Refused  

This question is repeated for the following loop values:
- on the grounds of race
- on the grounds of gender
- on the grounds of sexual orientation
- on the grounds of age

A total of four iterations occupying columns (1224) to (1227)

qddaemp  Are you personally aware of any laws giving rights to employees and job applicants with long term health problems or disabilities?

IF YES, PROBE FOR NAME. IF KNOW NAME AND IT IS NOT DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT, CHOOSE OTHER AND ENTER NAME THERE

Yes - Disability Discrimination Act  
Yes - don’t know name  
No  
Don’t Know  
Yes - Other specify  

Other specify...  

IF qddaemp <> Yes - Disability Discrimination Act OR  
THEN ASK: qddaem2

qddaem2  The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 introduced rights for employees and job applicants with long term health problems or disabilities. Prior to this survey, had you heard of this part of the act?

Yes  
No  
Don’t Know  

End of Filter inodda
**qddaser**  Are you personally aware of any laws giving rights to CUSTOMERS with long term health problems or disabilities?

IF YES, PROBE FOR NAME. IF KNOW NAME AND IT IS NOT DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT, CHOOSE OTHER AND ENTER NAME THERE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes - Disability Discrimination Act</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes - Don’t know name</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes - Other specify</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other specify...** (1229 - 1232)

**IF qddaemp = Yes - Disability Discrimination Act OR qddaem2 = Yes**

End of Filter isv1

**IF ( qddaemp = Yes - don’t know name OR qddaemp = Yes - don’t know name ) AND ( qddaem2 <> Yes )**

End of Filter isv1a

**IF qddaemp = Yes - Disability Discrimination Act OR qddaem2 = Yes THEN ASK: qheardd, qddawhe**

**qheardd**  When did you first hear of the Disability Discrimination Act?

IF CAN’T REMEMBER, CODE AS DK.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the last month</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlier in 2004</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2003</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2002</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2001</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2000</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 2000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t remember</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
qddawhe  How did you first hear of the Disability Discrimination Act?

DO NOT PROMPT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head office/HR manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work colleague</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job applicant</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend/relative</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/trade press</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media (e.g. TV, newspapers etc.)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflet</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet/website</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Union</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Rights Commission</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability charity/organisation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal adviser</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of commerce/business link</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other specify... (331 - 334)

End of Filter iddayes

IF qddaemp = Yes - Disability Discrimination Act OR qddaemp = Yes - don’t know name OR qddaemp = Yes - don’t know name OR qddaem2 = Yes THEN ASK: qactemp, qactcus, qstatus, qstacus, qsmall, qhowsma, Qexemgo, qhowkno, qwhen

qactemp  Can you tell me what you believe the main provisions of the &TV1& are regarding EMPLOYMENT? Just tell me in your own words.

(335 - 338)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
qactcus  Can you tell me what you believe the main provisions of the &TV1& are regarding CUSTOMER SERVICE? Just tell me in your own words.

Don’t Know  Y  (1234)

qstatus  Thinking now of the Act’s implications for EMPLOYMENT, which of the following statements do you think best describes the current status of the &TV1&?

- Employers have to make changes in advance even if they currently have no disabled employee or applicant  
- Employers do not have to make any changes unless they have a disabled employee or applicant  
- Don’t Know  
- Refused

Employers have to make changes in advance even if they currently have no disabled employee or applicant  
Employers do not have to make any changes unless they have a disabled employee or applicant  
Don’t Know  Y  (1238)

qstacus  Thinking about now of the Act’s implications for CUSTOMER SERVICE, which of the following statements do you think best describes the current status of the &TV1&?

- Businesses have to make changes in advance, even if they currently have no disabled customer  
- Businesses do not have to make any changes unless they have a disabled customer  
- Don’t Know

Businesses have to make changes in advance, even if they currently have no disabled customer  
Businesses do not have to make any changes unless they have a disabled customer  
Don’t Know  Y  (1239)
You might be interested to know that according to the Disability Discrimination Act, employers do not have to make any changes unless they have a disabled employee or applicant but businesses have to make changes even if they currently have no disabled customers.

Now I am going to ask you whether you consider people with certain conditions as being disabled.

qdisbel Do you consider a person with ... to be disabled?

