



The Employment of Disabled People in the Public Sector: A Review of Data and Literature

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All tables are based on data that have been weighted to take account of non-response and the effects of sample design. Population estimates are rounded to the nearest thousand; those below 10,000 are not shown because they are based on small sub-samples, and are unreliable. For similar reasons, proportions or percentages, and medians, based on fewer than 50 respondents are not shown.

Percentages may sum to 99 or 101 because of rounding. Values less

than 0.5 are shown as 0. Cells with no cases are shown by a dash. Base numbers for the calculation of percentages may vary because of missing data.

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We are grateful to many ‘umbrella’ organisations and to the individual employers who responded for helping us to obtain documentation on public sector employers’ policies and practices relating to employment of disabled staff.

Andrew Nocon at the Disability Rights Commission managed the project. We wish to thank him and members of the project steering group for advice and guidance. **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

BSL	British Sign Language
CPI	Consumer Prices Index
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DRC	Disability Rights Commission
HR	Human Resources
LFS	Labour Force Survey
ONS	Office for National Statistics

SIC Standard Industrial Classification

SME Small and medium-sized enterprises

Executive Summary

The Social Policy Research Unit, with Equal Ability Limited, carried out, over the summer of 2004, a review of evidence on the employment of disabled people in the public sector. The Disability Rights Commission wanted the review as context for the anticipated new statutory duty on the public sector to promote disability equality.

The report draws on:

- 1 secondary analysis of the Labour Force Survey, to describe recent trends and the characteristics of disabled public sector employees;
- 2 a review of published research literature; and
- 3 a trawl of public sector employers to identify documentation showing effective disability employment practices.

Recent trends in public sector employment

The number of working age disabled people in public sector employment in Britain grew from more than 660,000 in 1998/99 to just over 790,000 in 2002/03, an increase of almost 130,000 or nearly 20 per cent over the four year period. This compares with a 161,000 increase among non-disabled people, a modest growth of three per cent.

With the expansion of the public sector, the number of female employees increased faster than that of men. Disabled women working in the public sector increased by 101,000 or 24 per cent, compared with an increase of 28,000 disabled men, a growth of 11 per cent over the study period. The increase in employees was largely concentrated in local government and the health service, and rates of growth in these areas for disabled employees were over twice those of non-disabled employees.

Nonetheless, disabled people are less likely than non-disabled people to work in the public sector. Between 1998 and 2003, around 11 per cent of working age disabled people had public sector jobs compared with 18 per cent of non-disabled people. The difference between these two employment rates, seven percentage points, can be interpreted as the extent to which disabled people are disadvantaged, relative to non-disabled people, in obtaining or keeping jobs in the public sector.

Despite the increasing number of disabled people in public sector employment, inequalities in the proportions of disabled and non-disabled people working in the public sector did not diminish during the study period. People with mental health problems, or learning difficulties, are most disadvantaged in getting or keeping public sector jobs; minority ethnic disabled people are also under-represented in the public sector.

Employment circumstances and characteristics of disabled public sector employees

Disabled public sector employees are typically six or seven years older than their non-disabled counterparts: 42 per cent of disabled employees are aged 50 years or more, compared with 27 per cent of non-disabled employees. Disabled or not, almost two-thirds of public sector employees are women, and they are more likely than men to work part time.

Musculo-skeletal complaints are reported as the main health problem or disability by one in three disabled employees. Together with respiratory conditions, and complaints affecting the heart or circulation of the blood, they account for almost 60 per cent of the health problems singled out by these employees.

Differences between disabled and non-disabled public sector employees in educational qualifications are comparatively small except at the highest level: 22 per cent of disabled employees have a degree or equivalent qualification compared with 30 per cent of

non-disabled employees.

Just over half of both disabled and non-disabled public sector employees work in local government, and almost a quarter in the health service. However, disabled employees are less likely than non-disabled employees to occupy the more senior managerial, professional and technical positions, and differences in occupational status are more marked between disabled and non-disabled men. Disabled employees are also less likely to have taken part in any recent job-related training, partly because they were older and more likely to occupy lower status jobs than non-disabled employees.

Disabled employees are somewhat more likely than non-disabled employees to report that they had taken at least one day off sick during the past week: the proportions are 6.1 and 2.5 per cent respectively.

Nine per cent of disabled women expressed a preference for working longer hours, and six per cent of disabled men, marginally more than their non-disabled counterparts: seven and four per cent respectively.

Disabled employees often earn less than 95 per cent of non-disabled employees' earnings in comparable public sector occupations and organisations. Several groups of disabled employees, including those working in local government and the health service, typically earn much less than that, and disparities in earnings associated with disability are generally greater for men than women.

Research on employers' attitudes and practices in employment of disabled people

It is hard to draw firm conclusions from employer surveys because they define public sector in differing ways, word questions differently and focus either on workplaces or on whole organisations. Moreover, findings specific to public sector employers are not systematically presented in research reports.

Across sectors, respondents' interpretations of disability commonly were restricted to obvious physical and sensory impairment, and awareness of impairments covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 was low.

Between seven in ten and eight in ten of public sector employers were aware of the DDA. In the most recent survey reviewed, respondents in one in four voluntary and public sector organisations named the DDA spontaneously.

In one survey, one in three public sector employers said that they actively encouraged job applications from disabled people. In another survey, however, fewer than one in ten of all respondents said they were very likely to take on people with physical disabilities and less than one in twenty people with mental health problems. Here there was a suggestion that likelihood might be higher among public sector employers. A third survey found that three in ten of all employers felt it would be impossible to employ a wheelchair user or someone with impaired vision.

Seven in ten public sector workplaces in one survey had formal policies covering employment of disabled people.

There are inconsistent findings from surveys on the propensity of public sector employers to make adjustments for disabled employees, ranging from nearly eight in ten to one in four workplaces having in place (or planned) arrangements for flexible working time or varied hours. In the most recent survey reviewed, over half of public sector workplaces that had ever had a disabled employee had arrangements in place or planned for flexible work organisation. Of those public sector employers in that survey that actually had made changes to the workplace or working practices (just over one in four), one in three said the law required them to do so.

From the surveys reviewed there are indications of the public sector out-performing the private sector, but not always the voluntary sector, though some conclusions are derived from a single study. The areas in which the public sector may perform better than the private sector are:

- 1 likelihood of employing and recruiting disabled staff
- 2 somewhat more inclusive interpretations of 'disability'
- 3 awareness of the DDA
- 4 having a formal policy covering employment of disabled people
- 5 making, or being willing to make, adjustments for disabled staff and citing the law as a reason for making changes.

Caution is needed in attributing differences to sector alone. Size of organisation is recognised as a main variable leading to differences in results between the public and private sector. However, having taken size and other factors into account, one study found that the odds of having employed a disabled person are one and a half times higher in the public sector than in the private sector. It also found that the presence of a written policy relating to employment of disabled people and awareness of the DDA are significant factors in this respect. Accordingly, the interaction between size, having a policy and DDA awareness needs to be explored further in order to understand differences within the public sector.

