

Facts and Figures

Disability in the United Kingdom 2010

Introduction

This statistical summary gives an overview of the current key facts and figures surrounding disability in the UK today. It covers important areas such as employment, housing, transportation, education etc.

This compilation was as a result of comprehensive search of key websites in the field of disability. The figures are based on the most recent surveys and are current estimates. The data available about disabled people is based on a range of definitions. Therefore, different surveys produce different estimates of the number of disabled people. However, most of the information in this summary has been provided using the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 definition of disability.

Summary Statistics

- There are around 11 million disabled adults, this includes limiting long standing illness. This is equivalent to 20 % of the population
- There are about 770,000 children age under 16 in the UK with a disability, out of a population of 11.8 million children. This is equivalent to 6% of the child population
- Only 17% of disabled people were born with disabilities
- Majority (83%) of disabled people acquire their disability during their working lives
- Acquired Brain Injury is the largest cause of disability amongst the working age population
- Majority of impairments are not visible – less than 8% of disabled people use wheelchairs
- It is estimated that there are 1.2 million wheelchair users in England. Some 825,000 are regular users of NHS wheelchair services
- Only 28% of wheelchair users are under 60
- Disability is strongly related to age – 2.1% of 16-19 year olds are recorded as having a disability; 31% for those between the ages of 50-59 years; and 78% of people aged 85 or over

- There are about 1.5 million – nearly 3 in 100 – in the UK who have a learning disability. Just 1 in 3 people with a learning disability take part in some form of education or training
- About 200 babies are born every week with a learning disability
- People are more likely to become disabled if they have a low income, are out of work or have low educational qualifications
- 15% of young disabled people are not in any form of education, employment or training as opposed to 7% of their non-disabled peers. The gap increases between the ages of 16 – 19 to two thirds as likely (27% compared to 9%)
- 21% of disabled people aged 16 – 24 have no qualifications, compared to 9% of their non-disabled peers
- The incidence and experience of disability differs by socio-economic status, gender, age, religion and ethnicity
- Disability also shows marked regional variations. While only 17% of households in the South East have one or more disabled adults under the pension age, in the North East this rises to 27%

Ethnicity and Geography

- Bangladeshis and Pakistanis have the highest rates of disability of all ethnic groups
- Rates of disability are highest within the deprived and poorer areas and areas with a legacy of heavy industry, especially coal mining
- According to 2001 Census, Wales has the highest proportion (23.3%) of people with limiting long-term illness, followed by the North East region of England (22.7%). South East and London are the lowest English regions at 15.5%

Employment

- At 2009, there are over 6.9 million or 18.3% of working age people (one in five) who are disabled
- The average employment rate for the working age population is 74%. The employment rate of the working age disabled people is 49.7% compared with 79.1% of non-disabled people of working age. The gap between the employment rate of disabled people and the UK average employment rate is 24.3%

- Almost half (45%) of working age disabled people are economically inactive (i.e. outside of the Labour force) this figure is two times higher than 21.4% of non-disabled people of working age that economically inactive
- The average rate of disabled people making a transition into employment from economic inactivity is 4%, while the equivalent figure for non-disabled people is six times higher
- Employment rates differ across impairments and are particularly poor for those with learning disabilities (less than 1 in 5) and mental health problems (just over 1 in 10). The highest employment rates of over 6 in 10 exist for those with diabetes, skin conditions or chest/breathing problems
- The gap between the proportion of disabled and non-disabled young people out of work widened as they got older
- At age 26, disabled people were nearly four times as likely to be unemployed or involuntarily out of work than non-disabled people. Among those who were in employment, earnings were 11 per cent lower than for their non-disabled counterparts with the same level of educational qualifications
- There are currently 1.2 million disabled people in the UK who are available for and want work
- One of the key reasons for the low employment rate of disabled people is the fact that one in six of those who become disabled while in work lose their employment during the first year after becoming disabled
- 80% of all those who become disabled are in employment at the time of onset, falling to 60% the following year and 36% the year after that
- Disabled people have a very low representation in public appointments – the current make up is just one in twenty (5%) across England, Scotland and Wales, even though one in five of the working age population has a disability
- It is estimated the pay gap between a disabled person and non-disabled person varies from 6 to 26%. In addition, disabled women suffer from a gender pay gap, and earn less than disabled men
- Disabled men have a pay gap of 11%, and disabled women of 22%
- The average gross hourly pay for disabled employees is £10.31 compared to £11.39 for non-disabled employees
- More than half (55%) of disabled people reported to have no savings compared to around 12% of the general population
- Disabled people's day-to-day living costs – for basics like mobility aids, care and transport – are 25% higher than those of non-disabled people