Yes 1  (351)
No 2
Don’t Know  Y

This question is repeated for the following loop values:

- mobility problems (i.e. difficulty getting around or moving from place to place)
- lifting/dexterity problems (i.e. difficulties using their hands to lift or carry everyday objects)
- facial or skin disfigurement
- hearing impairment (which affects their ability to take part in spoken conversation)
- visual impairment (not corrected by glasses)
- a mental illness
- a learning difficulty (used to be called a mental handicap)
- a speech impairment (which affects their ability to take part in spoken conversation)
- a progressive illness (such as cancer or Parkinson’s disease)

A total of nine iterations occupying columns (351) to (359)

Under the Disability Discrimination Act people with all of the conditions I have just mentioned may be classified as being disabled.

The next few questions are about the employment of disabled people
qevdis  As far as you are aware, in the last 10 years, have there ever been, or are there currently, any people with disabilities or significant long term health problems that affect their day to day activities employed at this workplace?

Yes 1 (360)
No 2
Don’t Know Y
Refused Z

IF qevdis = Yes
THEN ASK: qdisbef, qdisisn, qdisnum

qdisbef  To your knowledge were any of these employees known to have a disability before they started working at this workplace?

Yes 1 (361)
No 2
Don’t Know Y
Refused Z

qdisisn  Did any of these employees develop their disabilities or long term health problems after they had started working at this workplace?

Yes 1 (362)
No 2
Don’t Know Y
Refused Z

qdisnum  How many disabled employees are currently employed at this workplace?

IF RESPONDENT IS UNSURE ASK THEM TO ESTIMATE
YOU CAN NOW CODE ZERO EMPLOYEES

Numeric Range ________________
Don’t Know Y (363)

Permitted Range
0 TO 14 (Numeric Range)

End of Filter idisev
qeopol  Does your business have a policy that covers the rights of disabled employees and applicants?

INTERVIEWER NOTE - EMPHASISE THAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE BUSINESS RATHER THAN JUST THE WORKPLACE

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IF qeopol = Yes
THEN ASK: qright

qright  And is that a written policy?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

End of Filter Ipolicy

I am now going to read out some statements about your workplace, can you tell me whether you agree or disagree with each one.

qbst  ...

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question is repeated for the following loop values:

- This workplace has good practices towards disabled employees
- This workplace would find it difficult to keep on employees who became disabled
- This workplace does not have flexible procedures that would allow it to employ disabled people
- This workplace has equal opportunities for disabled employees

A total of four iterations occupying columns (366) to (369)
I would now like to ask you some questions about your recruitment practices

qjobad  Are vacancies at your workplace ever advertised externally? This includes jobs that are posted with job centres or recruitment services

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IF qjobad = Yes**

qrefpol  When vacancies are advertised is any reference made to.......?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question is repeated for the following loop values:

- The rights of disabled applicants
- An equal opportunities policy
- The Two Ticks disability symbol

A total of three iterations occupying columns (371) to (373)

**End of Filter ijobad**

qhequ  Are applicants to your workplace required to give information about their health and disabilities, at any stage in the application process?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IF qhequ = Yes OR qhequ = Sometimes**

THEN ASK: qqufun
Is the information about health and disabilities used to…….? 

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Assess suitability for the job 1 (375)
Assess whether the workplace would be suitable for the applicant 2
Help make practical arrangements to allow the employee to do their job effectively 3
Monitor the composition of the workforce 4
Don’t Know Y
None of these X
Other 0

Other specify… (376 - 379)

How easy would it be for your workplace to…….? 

READ OUT

Very easy 1 (380)
Quite easy 2
Quite difficult 3
Very difficult 4
Impossible 5
Don’t Know Y

This question is repeated for the following loop values:
- Provide application forms in alternative formats
- Provide disability awareness information for staff involved in recruitment
- Provide help with communication (e.g. sign language interpreter)
- Check at interview if applicant would need any adjustments or adaptations if appointed
- Guarantee disabled applicants an interview

A total of five iterations occupying columns (380) to (411)
Have you ever sought advice on any aspect of employing disabled people?

This includes advice on adapting workplaces or any legal requirements the workplace may have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(412)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IF qemadv = Yes**

**THEN ASK:** qprevio, qwheadv

And were you seeking advice about your current business or was that on behalf of a different of previous business?

**CODE ALL THAT APPLY.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(1241)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous/different business</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t remember</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From where did you seek this advice?