Sickness absence

Sickness absence rates are higher amongst disabled than non-disabled employees. Surveys have found minorities of employers believing that disabled potential recruits might take more sick leave or have worse attendance and punctuality records than non-disabled people. On the other hand, similar sized minorities were found to believe that disabled people have better records than non-disabled people.

Sickness absence rates amongst all employees are higher in the public than in the private sector, and higher in large than in small

employing organisations. The gap between sectors is narrower when data is gathered from the Labour Force Survey than when the less reliable but much more widely publicised employer surveys are used.

Ill-health and sickness absence in parts of the public sector have been linked to levels of stress at work, which can result from inadequate social support networks at work, combined with deteriorating social relationships outside work, as well as from a work culture of long working hours, heavy workloads, low levels of employee control and bullying by managers.

In the one study that looked at differences between sectors in the management of sickness absence, public sector organisations appeared better placed than those in the private sector to offer rehabilitation.

Analysis of the Labour Force Survey found that the risk of leaving employment after becoming disabled as defined by the DDA was lower in the public industrial sectors than in the other industrial sectors.

Disabled people's employment experiences

There is only a small body of research on the experiences of disabled people working in the public sector. Key findings from studies involving disabled people working in health and social care are:

- 1 strikingly lower levels of job satisfaction among disabled than among non-disabled social services staff
- 2 pain emerging as the chief barrier at work for social care workers
- 3 views among health and social care workers that colleagues had limited awareness of disability and of how it affected them at work
- 4 perceptions that disclosure has negative effects on colleagues' attitudes to staff with a hidden disability or a mental health condition
- 5 strong beliefs among 'user employees' in mental health services

that their experiences as service users added value to their work with other users.

A study of how deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users and hearing people work together in statutory organisations concluded that working and social relationships can be improved, and deaf staff's confidence fostered, if hearing staff use BSL in the presence of deaf staff. The power imbalance between unqualified deaf workers and qualified hearing staff can be reduced by recognising competency rather than qualification.

One wider study found organisations of and for disabled people to be more supportive, accepting, flexible and empathetic than other employers.

Role of services in promoting employment in the public sector

From the large number of evaluations of government employment programmes there is no direct evidence of the sectoral destinations of disabled participants who enter employment. Scrutiny of early findings from the evaluation of the New Deal for Disabled People national extension (the Job Broker service) suggests that the public sector may not be well represented.

A survey of users of Access to Work found:

- 1 Access to Work used much more in the public than in the private and voluntary sectors, and particularly in central government
- 2 public sector users somewhat more likely than others to have a bigger package of Access to Work supports but less satisfied with the extent to which Access to Work met their needs
- 3 public sector users holding less favourable opinions on employers' involvement in the process of getting Access to Work and less satisfied with the time for the support to be provided, compared with users in other sectors
- 4 a lower overall opinion of Access to Work among public sector users than those in the private and voluntary sectors.

Evidence from a study on public sector supported work settings is that disabled employees in public sector supported factories and businesses were the least satisfied with the support they received, compared with those in voluntary sector businesses or in supported jobs with ordinary employers. They rated especially less highly the interest of the job, learning new skills and improvement of their pace of work.

There are suggestions that public bodies aiming to establish social firms need to develop genuine worker participation in the planning and implementation stages, and in monitoring.

Evidence from employers' documentation of effective policies and practices

Thirty-one umbrella or similar organisations were asked to circulate a request for documentation evidencing effective policies and practices in the public sector, and some government departments were asked to identify good practice employers. Information was received for 22 employers, a disappointingly low response, and evidence of effectiveness was very limited. Limitations in the method used, and in umbrella organisations' and employers' capacity to respond to the request, are acknowledged. There are, however, indications of limited awareness among umbrella organisations of what their members are doing, uncertainty among public sector employers about whether they are doing anything special, a lack of an organisation-wide strategic view and possibly only limited evidence of effectiveness available.

Many employers were only just beginning to look at monitoring and understanding the effectiveness of their policies. There was, exceptionally, some evidence of progress with employment targets. One example was found, in a NHS trust, of active promotion of workplace diversity resulting in high levels of recruitment of staff with personal experience of mental health problems.

There was some evidence of staff surveys leading to an agenda to improve provision for prospective and existing disabled employees, including setting up an employee network.

Documented practices for which no evidence of effectiveness was offered include use of guaranteed interviews, staff training and adjustments.

Significant importance was attached by respondents to 'being awarded' the Jobcentre Plus Disability Symbol as a form of external accreditation. The system of assessment does not appear to maximise the potential for improving employment opportunities.

From the documents retrieved there were examples of good disability policies but also of failures to link them effectively with mainstream policies. There was a tendency for a lack of explanation and illustration to tie theoretical statements to the real experiences of disabled people and their colleagues. The view of disability was sometimes limited.

Conclusions and recommendations

It is encouraging to find, from the analysis of the LFS, rather few apparent differences in the characteristics of disabled and non-disabled employees in the public sector, though disparities in earnings and occupying senior positions need further investigation and when the quality of employment is considered disabled employees in certain sub-sectors of the public sector are disadvantaged. It is also encouraging that the public sector outperforms the private sector in some respects, though it is hard to explain why.

The proposed duty on the public sector to promote disability equality will require employers to take action in areas which are currently under-developed such as: involving disabled staff; training and awareness raising; monitoring disability within the workforce and

among job applicants; and taking an organisation-wide strategic approach.

Guidance needs to convince employers of the value to them of taking action, involving a prior understanding of what motivates them to change.

Development work might include further investigation of effective practice through equality, diversity and disability networks and recipients of award and accreditations.

At the same time, steps must be taken to counter misunderstandings about disability, with active campaigning to educate the public about disability in general and legislation on disability in particular, and specifically to promote awareness of which conditions are included under the DDA and help to dispel myths about employing disabled people.

Overcoming gaps in knowledge

There is scope for further analysis of the LFS to fill gaps in knowledge:

- 1 multivariate analysis to investigate reasons for the reported differences between disabled and non-disabled employees, with priority given to pay differentials
- 2 comparison of disabled people's employment experiences across sectors, to provide the context within which to evaluate and interpret findings related to the public sector
- 3 longitudinal analysis to explore employment trajectories of disabled people, including movements in and out of the public sector
- 4 longitudinal analysis to investigate in more detail the finding that public sector employees have a lower risk of leaving employment following onset of disability compared with those working in other industry divisions.

There is a role for the DRC to influence the design of further research to introduce consistency in the definition of the public sector and in survey design so that the impact of the public sector duty can be tracked over time.

There is a need for research that establishes what leads to change and which takes account of the perspectives of disabled and non-disabled staff in different positions within public sector employing organisations.

1. Introduction

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) asked the Social Policy Research Unit, with Equal Ability Ltd, to carry out a review of data and research evidence relating to the employment of disabled people in the public sector in Great Britain. The review was carried out over the summer of 2004.