Housing

- Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to live in poor housing. There is a clear shortage of housing that is specifically designed to meet disabled people's needs
- Disabled people are twice as likely as non-disabled people to be social housing tenants
- In 2007-08 over 6 million households contained at least one person with a disability or serious medical condition. Of the 6 million people, there were 1.5 million individuals in England who required specially adapted accommodation because of a 'disability or medical condition'
- Overall some 4.5 million households (21% of all) include one or more people with a reported mobility problem; the majority of whom are aged 60 years or more.
- Suitable accessible housing is required for people with mobility problems, who may find that their current accommodation limits their independence and social life as well as presenting increased safety hazards
- The social rented sector had the highest proportion of such households (50%) and the private rented sector had the lowest proportion (21%)
- Overall some 4.5 million households (21% of all) include one or more people with a reported mobility problem; the majority of whom are aged 60 years or more.
- 80% lived in accommodation they considered to be 'suitable' for coping with the medical condition or disability, whilst 20% are in unsuitable accommodation
- 35% (7.7 million) of homes were 'non-decent' in 2007, of which 67% were classified as straightforward to make decent
- The average (mean) cost to make homes decent was around £6,860.
- Households with children were less likely to live in non-decent homes than the average household. Households with children in the social sector were least likely to live in non-decent homes
- Vulnerable households with children were more likely to live in non-decent homes than their non-vulnerable counterparts, particularly those privately renting their accommodation
- Children and older people tend to be more at risk from poor housing conditions in terms of their health and safety
- 53% of disabled children under 15 live in unsuitable accommodation

Transportation

- 60% of disabled people have no car available to the household, compared to 27% of the overall population
- In England, there were 71,000 licensed taxis at the end of March 2009, 53% (38,000 out of 71,000) were designed to be wheelchair accessible with assistance from the driver
- There are currently 21% 'step-free' stations on the tube (58 out of 270 tube stations)
- In 2005, 39% of buses are wheelchair accessible; 46% of trains are fully accessible
- The percentage of people with mobility difficulties in the general population is 14%. Mobility difficulties tend to affect older people more than younger people 45% of those aged 70 or over have problems walking or using a bus, compared with 5% of those aged 16 to 49. Rates are also higher among women than men
- People with mobility difficulties make around a third fewer trips than those without difficulties
- The estimated number of disabled drivers was over 1.9 million. Approximately 20% of disabled adults in Great Britain
- Drivers with DVLA listed medical conditions formed approximately 6% of the 34 million licensed drivers
- An estimated 27,000 adapted vehicles are used by mobility clients
- Disabled people drive cars far less (47% less often), although taxis/minicabs are used much more (67% more frequently), as well as buses (around 20% more frequently)
- The number of blue badge on issue in England is estimated to 2.46 million people

Education and skills

- Disabled people are more than twice as likely as non-disabled people to have no qualifications. 23% of disabled people have no qualifications compared to 9% of non-disabled people
- Almost 14% of learners in the former areas of learning have a disability or learning difficulty
- Of the number of people in higher education in 2007/08, only 7% were disabled learner (62,510 out of 884,610 people)

- 71% of disabled people do not have a qualification higher than Level 2 compared to 17.8% of non-disabled people
- At age 16, young disabled people are twice as likely not to be in any form of education, employment or training (NEET) as their non-disabled peers (15% compared to 7%)
- At age 26, disabled people were nearly four times as likely to be unemployed or involuntarily out of work than non-disabled people
- It is predicted that, by 2020, 42 per cent of jobs will require a degree level qualification or above