**DO NOT PROMPT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues at workplace</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist consultant</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicitor/legal advice</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job centre/employment service</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acas</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Union</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/employer organisation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another business</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlord</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local/planning authority</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Rights Commission</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability charity/organisation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Advice Bureau</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTI</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused</td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other specify...**  

(415 - 418)

**End of Filter iadvyes**
qdis How easy would it be for this workplace to employ someone ..........?

... READ OUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very easy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite easy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite difficult</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impossible</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question is repeated for the following loop values:

- who needs to use a wheelchair
- who has arthritis which can fluctuate and at times severely limit their physical capacity
- who has severe facial scarring which cannot be completely masked
- who is profoundly deaf (not helped by hearing aid)
- with severely impaired vision who needed to use Braille and other such aids
- who is dyslexic

A total of six iterations occupying columns (419) to (424)

qdi3 How easy would it be for this workplace to employ someone ..........?

who has learning difficulties (used to be called a mental handicap)

READ OUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very easy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite easy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite difficult</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impossible</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IF ( qdi3 = Quite difficult OR qdi3 = Very difficult OR qdi3 = Impossible ) THEN ASK: qlearn
And why did you say that?

IF NECESSARY: Why did you think that it would be difficult for this workplace to employ someone who has learning difficulties?

Don’t Know       Y  (1243)
Refused          Z

End of Filter Idiff

How easy would it be for this workplace to employ someone ..........?

READ OUT

Very easy       1  (1247)
Quite easy      2
Quite difficult  3
Very difficult   4
Impossible      5
Don’t Know       Y

This question is repeated for the following loop values:
- who suffers from clinical depression
- who has a severe stammer and finds it hard to communicate verbally
- with Parkinson’s disease
- with epilepsy

A total of four iterations occupying columns (1247) to (1250)

How easy would it be for this workplace to employ someone ..........? who has Schizophrenia

READ OUT

Very easy       1  (1251)
Quite easy      2
Quite difficult  3
Very difficult   4
Impossible      5
Don’t Know       Y
IF ( qdista3 = Quite difficult OR qdista3 = Very difficult OR qdista3 = Impossible )
THEN ASK: qschizo

qschizo  And why did you say that?

 IF NECESSARY: And why did you say that it would be difficult for this workplace to employ someone who has Schizophrenia?

 (1252 - 1255)

| Don’t Know | Y |  (1252) |
| Refused    | Z |

End of Filter Idiff2

IF qevdis = Yes
THEN ASK: qmoradj

Which of the following are currently in place or planned at this workplace to assist disabled employees.

qadjem  ...

Is this currently in place or planned?

| Currently in place | 1 |  (425) |
| Planned           | 2 |
| Neither           | 3 |
| Don’t Know        | Y |

This question is repeated for the following loop values:

- Transferring people or jobs to other premises to assist disabled employees
- Adapted work environment to help disabled employees (e.g. adapting premises, furniture, lighting)
- Flexible work organisation (e.g. transferring disabled people to other jobs, rearranging work duties)
- Flexible working time, or varying hours for disabled employees
- Providing appropriate physical assistance (e.g. interpreters for a person who is deaf)
- Allowing working from home for disabled employees
- Providing car parking space for disabled employees

A total of seven iterations occupying columns (425) to (431)
qmoradj  Has anything else been done at this workplace to help disabled employees?

| Don’t Know | Y  | (432) |
| None       | X  |       |

IF qadjem(1) = Planned OR qadjem(2) = Planned OR qadjem(3) = Planned
OR qadjem(4) = Planned OR qadjem(5) = Planned OR qadjem(6) = Planned
OR qadjem(7) = Planned
THEN ASK: qplan

qplan  You said that there were adjustments planned for this workplace that have not yet been made, when would these changes be completed?

READ OUT

| Within the next 6 months | 1   | (436) |
| Over 6 months but within 1 year | 2   |
| Over 1 year but within 2 years | 3   |
| Over 2 years but within 5 years | 4   |
| Over 5 years but within 10 years | 5   |
| Over 10 years | 6   |
| Don’t Know | Y   |

End of Filter iplan

qdischa  Have you actually had to make any changes to the workplace or working practices for your disabled employees?

| Yes        | 1   | (437) |
| No         | 2   |
| Don’t Know | Y   |

IF qdischa = Yes
THEN ASK: q eas, qdiffic, qcosrea
qeas  Generally how easy was it to make these adjustments?