1.1 Aims and background

The research was commissioned in anticipation of a new statutory duty, within the forthcoming Disability Rights Act, to promote disability equality across the public sector. Fuller details of the proposed new duty on the public sector are given in the concluding chapter of this report (Chapter Eight). A key aspect is the proposed requirement on public bodies to publish a disability equality scheme and action plan. The DRC is likely to issue Codes of Practice.

The introduction of a public sector duty provides an ideal context within which to focus on and improve employment opportunities for disabled people in the public sector. In order to inform this process, the DRC sought evidence on:

- 1 trends in employment of disabled people in the public sector

- 2 the characteristics and employment situation of public sector employees
- 3 the experiences of disabled people seeking or being in public sector employment, or who have left such employment
- 4 public sector employment practices and public sector employers' attitudes towards the employment of disabled people
- 5 the most effective practical interventions to improve disabled people's opportunities to enter, stay in or progress in public sector employment.

The research design was in three parts.

1. Secondary analysis of the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS was selected because it is:
 - 1 representative of the working age population in Britain and its constituent countries, and the sample design enables population estimates to be made
 - 2 based on large samples that allow sub-group analysis, for example by age and ethnicity
 - 3 repeated every quarter and therefore provides an up-to-date picture of employment and the labour market, as well as showing trends over time
 - 4 designed around standard questions on economic status, industry, occupation, employment position and socio-economic classifications, including measures of employment and unemployment that conform to the internationally agreed International Labour Organisation definitions.
2. A review of the published research literature. The focus was on the most recent research evidence, covering the period since the employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) were introduced in December 1996.
3. A review of unpublished documentation gathered from public sector employers. The aim was to concentrate on evidence of effective practices, such as in recruitment, workforce monitoring

or disability awareness training.

1.2 Outline of the report

Chapters Two and Three draw on secondary analysis of the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Chapter Two describes trends in the number and proportion of disabled people employed in the public sector in Great Britain from spring 1998 to spring 2003. Chapter Three uses the most recently available LFS data to describe the employment circumstances and characteristics of disabled public sector employees. In both chapters data are presented on disabled compared with non-disabled employees in the public sector only.

Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven summarise the available published research literature on the employment of disabled people in the public sector in Great Britain. Much of the literature in the field of employment and disabled people was already known to the research team, as a consequence of having undertaken searches for several previous reviews as well as being active researchers in the field. Existing knowledge was up-dated and extended by searches on ‘Academic Search Premier (EBSCO)’, selected academic publishers websites, government and industry websites, media databases and library databases.

It is important to note at this point that almost no British research literature specifically on the topic of public sector employment of disabled people was found through searches. To identify material of relevance to the review it was necessary to trawl through the literature on the wider topic of employment of disabled people. As will be explained further, it was sometimes found necessary to present the wider context to the findings relating to the public sector.

Chapter Four reports the research on the attitudes and employment practices of public sector organisations.

Chapter Five looks at sickness absence among disabled people and

employer perceptions that they will take more sick leave, examines recent evidence on sickness absence in the public sector and reports findings of an important analysis that takes account of sector in characteristics associated with increased risk of job loss.

Chapter Six reviews the limited literature on the public sector employment experiences of disabled people, people with chronic and mental health conditions, and deaf people.

Finally, Chapter Seven examines research on practical interventions, such as government programmes, to improve the chances for disabled people to enter, retain and progress in public sector jobs.

It should be noted that there is no uniformity in how 'disabled people' is defined in the studies reviewed. Wherever possible we present the definitions used in the studies. It should also be noted that the scope of some surveys extends to include Northern Ireland.

Chapter Eight presents findings from a trawl of public sector employers to identify effective employment policies and practices based on their own documentation.

Chapter Nine concludes with the main messages from the research and recommendations to the DRC.

2. Recent trends in public sector employment

This chapter describes recent trends in the number and proportion of disabled people employed in the public sector in Great Britain, and draws comparisons with those of non-disabled public sector employees. It uses data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which collects information about respondents' position within the labour

market and their working patterns. Two considerations shaped the analysis described here: the identification of disabled people and the designation of public sector employment. Both definitions are discussed briefly in the next section. Later sections present key findings, with additional tables shown in Appendix A.

2.1 Labour Force Survey definitions and measures

Every quarter, the LFS aims to interview all adults aged 16 years and over living in a nationally representative sample of some 60,000 private households. Disabled people are identified as those respondents who report a health problem or impairment that substantially limits their ability to carry out ordinary, everyday activities, and which is expected to last for more than a year. This definition is broadly consistent with the concept of disability used in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. The LFS definition of disability also includes people who may not meet the DDA criteria in full, but whose health problems or impairments reportedly limit the amount or kind of paid work they might do.

Throughout this chapter and the next, the term 'disabled' refers to the LFS definition described above. The survey measure based on the DDA and work limitations was included in LFS datasets from spring 1998 onwards. The trends analysis therefore examines changes in public sector employment from spring 1998 to spring 2003. LFS data for spring 2004 had not been released into the public domain at the time of writing.

The classification of public sector employment is also based on respondents' own reports. The LFS definition is intended to cover people who work in organisations that are owned, funded or run by central or local government. This definition is somewhat broader than that used in the National Accounts, which excludes publicly-funded bodies such as universities. Thus, Black et al. (2004) draw on administrative sources, and a survey of local authorities, to produce lower estimates of the number of jobs in the public sector than those

derived from the LFS. In addition, the LFS estimates are liable to misclassification because respondents and interviewers may find it difficult to distinguish between jobs in the public and private sectors.

The next section presents estimates of the number of disabled and non-disabled employees in the public sector in Britain and its constituent countries. Later sections go on to investigate trends in public sector employment rates and employment patterns, among disabled people of working age and sub-groups defined by ethnicity, impairment, and employing organisation.

2.2 Trends in the number of public sector employees

According to Black et al. (2004), the number of public sector jobs has increased each year since 1998, after declining for almost 20 years in a row. They estimate an additional 509,000 public sector jobs between 1998 and 2003, a ten per cent increase over the five-year period. The fastest growing areas of public sector employment have been in local authority education provision (246,000 more jobs, a 20 per cent increase) and the health service (218,000 or 18 per cent increase), with smaller gains in central government (43,000 or five per cent increase) and the police (19,000 or nine per cent increase).

Estimates from the LFS indicate that the number of working age disabled people in public sector employment in Britain grew from more than 660,000 in 1998/99 to just over 790,000 in 2002/03, an increase of almost 130,000 or nearly 20 per cent over the four-year period. This compares with a 161,000 increase among non-disabled people, a modest growth of three per cent. Although the net increase in public sector employment is greater for non-disabled people, the rate of public sector growth is six times higher for disabled people (19 compared with three per cent).

These findings, based on spring quarters only, are summarised in Table 2.1. This table provides estimates of the number of public sector employees (in thousands) in both the disabled and the non-disabled population, and separately for women and men. For the

purpose of this trends analysis, working age covers adults under state pension age (women aged 16 to 59 years, men 16 to 64 years), and the spring quarter refers to the months of March, April and May.