Health

- Disabled people make up around one third of the NHS users in Britain
- People with learning disabilities or long-term mental health problems on average die 5 to 10 years younger than other citizens, often from preventable illnesses
- People with a learning disability were more likely to be obese 28.3%, compared to 20.4% of the remaining population
- People with multiple impairments face additional access barriers for the Health service
- 21% of all disabled people and 64% of profoundly deaf people find accident and emergency units either inaccessible or inadequate for their needs
- It is estimated that around 748,000 children and young people aged 5 to 16 in Great Britain have mental health problems; around 78,000 of these have autistic spectrum disorders; around 132,000 have a learning disability and 51,000 of these also have mental health problems
- About 60% of children and young people with both learning disabilities and mental health problems live in poverty

Safety and Security

- More than 20% of disabled people have experienced harassment in public because of their impairment
- Harassment is the most common crime experienced by disabled people. Verbal abuse outside homes and repeat burglaries are common experiences
- 8% of disabled people in London suffered a violent attack during 2001/2 compared with 4% of non-disabled people

- 90% of people with a learning disability have experienced bullying and harassment. 66% per cent of people with a learning disability have been bullied regularly with 32% stating that bullying was taking place on a daily or weekly basis

Children, Disability and Poverty

- There are 770,000 disabled children under the age of 16 in the UK. This equates to 1 in 20 children
- Around 4 million children live in low-income households in 2007/08
- 98% of disabled children live at home and are supported by their families
- Around a third of all disabled adults aged 25 to retirement are living in low-income households. This is twice the rate of that for non-disabled adults and the gap between the two is markedly higher than a decade ago
- 55% of families with disabled children are living in or at the margins of poverty
- 29% of households with a disabled child live in poverty compared to 21% of households with no disabled children
- 3% of mothers with disabled children work full time compared with 22% of mothers with non-disabled children
- 84% of mothers of disabled children are not working compared with 39% of mothers of non-disabled children
- the annual cost of bringing up a disabled child is three times greater than for a non-disabled child
- Only 4% of disabled children are supported by social services
- There are an estimated 3 million people living in relative poverty in the UK
- Disabled adults aged 25 to retirement are twice as likely to live in low-income households as their non-disabled adults counterparts: 31% compared with 16%
- Analysis of data from the 2001 Family and Children Survey, indicated that 32% of families in Britain supporting a child with learning disabilities were living in poverty, compared with 24% of other families
- There is a two-way relationship between disability and poverty in childhood. Disabled children are among the most likely to experience poverty and poor children are more likely to become disabled than those who are better off

Sensory Impairments

- There are about 2 million people in the UK with significant sight loss. There are an estimated 25,000 children with sight problems.

- At 31 March 2007, 54,500 people were registered as deaf
- At 31 March 2008, 153,000 people were registered as blind people; 156,300 people were registered as partially sighted people
- 64% of blind and 66% partially sighted people were aged 75 or over
- 44,900 (29%) of those registered blind and 43,500 (28%) of those registered partially sighted also recorded an additional disability
- Of those people registered as blind with an additional disability, 4% have a mental health problem, 8% have a learning disability, 60% have a physical disability and 27% have a hearing impairment
- Of those people registered as partially sighted with an additional disability, 4% have a mental health problem, 4% have a learning disability, 61% have a physical disability and 30% have a hearing impairment
- It is estimated that there are almost 9 million people with hearing impairment
- Approximately 28% of people who are hearing impaired are between 16 – 60 years of age, and 72% are 60 over
- Every year, around 840 babies are born with a significant hearing impairment. About 1 in 1,000 children are deaf at three years of age
- It is estimated that 20,000 children between 0-15 years of age are moderately to severely deaf, and approximately 12,000 children between this age range were born deaf
- There are around 23,000 deafblind people, a further 250,000 people experience some degree of dual sensory impairment, many in older age

Papworth Trust will publish full documents of 'Key Facts about Disability' later this year. This document will be updated regularly as to when figures from surveys become available.

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