READ OUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very easy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite easy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither easy or difficult</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite difficult</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very difficult</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

qdiffic  What, if any, would you say were the main difficulties or problems in making these changes?

DO NOT PROMPT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No problems/difficulties</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space constraints</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning constraints or problems</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The age of the building</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting head office to agree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premises difficult to alter</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with Health and Safety</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cost of changes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties relating to staff attitudes/training</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge about changes</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other specify... (1258 - 1261)
qcosrea Which of these applies to why you went ahead with these adjustments?

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

The costs were small 1 (439)
Adjustments were made as part of a general refurbishment 2
We assumed the benefits would exceed the cost 3
It was the right thing to do for the disabled employee(s) 4
Company policy required us to make changes 5
In response to a request from an employee 6
The change had wider benefits for employees at the workplace 7
The law required us to make the change 8
Don’t Know Y
None of these X

IF qcosrea = None of these THEN ASK: qcosre2

qcosre2 What was the reason you went ahead with the adjustments?

PROBE

(440 - 443)

Don’t Know Y (440)
End of Filter icosre2

IF qcosrea = The law required us to make the change THEN ASK: qlawem

qlawem Would you have made these changes without the legislation?

READ OUT

Yes - all of them 1 (444)
Yes - some of them 2
No 3
Don’t Know Y

End of Filter ilawem
qadjcos Did any of the adjustments made have a direct financial cost for the workplace?

Yes 1 (445)
No 2
Don’t Know Y
Refused Z

IF qadjcos = Yes
THEN ASK: qadcost

qadcost Approximately how much in total, excluding grants or other income from third parties, has it cost this workplace in the last 12 months for adjustments made to help disabled employees? This includes costs incurred by changes to working patterns and practices.

READ OUT

£1 - £99 1 (446)
£100 - £499 2
£500 - £999 3
£1,000 - £4,999 4
£5,000 - £9,999 5
£10,000 and over 6
Don’t Know Y
Refused Z
None of these X

IF NOT (qadcost = None of these OR qadcost = Refused OR qadcost = Don’t Know)
THEN ASK: qburden

qburden How heavy a financial burden was it for your business?

READ OUT

Very heavy 1 (1262)
Fairly heavy 2
Not very heavy 3
Don’t Know Y
Refused Z

End of Filter icost

End of Filter iadjco1
IF qadjcos = No
THEN ASK: qadcono

qadcono  Why was there no direct financial cost from the adjustments made?

DO NOT PROMPT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY

- Adjustment was part of general refurbishment to facilities 1 (447)
- Adjustment was in response to company policy 2
- Adjustment was just a change in practice 3
- Landlord paid 4
- No costs were incurred 5
- Costs were funded by an external agency 6
- Don’t Know Y
- Other 0

Other specify... (448 - 451)

End of Filter iadcono

End of Filter idischa

IF qdischa = No
THEN ASK: qwhyno
qwhyno  Why has this workplace not had to make any adjustments to jobs, the working environment or working conditions to enable you to employ or continue to employ disabled people?

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Never had any disabled employees 1 (452)
Changes are planned but have not been completed 2
Necessary facilities/arrangements at the workplace were already in place 3
Premises are rented 4
Disabled employees did not require adjustments at the workplace 5
Adjustments to the workplace are planned but are not yet completed 6
Will be done but not a priority to date 7
We could not afford to make necessary adjustments 8
Don’t Know Y
Refused Z
Other 0

Other specify... (453 - 456)

End of Filter idisnad

End of Filter idisem

IF qevdis <> Yes

I am going to read you some statements on changes a workplace can make. Could you tell me how easy would it be for this workplace to make these changes to enable it to employ or continue to employ disabled people?
How easy would it be for this workplace to make these changes to enable it to employ or continue to employ disabled people?

Very easy 1 (457)
Quite easy 2
Quite difficult 3
Very difficult 4
Impossible 5
Don’t Know Y

This question is repeated for the following loop values:

- Transferring people or jobs to other premises to assist disabled employees
- Adapted work environment to help disabled employees (e.g. adapting premises, furniture, lighting)
- Flexible work organisation (e.g. transferring disabled people to other jobs, rearranging work duties)
- Flexible working time, or varying hours for disabled employees
- Providing appropriate physical assistance (e.g. interpreters for a person who is deaf)
- Allowing working from home for disabled employees
- Providing car parking space for disabled employees

A total of seven iterations occupying columns (457) to (463)

End of Filter inodiem

People’s views on the employment and retention of disabled people can vary. Here are some things employers have said, can you tell us how much you agree or disagree that the following statements apply to your enterprise?
qems ...?