With the expansion of the public sector, the number of female employees increased faster than that of men. However, both disabled women and disabled men record higher public sector growth rates than their non-disabled counterparts. Disabled women record not only the highest rate of public sector employment growth (around 24 per cent during the period under review – more than twice that of disabled men), but also a larger increase in employment than did disabled men (101,000 compared with 28,000 respectively). These comparisons are drawn from Table 2.1.

These trends relate to Great Britain and are largely driven by the expansion of public sector employment in England. Comparable trends, indicating an overall increase in public sector employment, and higher rates of growth among disabled women especially, are observed in Scotland. The findings for Wales are less clear-cut: here the number of disabled people in public sector employment has fluctuated over time, possibly reflecting some imprecision associated with a smaller sample size, or variations in survey practice. Overall, the Welsh public sector shows a modest increase in employment levels, and a longer time series is probably required to clarify the observed differences in growth rates between disabled and non-disabled employees, and between women and men. The findings for each country are shown in Tables A.2.1 to A.2.3 in Appendix A.

Table 2.1 Estimated number of working age people in public sector employment, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003
(thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

							Ch
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	

Women							
Disabled	385	443	434	452	519	511	
Not disabled	3120	3084	3214	3304	3276	3315	
Total	3505	3527	3648	3756	3795	3826	
Men							
Disabled	243	258	271	279	264	293	
Not disabled	1938	1947	1960	1942	1897	1923	
Total	2181	2205	2231	2221	2161	2216	
All							
Disabled	628	701	705	731	782	804	
Not disabled	5058	5031	5174	5246	5173	5238	
Total	5686	5732	5879	5977	5955	6042	

The increase in disabled public sector employees also varies widely within England, reflecting regional variations in the prevalence of impairment and the location of public sector employment, as well as employment practices affecting disabled people. Table A.2.4 in Appendix A shows that the increase in disabled women working in public sector employment varies from six per cent (in Yorkshire and Humberside) to 47 per cent (in the South West). Above average increases in their numbers are also found in the North East and the East Midlands, and below average increases in London and the South East. Regional variations in the growth of public sector employment among disabled men range from no observed change in the South East and South West, and four per cent in London, to over 20 per cent in the North West, North East, Yorkshire and Humberside, and the West Midlands (Table A.2.5 in Appendix A).

Because the rate of growth in public sector employment was faster for disabled than non-disabled people, the proportion of disabled employees increased over the period under review. The proportion of disabled public sector employees in 2003 was over 13 per cent in Britain as a whole, compared with 11 per cent in 1998. The proportion of disabled public sector employees increased in each country, and among women and men alike, as shown in Table A.2.6 in Appendix A.

2.3 Employment 12 months earlier

Table A.2.7 in Appendix A shows the number of currently disabled public sector employees who were working for the same organisation 12 months earlier, the numbers working elsewhere at that time, and those who were not in paid employment. The number of disabled public sector employees working for the same organisation 12 months earlier increased across the study period by over 100,000 from around 568,000 to 669,000. The number of currently disabled employees recruited in the past year from other organisations (which may include other public sector organisations), also increased (by around 14,000), while the number of currently disabled employees who did not have a job 12 months previously shows no clear trend across the study period.

Clearly, the number of currently disabled working age people employed by the same organisation 12 months earlier far exceeds the number of currently disabled people recruited in the previous year (681,000 and 89,000 respectively in spring 2003, see Table A.2.7). Across the study period, however, the average annual increase in the number of currently disabled people who were working for the same organisation (around 27,000 per year) is considerably less than the average number of currently disabled people who were recruited (around 86,000 per year), whether from a different organisation (40,000 per year) or from not having a job at all (46,000 per year). This latter group includes those who described themselves as previously: not working because sick, injured or disabled (12,500), unemployed and actively seeking work (10,500), full-time students (10,000), looking after home or family, or doing something else including retirement (both groups under 10,000 each).

These findings suggest that both retention and recruitment have contributed to the increasing number of disabled employees in the public sector; however, no firm conclusions can be drawn about the extent of those contributions. It is not known whether those working for the same public sector organisation 12 months earlier, or those

recruited into the public sector during the previous 12 months, were disabled at that time (apart from those who described themselves as sick, injured or disabled), or whether they would have met the DDA criteria. Nor do we know how many disabled employees left public sector employment during the period, or moved into and out of public sector employment (including those who returned to work for the same organisation).

2.4 Trends in public sector employment rates

Table 2.2 shows the number of working age people in the public sector as a proportion of all working age people, including other economically active people (in non-public sector work or seeking employment) and people who were not economically active according to standard survey definitions. In 2003 for example, 16 per cent of disabled working age women worked in the public sector compared with eight per cent of disabled working age men (see Table 2.2).

The absolute increase in disabled public sector employees described above (129,000 from Table 2.1) is associated with a small increase in the proportion of disabled people in public sector employment.

Table 2.2 shows that 10.5 per cent of disabled working age people were in public sector employment in 1998. By 2003, this had increased to 12 per cent.

The overall increase in the rate of public sector employment almost wholly reflects an increase in the number of women employed. From Table 2.2 it can be seen that both disabled and non-disabled women show an increase of around two percentage points in public sector employment rates between 1998 and 2003: from 13.6 to 15.8 per cent in the case of disabled women. In contrast, the proportion of working age men in public sector employment fluctuates within a narrow range: between 7.6 and 8.4 per cent of disabled men, for example, despite a net increase of 28,000 in the number working in the public sector (shown in Table 2.1). The reason appears to be that, during the period under review, the increase in public sector

employment for disabled men (11 per cent, Table 2.1) largely kept pace with the rate of increase in the number of working age disabled men recorded in the LFS (9 per cent). By comparison, the rate of increase in the number of working age disabled women (also 9 per cent) was outstripped by the rate of increase in the number working in the public sector (24 per cent, Table 2.1).

Despite the increasing number of disabled people in public sector employment, they are less likely to work in the public sector than non-disabled people. For example, an estimated 12 per cent of working age disabled people worked in the public sector in 2003, compared with almost 19 per cent of non-disabled people (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Proportion of working age people in public sector employment, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001
Women				
Disabled	13.6	14.6	13.9	14.5
Not disabled	22.7	22.6	23.6	24.0
Men				
Disabled	7.8	8.0	8.1	8.3
Not disabled	13.4	13.6	13.7	13.5
All				
Disabled	10.5	11.2	10.9	11.3
Not disabled	18.0	18.0	18.5	18.6

The difference between these two employment rates, around seven percentage points, can be interpreted as the extent to which disabled people are disadvantaged, relative to non-disabled people, in obtaining or keeping jobs in the public sector. According to this interpretation, disabled women are slightly more disadvantaged than

disabled men. In 2003, the public sector employment rate for disabled women was around eight percentage points below that of non-disabled women, whereas disabled men's public sector employment rate was five percentage points below that of non-disabled men.

The findings in Table 2.2 indicate that inequalities between disabled and non-disabled people in public sector employment hardly changed from 1998 to 2003. Overall, the employment gap fluctuates around seven percentage points throughout that period. The employment gap between disabled and non-disabled women varies around eight or nine percentage points, and around five percentage points for men. In other words, the growth in public sector employment since 1998 affected the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people more or less to the same degree. Thus, the extent of employment disadvantage experienced by disabled women and men shows no consistent tendency to increase or decrease across the study period. However, there is a small but sustained decline in the public sector employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people as a whole: from 7.6 per cent in 2000 to 6.6 per cent in 2003. It will be important to monitor this trend, and its implications for disabled women and men, beyond the present study period.

Employment rates in the public sectors of England, Scotland and Wales are shown in Appendix A, Tables A.2.8 to A.2.10 respectively. Not surprisingly, key trends and findings for England are virtually identical for those of Britain as a whole, but similar conclusions broadly apply elsewhere. In both Scotland and Wales, public sector employment rates for disabled women appear to have increased in recent years, but the gap between them and non-disabled women shows no consistent trend over time. The proportions of disabled men in the Scottish and Welsh public sectors do not change consistently over the period observed here, and differences in employment rates between them and their non-disabled counterparts merely fluctuate within a narrow range.

Tables A.2.11 and A.2.12 in Appendix A show the proportions of disabled women and men respectively working in the public sector in each of the English regions. Area variations in the proportion of working age disabled people employed in the public sector are

comparatively small. In 2003, public sector employment varied from 14 per cent (London) to 20 per cent (South West) for disabled women, and from seven per cent (East Midlands) to nine per cent (North East) for disabled men. These tables also show variations in the extent to which public sector growth has affected the employment of disabled people over time. The proportion of disabled women in public sector employment has grown fastest in the East Midlands, North East and the South West. The greatest impact on disabled men's public sector employment rates has been in the North West and in Yorkshire and Humberside.

2.5 Trends in employment within the public sector

As noted in Section 2.2, the growth in public sector employment since 1998 was not uniform across all the organisations in that sector. Tables 2.3 and 2.4 show the estimated number of disabled women and men working in the public sector organisations distinguished in the LFS.

It can be seen that the growth in public sector employment among disabled people was concentrated in two broad areas: local government and the health service. These are also the main areas of public sector growth for non-disabled people, but they recorded lower rates of growth than disabled people. Table 2.3 shows that the employment of disabled women in local government grew by 31 per cent and by 27 per cent in the health service; comparable rates for non-disabled women are nine and ten per cent respectively. Table 2.4 shows that disabled men's employment in local government increased by 25 per cent, and by 23 per cent in the health service, compared with rates of three and ten per cent respectively for non-disabled men. Disabled people's employment in higher education and other grant-funded educational establishments also grew faster than that of non-disabled people during the period under review.

Table 2.3 Estimated number of disabled working age women in public sector organisations, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Local government or council (including police, fire service and local authority controlled schools or colleges)	197	236	238	233	279	281
Health authority or NHS Trust	103	117	111	128	143	139
Central government, civil service, armed forces	44	47	41	45	50	47
University, polytechnic, or other grant-funded educational establishment	23	26	25	22	27	22
Nationalised industry or State Corporation	*	*	*	11	*	*
Other public sector organisation	11	11	13	12	11	10
Total	385	443	434	452	519	511

* Under 10,000 in cell: estimate not shown.

Table 2.4 Estimated number of disabled working age men in public sector organisations, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Local government or council (including police, fire service and local authority controlled schools or colleges)	110	112	137	133	121	118
Health authority or NHS Trust	30	32	29	29	32	31

Central government, civil service, armed forces	55	61	51	60	58	
University, polytechnic, or other grant-funded educational establishment	19	24	21	25	29	
Nationalised industry or State Corporation	18	20	26	22	16	
Other public sector organisation	11	*	*	11	*	
Total	243	258	271	279	264	

* Under 10,000 in cell: estimate not shown.

Despite higher rates of public sector employment growth for disabled people, Table 2.2 showed that around seven per cent fewer disabled people were employed in the public sector than non-disabled people (as discussed in Section 2.4). The question arises: which public sector organisations are contributing most to this disparity in employment rates between disabled and non-disabled people? If disabled people were employed in the public sector to the same extent as non-disabled people, around 442,000 more disabled employees would be working in the public sector in spring 2003, or more than 50 per cent of the observed number (804,000 in Table 2.1). Most of these 'additional' disabled employees would be found in local government (193,000, 43 per cent extra), the health service (106,000, 59 per cent extra), central government including the civil service and defence (59,000, 64 per cent extra), and universities or other grant funded educational establishments (42,000, 94 per cent extra).

In the LFS, employment can also be classified according to the type of activity that organisations are engaged in, or the service they aim to deliver. Tables A.2.13 and A.2.14 in Appendix A show that recent growth in public sector employment for disabled people was concentrated in the three largest areas: Education, Health and Social Work, and Public Administration and Defence. Growth rates for disabled employees in these three areas were more than double

those for non-disabled employees.

It is not possible to establish clear trends in the nature of public sector occupations from 1998 onwards because a new classification combining aspects of status, qualification and level of responsibility was introduced in spring 2001, giving only three observation points for this study. These data are summarised in Table A.2.15 in Appendix A, which shows the number of disabled employees by occupational position between spring 2001 and spring 2003.

These findings indicate increasing numbers of disabled women working in all the occupational positions distinguished here, but those in occupations described as professional, associate professional and technical, and administrative and secretarial, record the largest increases. Trends in the occupational position of disabled men working in the public sector present a rather mixed picture. The number of disabled men in personal service, professional, and associate professional and technical occupations, has increased since spring 2001. In contrast, the number of disabled men working in administrative and secretarial occupations, as process, plant and machine operatives, and in elementary occupations, has decreased.

2.6 Trends in public sector employment by age

The data show that most disabled public sector employees are aged 40 years and over. In 2003, 69 per cent of disabled women were aged 40 to 59 years, and the same proportion of disabled men was in the 40 to 64 year age group. No more than one in ten disabled women and men in the public sector were under age 30.

Table A.2.16 in Appendix A shows further that the 40 years and over age group accounts for most of the increase in disabled public sector workers across the study period. Their numbers grew faster than those in the younger age groups.

2.7 Trends in public sector employment rates by health

problems

Disabled people are a diverse group of people and one indication of the variety of responses to their particular needs in the labour market is the range of impairments they report. Respondents defined as disabled by the LFS are asked to describe their main health problem according to 17 broad categories; however, there is no indication of onset, duration or severity. People with seeing difficulties are identified only if they experience such difficulties while wearing spectacles or contact lenses, otherwise the role of special aids, environmental adaptations, and human support is not considered.

Table 2.5 shows the proportion of disabled people within each health problem category who work in the public sector. For example:

12.5 per cent of working age disabled people, who reported in spring 2003 that difficulties connected with their arms or hands were their main health problem, worked in the public sector.