IF NECESSARY: Thinking about your enterprise, how much do you agree or disagree with this statement?

READ OUT

| Strongly agree | 1 | (464) |
| Slightly agree | 2 |
| Slightly disagree | 3 |
| Strongly disagree | 4 |
| Don’t Know | Y |
| Refused | Z |

This question is repeated for the following loop values:

- Taking on a disabled person is a major risk for the employer
- We always seek to recruit the best person for the job, irrespective of whether they have a disability or not
- Adjustment(s) for an employee who becomes disabled usually costs less than recruiting a new one
- Taking on a person who had a disability or severe illness in the past but has now recovered would be a risk for this business
- People with disabilities tend to be less productive than other employees
- It’s very rare that we have a disabled person apply for a job

A total of six iterations occupying columns (464) to (469)

QUANCEPT ITEM:

QUANCEPT ITEM:

QUANCEPT ITEM:

QUANCEPT ITEM:

IF qcusawa = Yes - Disability Discrimination Act OR qcuspro = Yes

End of Filter itva2
Appendix B
Qualitative topic guides


**Topic Guide**

To explore:

- small businesses’ awareness of, and response to, the Disability Discrimination Act;
- the varying extent to which small businesses have responded to the Act;
- the underlying reasons behind the perceived difficulties that small businesses have in employing disabled people;
- whether small businesses have made any adaptations to the premises or working situation with regards to employing disabled people;
- what small businesses perceive as the business advantages and/or disadvantages of employing disabled people.
1. **INTRODUCTION**

- About BMRB.
- About the research:
  - This research is being funded by the DWP. They wish to understand the responses of small employers to the DDA. New provisions of the DDA were introduced on 1st October 2004, which extended the duties and responsibilities towards employees and potential employees to smaller firms, which were not previously included under the Act.
- Length of interview – up to 60 minutes.
- Confidentiality and anonymity:
  - None of the quotations used are attributed to anyone by name.
  - Findings are reported in such a way that no respondents can be identified.
- Recordings and transcripts are only available to the research team.

2. **BACKGROUND**

*I would like to start the interview by asking you a little about the company and your role…*

- Details of the company (Briefly – to provide a context):
  - Sector.
  - Size.
- Job role:
  - Responsibilities for recruiting/employing staff.

3. **EMPLOYING DISABLED PEOPLE**

*Note: Throughout the interview it is important to focus the respondent on the definition of disability in Appendix 1 and not their own definition of disability.*

**Whether they currently employ disabled people**

*…Thinking about your workforce…*

- Whether currently employ disabled people:
  - How many.
  - Types of disability.
  - Levels of severity.
  - Job roles.
  - How do they know they are disabled.
• Whether ever employed disabled people.
  – How many.
  – When.
  – Types of disability.
  – Levels of severity.
  – Job roles.
  – How do they know they were disabled.
• Could they be employing people who are disabled but not realise they are doing so.
• Could they have employed disabled people in the past without realising it.
• Reasons for not employing disabled people at the present time (if relevant).
• Reasons for not employing disabled now, when they have done so in the past.

Retention
• Has/does the firm employ disabled people (people who have become disabled whilst working for the firm):
  – Ask for description of the employee, job role, type of disability they have, severity, impact of the person’s disability on their job role.
  – Have they made any changes to accommodate existing employees with disabilities.
    ~ Physical changes to the work environment.
    ~ Changes in working conditions (flexible times, type of work, etc.).
  – Explore their experiences of employing a person with a disability
• What would happen if an employee became disabled whilst working for the firm:
  – Explore different types of disability (physical, sensory, learning difficulty, psychological).
  – Explore levels of severity of impairment.
    – Get the respondent to describe the types/levels of disability where they would continue to employ and where they would not continue to employ.
  – Likely changes they would make to working conditions/environment.
• Why do they retain disabled people:
  • Perceived advantages of employing disabled people (people who have become disabled whilst working for the firm).
  • Perceived disadvantages of employing disabled people (people who have become disabled whilst working for the firm).
**Employment**