Table 2.5 Proportion of disabled working age people by main health problem in public sector employment, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001
Problems with arms or hands	9.3	11.3	12.1	9.4
... legs or feet	8.8	11.1	9.4	9.7
... back or neck	11.3	11.4	9.9	11.1
Difficulty seeing	9.5	10.8	12.3	11.9
Difficulty hearing	19.0	16.3	17.3	15.3
Skin conditions, allergies	16.5	14.2	11.4	14.5
Chest, breathing problems	11.4	12.5	13.3	13.8
Heart, blood pressure, circulation	9.8	10.8	12.6	12.7
Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion	11.8	14.3	12.3	12.0
Diabetes	15.3	15.6	12.6	12.8
Epilepsy	11.9	10.4	11.3	12.5
Learning difficulties	4.0	3.3	4.8	3.7
Mental health problems	4.1	3.8	4.2	5.0
Progressive illness*	7.7	10.6	10.5	10.3

Other health problems	15.3	13.1	13.2	14.9
All disabled people	10.5	11.2	10.9	11.3

* Not included elsewhere

It is difficult to detect clear trends from Table 2.5, and variations from year to year may reflect no more than sampling error. People with hearing difficulties appear to have the highest employment rates, but this may be influenced by the inclusion of respondents whose hearing problems were alleviated by using a hearing aid, special telephone, or other support. People with diabetes, skin problems, or breathing difficulties also have elevated public sector employment rates by comparison with other disabled people. People with mental health problems, or learning difficulties, have public sector employment rates less than half that of disabled people as a whole, and less than one third that of non-disabled people. People who may have mobility problems, because of difficulties with their legs or feet, also have reduced rates of employment in the public sector.

2.8 Public sector employment rates by ethnicity

A new classification of ethnicity was introduced in the 2001 LFS and consequently only three years of consistent data are available for trends analysis. This is insufficient to detect reliable time trends in public sector employment among minority ethnic groups. In addition, the small number of disabled public sector employees from ethnic minorities produces quite large sampling fluctuations over time. Data from the spring quarters of 2001, 2002 and 2003 were therefore combined to smooth these fluctuations. Small sample sizes also made it necessary to combine minority ethnic groups, to draw comparisons between disabled and non-disabled people that are more robust. Unfortunately, this approach masks differences in the labour market experiences of particular ethnic groups.

The findings are summarised in Table 2.6. This shows the proportion of all working age people in public sector employment according to disability, ethnicity and gender. For example, 10.4 per cent of disabled women from minority ethnic groups work in the public sector

compared with 17.6 per cent of their non-disabled counterparts. Proportions standardised for age differences are also shown to take into account the younger age profile of most minority ethnic groups. The main effect of age standardisation is to increase the proportion of non-disabled minority ethnic people working in the public sector, and to widen the employment gap between them and their disabled counterparts.

Table 2.6 Proportion of working age public sector employees by ethnicity, Great Britain, spring quarters 2001, 2002 and 2003 combined (per cent, age standardised percentages in parenthesis)

	Disabled	Not disabled
Women		
White	16.0 (15.7)	24.5 (24.9)
Minority ethnic groups	10.4 (10.5)	17.6 (19.5)
Men		
White	8.3 (8.5)	13.5 (13.6)
Minority ethnic groups	5.2 (5.1)	11.5 (12.3)
All		
White	12.0 (12.0)	18.9 (19.1)
Minority ethnic groups	8.0 (8.0)	14.6 (15.9)

It can be seen that the proportion in public sector employment is highest for non-disabled white women (24.5 per cent), and lowest for disabled minority ethnic men (5.2 per cent). Disabled people from minority ethnic groups appear to be doubly disadvantaged. Their public sector employment rates are lower than those of non-disabled people in the minority ethnic population, which in turn are lower than those of non-disabled people in the white population.

2.9 Trends in part-time employment in the public sector

From 1998 to 2003, the proportion of working age disabled women in public sector employment who described their job as part-time varied between 44 and 48 per cent, and between 10 and 12 per cent for disabled men. In neither case was there any clear trend over time.

These proportions are slightly above those for part-time working among non-disabled people in the public sector: around 41 or 42 per cent for women, and seven or eight per cent for men. These findings indicate that disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to have part-time jobs in the public sector, but the differences are small and show no clear tendency to increase or decrease over time.

Although part-time working is self-defined by respondents in the LFS, they are also asked how many hours they usually work each week. Trends in hours worked by disabled and non-disabled people in the public sector are shown in Appendix A (see Table A.2.17 which classifies hours worked into three bands according to those used for tax credit purposes). These findings show that disabled people are more likely to work under 30 hours a week than non-disabled people, but again, the differences are small and show no firm trend over time. Further details of the hours that people worked in the public sector, why some employees worked part time, and whether they would prefer to work longer or shorter hours, are presented in Sections 3.7 and 3.12.

2.10 Trends in temporary employment in the public sector

The proportion of working age disabled women who described their public sector job as temporary declined from 10 or 11 per cent between 1998 and 2001 to around eight per cent in 2002 and 2003. Whether this trend will continue remains to be seen, but it parallels a trend among non-disabled women who reported similar proportions of temporary public sector jobs.

No clear trend in the proportion of men with temporary public sector jobs is observed between 1998 and 2003. Moreover, there is little difference between disabled and non-disabled men in the extent of temporary employment. In 2003, seven per cent of disabled men in the public sector, compared with eight per cent of non-disabled men, had jobs that were described as temporary in some way.

2.11 Conclusions

This chapter presents new evidence on recent trends in public sector employment as they affect disabled people. The research found that:

- 1 There are now more disabled people working in the public sector than in 1998, especially in local government and the health service.
- 2 The number of disabled people in public sector employment has grown at a faster rate than that of non-disabled people since 1998.
- 3 Both recruitment and retention appear to underlie the increasing number of disabled people in public sector employment, but their precise contribution cannot be estimated from the data analysed here.
- 4 Women, including disabled women, predominate in public sector employment, and their numbers grew faster than those of men during the period under review; however, women are more likely than men to work part-time.
- 5 There are wide variations between countries and regions within Britain in the recent growth of public sector employment for disabled people.
- 6 Between 1998 and 2003, around 11 per cent of working age disabled people had public sector jobs compared with 18 per cent of non-disabled people.
- 7 Despite the increase in public sector employment among disabled people since 1998, inequalities in the proportions of disabled and non-disabled people working in the public sector show no clear tendency to increase or decrease across the study period.

- 8 People with mental health problems, or learning difficulties, are most disadvantaged in getting or keeping public sector jobs; minority ethnic disabled people are also under-represented in the public sector.

Recent trends have boosted the number of older disabled people working in the public sector. **3. Employment circumstances and characteristics of disabled public sector employees**

This chapter presents new evidence on the employment of disabled people in the public sector. It describes their position within that sector and their working patterns, drawing comparisons with those of non-disabled people. The aim is to provide a quantitative framework for understanding the labour market experiences of disabled people with public sector jobs, and the organisations that employ them.

The analysis is based on a specially constructed sample of public sector employees who were interviewed, for the first time, during each quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) conducted from spring 2001 to winter 2003 inclusive. This sample was designed to use survey information obtained in face-to-face interviews (rather than by telephone), to incorporate important information such as data on earnings, and to maximise the number of disabled people available for the analysis. Because respondents are drawn from successive quarterly surveys, the findings provide an 'average' picture that represents the circumstances of public sector employees over the three-year period. Further details of how the sample was constructed are given in Appendix B.

A key difference between this sample and the samples used in Chapter Two, which are based on the working age population, is that it covers all public sector employees, including those over the current state pension age, recognising that some people choose or are contracted to work beyond age 60 for women and age 65 for men.

The LFS definitions of disability and public sector employment are described in Section 2.1.

The next three sections describe the personal circumstances of public sector employees, focusing on age and gender, health problems and educational qualifications. Later sections describe the public sector organisations they work for and their occupational status, and go on to examine the characteristics of their jobs and working patterns, including job-related training, sickness absence, and earnings. The discussion of hours worked each week, recent job search activity, and employment preferences, provides a basis for considering the extent to which public sector employees felt under-employed in their current job.

3.1 Age and gender

Disabled public sector employees are older than their non-disabled counterparts. Table 3.1 shows that 42 per cent of disabled people working in the public sector are aged 50 years or more, compared with 27 per cent of non-disabled employees.

Disabled women are typically six years older than non-disabled women according to their median ages (47 and 41 years respectively). Disabled women working in Central government, the civil service and armed forces tend to be younger (median 43 years) than other disabled female employees, as are those in Sales and customer service occupations, or working as Associate professional and technical staff (41 and 43 years respectively).

Disabled men are seven years older than non-disabled men (median ages 48 and 41 years respectively). Disabled men working in Central government, the civil service and armed forces, or in the Health service, are generally younger (median ages 46 years) than other disabled male employees. Disabled men in Administrative and secretarial occupations (median 42 years) are younger than any other occupational group of disabled men.

The proportion of disabled public sector employees increases progressively across the age range, reflecting the increased risk of onset of impairment and ill-health in middle and older age (Burchardt, 2000). Overall, 13 per cent of employees are defined by the LFS as disabled people, but this proportion rises from less than ten per cent of those under age 40, through 18 per cent of those aged 50 to 59 years, to 23 per cent of those aged 60 years or over. The proportion of disabled employees in each age group is similar for women and men alike (see Appendix A, Table A.3.1).

Table 3.1 also shows that a small minority of women work in the public sector beyond state pension age. Indeed, there is a larger proportion of disabled women over 60 years (eight per cent) than non-disabled women (four per cent). Three per cent of disabled men in the public sector are over 65 years, compared with one per cent of non-disabled men.

It can be discovered from Table 3.1 that almost two-thirds of disabled and non-disabled public sector employees are women. In the public sector as a whole, there are 183 disabled women for every 100 disabled men; further analysis shows that this ratio varies according to their occupation. Among disabled employees, women predominate in Personal service, and Administrative and secretarial occupations: 412 and 378 women per 100 men respectively. There are also more disabled women than men in Professional occupations, and Associate professional and technical occupations (around 140 per 100 disabled men), as well as Elementary occupations (173 per 100 disabled men). Disabled men predominate in Skilled trades occupations (425 per 100 disabled women) and among Process, plant and machine operatives (929 per 100 disabled women). Almost equal numbers of disabled women and men are found as Managers and senior officials (108 women per 100 men).

Disabled women are most often found working for a Health authority

or in Local government (429 and 201 per 100 disabled men respectively). In contrast, disabled men outnumber disabled women in Central government, the civil service and armed forces (113 per 100 women), and more so in Nationalised industry and state corporations (222 per 100 women). Universities or other grant-funded educational establishments have similar numbers of disabled women and men (103 women per 100 men).

Table 3.1 Age distribution of public sector employees by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Not disabled		
	Women	Men	All	Women	Men	All
Under 30 years	9	9	9	17	1	17
30 to 39 years	20	19	19	27	2	29
40 to 49 years	30	26	29	30	2	30
50 to 59 years	34	33	33	22	2	22
60 years and over	8	12	9	4	1	5
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)*	2970	1619	4589	20275	11292	31567

* See Appendix B for details of sample weighting.

3.2 Main health problem

In the LFS, respondents are invited to report all their health problems and interviewers record these into a 17-fold classification of medical complaints; however, this analysis focuses on what they identify as their main health problem. The LFS provides no measure of severity or duration, other than that these complaints are reported to have a substantial and long-term (greater than 12 months) adverse effect on ordinary, everyday activities. Individuals reporting similar complaints may be affected to varying degrees and in different ways.

Table 3.2 shows that disabled public sector employees present a diverse range of health problems and impairments. It can be seen that fewer than one in twenty report most of the complaints identified in the LFS as the main health problem, and no more than one in five are adversely affected by any single category of complaint.

Musculo-skeletal complaints (covering three categories described in the table as Problems with... which include arthritis and rheumatism) are reported as the main health problem by one in three disabled employees; together with respiratory conditions, and complaints affecting the heart or circulation of the blood, they account for almost 60 per cent of the health problems singled out by these employees.

3.3 Educational qualifications

Non-disabled public sector employees are somewhat more likely to have an educational qualification than disabled employees (91 and 87 per cent respectively). However, differences in level of qualification are comparatively small except at the highest level. Fewer disabled employees have a degree or equivalent qualification, 22 per cent compared with 30 per cent of non-disabled employees, an eight percentage point difference (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.2 Proportion of disabled public sector employees by main health problem, Great Britain (per cent)

	Women	Men	All
Problems with back or neck	18	17	17
Chest, breathing problems	14	13	14
Heart, blood pressure, circulation	10	15	12
Problems with legs or feet	10	11	10
Problems with arms or hands	7	5	6
Diabetes	5	7	6
Progressive illness*	6	4	5
Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion	5	6	5
Mental health problems	4	4	4
Difficulty hearing	3	3	3
Skin conditions, allergies	2	2	2
Difficulty seeing	1	3	2
Epilepsy	1	2	2
Learning difficulties	0	1	1
Other health problems	13	6	10
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2955	1612	4567

* Not included elsewhere.

Table 3.3 Highest educational qualification of public sector employees by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Women
	Women	Men	All	
Degree or equivalent	19	27	22	22
Higher education	21	13	18	18
GCE A level or equivalent	14	24	18	18

GCSE grades A to C, or equivalent	21	14	19	2
Other qualifications	12	10	11	1
No qualification	13	11	13	1
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2947	1603	4550	2001

This latter difference partly reflects age or generational differences in disabled and non-disabled people's access to higher education.

Thus, the difference in proportions of disabled and non-disabled people with a degree or equivalent qualification narrows slightly with age. Among those aged 50 years or over, 18 per cent of disabled people have a degree or equivalent qualification, compared with 24 per cent of non-disabled people, a six percentage point difference. However, there is an eight percentage point gap between disabled and non-disabled employees under 50 years of age in the proportion having a degree or equivalent qualification: 24 and 32 per cent respectively.