- Has/does the firm employ disabled people *(people who were disabled at the recruitment stage)*:
  - Ask for description of the employee, job role, type of disability they have, severity, impact of the person’s disability on their job role.
  - Have they made any changes to accommodate existing employees with disabilities:
    ~ Physical changes to the work environment.
    ~ Changes in working conditions (flexible times, type of work, etc.).
- How would the nature of the disability affect their decision to employ:
  - Explore for different types of disability (physical, sensory, learning difficulty, psychological).
  - Explore for different levels of severity.
  - Get the respondent to describe the types/levels of disability where they would employ and where they would not employ.
- Explore their experiences of employing a person with a disability.
- Why do they employ disabled people:
  - Perceived advantages in employing disabled people *(people who were disabled at the recruitment stage).*
  - Perceived disadvantages in employing disabled people *(people who were disabled at the recruitment stage).*

**Recruitment**

- How do they know whether an applicant is disabled.
- Do they get many applications from people with disabilities?
  - Changes over time.
- Perceived quality of applications from disabled people:
  - Are there differences between disabled and non-disabled applicants in terms of skills, qualifications, experience, etc.
  ~ Explore differences and whether real or perceived; do they have evidence.
- What, if any, changes have they made to their recruitment process/practices:
  - How have these changes come about.
- How do they encourage applications from disabled people:
  - Equal opportunities statements (e.g. in adverts).
  - Two ticks symbol.
  - Other.
• Would they interview people that had declared in an application form that they had a disability.

• How do they take disability into account in making a decision to interview someone.

• If a person declared a disability during an interview, how would they deal with this:
  – What questions would they ask.
  – How would they take the person’s disability into account.

• In the situation of two people with similar skills, who would they employ:
  – Reasons why.
  – Would this vary according to the nature of the disability; how.

Views about disability and employment

• Are there people with specific types of disability that are more difficult to employ than others (spontaneously).

• For each of the following, explore:
  – their image of each type of disability;
  – the effect these disabilities have on a person’s employability;
  – what the specific difficulties would be with employing someone;
  – whether changes to the workplace could be made to accommodate;
  – any experience to date:
    ~ physical conditions (mobility, cardio-vascular, etc.);
    ~ sensory (sight, hearing);
    ~ learning difficulties (inc. dyslexia);
    ~ psychological problems (depression, mania, schizophrenia, etc.).

4. POLICIES AND PRACTICES

• Does the firm have a formal policy on recruitment and employment of people with disabilities:
  – Written?
  – Does it specifically deal with disabled people or is it part of a broader Equal Opportunities Policy.
  – How long in place.
  – How did it come about (Was DDA a factor).
  – Who sets the policy.
– What does the policy cover (recruitment, employment, retention, etc.).
– How are staff made aware of the policy.
– How is the policy implemented.
– Who has responsibility for its implementation.
– Is the policy monitored.
– Perceived effectiveness of the policy.

• If there is no formal policy:
  – Reasons why not.
  – Any plans to set one up.
  – If there is an informal policy:
    ~ How does this work in practice.
    ~ Explore whether the informal policy operates across the company or whether it is based on individual personal preference.

5. THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT
• Awareness of the Act:
  – When and where first heard about.
  – Main provisions of the Act:
    ~ as an employer;
    ~ as a service provider.
  – Whether believe their firm is covered by the Act.
  – Awareness of how disability is defined by the Act.
  – How do they define disability.
  – Awareness of the term ‘reasonable adjustments’:
    ~ Perceived meaning.
    ~ Knowledge of how ‘reasonable’ is defined.
• Action taken:
  – What action have they taken in response to the Act:
    ~ Recruitment/employment/retention policy.
    ~ Employing disabled people.
    ~ Making adjustments to the working environment/conditions (briefly).
    ~ To satisfy the service provider aspects of the Act.
• Perceived relevance to their business:
  – What is the relevance to their business.
  – Could it be relevant to other businesses (e.g. larger businesses):
    ~ Reasons; why not relevant to their business.
  – Can they see any advantages in employing people with disabilities (e.g. extending the talent pool – link with skills/experience of disabled people).

• Information sources:
  – Have they (passively) received any information/advice about the DDA:
    ~ What.
    ~ Where from.
    ~ Perceived usefulness.
  – Have they (actively) sought any information/advice about the DDA:
    ~ What.
    ~ Where from.
    ~ Perceived usefulness.
    ~ Why did they do this/what prompted them.
  – Do they require any information/advice about the DDA:
    ~ What.
    ~ Who would they consider going to for information/advice.
  – If they needed information about disability or the DDA:
    ~ Where would information be available.
    ~ Would they use these sources; reasons.

• Enforcement of the Act:
  – Is the Act enforced or policed.
    ~ How do they know this.
  – Who does this:
    ~ Any experience.
  – Should the Act be enforced or policed:
    ~ How.
    ~ What effect would it have on their business.
6. CHANGES TO THE WORK ENVIRONMENT/CONDITIONS

Note: changes to the workplace/working conditions can be made for a number of reasons. These may be to help customers generally (e.g. flexible opening times/pushchair ramps, etc.), to help disabled people generally, to help disabled employees. Probe the effect of making any changes on each of the groups.

Workplace – changes made

- Have they made any changes to the workplace to assist disabled people:
  - Disabled employees.
  - Disabled people generally (i.e. customers).
  - Non-disabled people (i.e. customers).
  - Probe for requested versus not requested changes.
- Physical changes to the work environment:
  - Structural changes such as lifts, doorways, ramps.
  - Minor changes, such as seating, etc.
- Provision of specialist equipment:
  - Major items, such as readers.
  - Minor items, such as lighting, etc.
- Who requested the changes.
- How was the need assessed.
- How did they estimate the cost.
- Who paid for the changes (what was the cost).
- What have been the benefits.
- Effect on employee.
- Effect on other employees.
- How well is this working.

- Effect of making adjustments for disabled people generally on disabled employees.
- Effect of making adjustments for disabled employees on disabled people generally.
- Effects of making adjustments on non-disabled people.
- Reasons for making adjustments (e.g. DDA versus other factors).
- What types of adjustment would they be prepared to make:
  - What level of cost would it be acceptable for them to incur.
Workplace – the costs of making adjustments (if not already covered)

- Have they been asked to make adjustments, or considered making adjustments, which they did not pursue:
  - Why did they not pursue.
  - Did they get estimated costs.
  - What part did the costs play in this decision.

Working conditions

- Have they made any changes in working conditions for disabled people:
  - Disabled employees.
  - Disabled people generally (i.e. customers).
  - Non-disabled people (i.e. customers).
  - Probe for requested versus not requested changes.
  - Flexible working conditions.
  - Changes in start/end times, etc.
  - Who requested the changes.
  - How did they assess the need.
  - What have been the benefits.
  - Effect on employee.
  - Effect on other employees.
  - How well is this working.

- Effect of making adjustments for disabled people generally on disabled employees.
- Effect of making adjustments for disabled employees on disabled people generally.
- Effects of making adjustments on non-disabled people.
- Reasons for making adjustments (e.g. DDA versus other factors).
- What types of adjustment would they be prepared to make.

- Reasons for not making physical changes to the work environment:
  - Explore.
  - If costs mentioned, explore whether these were genuine estimated costs or simply a guess.

- Reasons for not making adjustments to the working conditions:
  - Explore.
7. **SUMMING UP**

- Ask the respondent to consider a ‘cost – benefit’ analysis of employing disabled people in relation to their business:
  - What are the costs *(explore whether these are genuine estimates or guesses)*.
  - What are the benefits:
    - Considering the continuing employment of an existing employee who becomes disabled.
    - Considering the recruitment of a person who has a disability.
- Likelihood of employing disabled people:
  - Whether people with specific types of disability are more employable than others.
- Likelihood of making changes to the work place/conditions:
  - What would they consider changing.
- **THANK** respondent and **CLOSE** the interview.
Appendix 1

**Definition of disability (used in the preceding survey)**

A disabled person is someone who has a disability or long-term health problem that affects his or her day-to-day activities. This can include someone who:

1. needs to use a wheelchair;
2. has arthritis which can fluctuate and at times severely limit their physical capacity;
3. has severe facial scarring which cannot be completely masked;
4. is profoundly deaf (not helped by hearing aid);
5. has impaired vision and may need to use Braille and other such aids;
6. is dyslexic;
7. has a neurological impairment e.g. multiple sclerosis, learning difficulties, autism, dyspraxia;
8. has clinical depression;
9. has a severe stammer and finds it hard to communicate verbally;
10. has Parkinson’s disease;
11. has epilepsy;
12. has Schizophrenia;
13. has restricted growth;
14. has a terminal illness such as cancer.