The difference in proportions of disabled and non-disabled employees with a degree or equivalent qualification also varies by gender. Tables A.3.2 and A.3.3 (in Appendix A) show that among those aged 30 to 49 years, and 50 years and over respectively, disabled men are less likely to have a degree or equivalent qualification, compared with their non-disabled counterparts (a ten and nine percentage point difference), than are women (a five and four percentage point difference). Under 30 years of age, the disparity between disabled and non-disabled employees in the proportions holding a degree or equivalent qualification is similar for women and men (nine and eight percentage points respectively). In contrast, disabled women and, to a lesser extent, disabled men aged under 30 years of age are more likely to have GCSE grades A to C or equivalent than their non-disabled counterparts (percentage point differences of 12 and six respectively).

3.4 Public sector organisations

Just over half of public sector employees work in Local government, and almost a quarter in the Health service. Table 3.4

shows that there is little difference between disabled and non-disabled employees in the extent to which they work for different types of public sector organisations. Gender differences are more apparent than those associated with disability. Disabled or not, women are more likely than men to work for Local government or the Health service. Disabled and non-disabled men are more likely than women to work for Central government, the civil service and armed forces, although these bodies provide fewer than one in five public sector jobs. Table 3.4 Employing organisation of public sector employees by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			W
	Women	Men	All	
Local government or council (including police, fire service and local authority controlled schools or colleges)	54	49	52	
Health authority or NHS Trust	28	12	22	
Central government, civil service, armed forces	10	21	14	
University, polytechnic, or other grant-funded educational establishment	5	9	6	
Nationalised industry or State Corporation	1	6	3	
Other public sector organisation	2	4	3	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2970	1617	4587	2

A different way of characterising public sector employment is to describe the activity or service that organisations deliver or produce. Hospitals, for example, employ people in a range of jobs from providing front-line and ancillary medical care, laboratory analysis, management and clerical support, to cleaning, maintenance and security, but all employees are engaged in delivering a health service. This approach classifies organisations by industry division as shown

in Table A.3.4 in Appendix A.

It can be seen that the provision of Education, and Health and social work predominates, accounting for almost 60 per cent of public sector employees, followed by Public administration and defence which account for around one in four public sector employees. Again, differences in public sector activity between disabled and non-disabled people are small, with larger differences observed between women and men whether they are disabled or not. Thus, women are more likely than men to be engaged in the production of Education, and Health and social work, whereas men are more likely to be in Public administration and defence.

3.5 Occupational status

Different jobs carry different levels of responsibility, attracting different rewards and benefits that may reflect their perceived status or rank in society. Two widely used measures of occupational status are the position that people hold within their employers' organisations, and the socio-economic standing that may be attributed to their job in society at large. Both classifications are constructed by ONS researchers from respondents' descriptions of their current job.

Table 3.5 shows the occupational position of public sector employees ranging from Elementary occupations to Managers and senior officials. It can be seen that disabled people are less likely than non-disabled people to hold senior managerial, professional, and technical positions (the first three categories in Table 3.5): the proportions are 44 and 54 per cent respectively. By comparison, disabled people are more likely to be in Administrative and secretarial, Personal service, and Elementary occupations: 50 per cent overall compared with 41 per cent of non-disabled employees. Table 3.5 Occupational position of public sector employees by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Work hours (per week)
	Women	Men	All	
Managers and senior officials	4	7	5	20
Professional occupations	17	23	19	20
Associate professional and technical	18	24	20	20
Administrative and secretarial	24	12	20	20
Skilled trades occupations	1	7	3	20
Personal service occupations	20	9	16	20
Sales and customer service occupations	2	0	1	20
Process, plant and machine operatives	0	4	2	20
Elementary occupations	13	14	14	20
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2971	1618	4589	20

As noted in Section 3.1, gender differences in occupational position cut across differences between disabled and non-disabled people. Table 3.5 shows that women are more likely than men to be in Administrative and secretarial, and Personal service occupations, and this is the case whether they are disabled or not. In contrast, disabled and non-disabled men are more likely than women to occupy the senior managerial, professional, and technical grades (the first three categories in Table 3.5). Disabled women are least likely, and non-disabled men most likely, to occupy these positions; disabled men and non-disabled women fall between the two and occupy such positions to a similar extent as each other.

The socio-economic classification of public sector jobs underlines the disparity between disabled and non-disabled employees: 54 per cent of non-disabled employees hold jobs accorded managerial and professional status compared with 48 per cent of disabled employees (see the first two categories in Table A.3.5 in Appendix A). In contrast, 32 per cent of disabled employees occupy jobs described as Lower supervisory and technical, Semi-routine, and Routine in nature compared with 25 per cent of non-disabled employees. Gender differences are also evident. Disabled and non-disabled women predominate in what are described as Intermediate and Semi-routine

jobs, and to a lesser extent in the Lower managerial and professional, and Routine jobs. Men predominate in Higher managerial and professional jobs, as well as in Lower supervisory and technical jobs.

The classifications of occupational position and socio-economic status both rely, in part, on whether respondents have responsibilities for other employees, although this information is not always apparent in the categories of each construct. Accordingly, Table A.3.6 in Appendix A summarises the responses to a direct survey question about managerial or supervisory duties.

There is no difference in the extent to which disabled and non-disabled women exercise such duties: one third of disabled and non-disabled women describe themselves as managers or supervisors. Disabled or not, men are more likely than women to have such responsibilities. However, disabled men are slightly less likely than non-disabled men to have managerial responsibilities: 25 and 30 per cent respectively describe themselves as managers, though both groups are equally likely to be supervisors (15 per cent).

3.6 Occupational position and highest educational qualification

It might be expected that individuals would occupy positions of responsibility and expertise commensurate with their employment experience, training and skills. A relevant question in this context is the extent which disabled and non-disabled employees with similar qualifications, hold comparable jobs in the public sector. To investigate this further, Tables A.3.7 and A.3.8 in Appendix A show, for women and men respectively, the proportion of employees by occupational position according to their highest educational qualification.

Overall, differences between disabled and non-disabled employees in terms of the qualifications they hold and their position in public sector organisations are relatively small. This is especially the case for women: for each qualification level, the proportion of disabled women

in each occupational position differs by less than four percentage points (and often by less than two percentage points) from that of non-disabled women (see Table A.3.7).

Differences between disabled and non-disabled men are somewhat larger (see Table A.3.8). For example, disabled men with GCE A level or equivalent are less likely to be in associate professional and technical occupations, and more likely to be in elementary occupations, than non-disabled men. Disabled men with GCSE grades A to C or equivalent are also less likely to be in associate professional and technical occupations, and more likely to hold administrative or secretarial positions, than non-disabled men. Again, disabled men with no qualification are less likely to be in associate professional and technical occupations, and more likely to work in personal service occupations, than their non-disabled counterparts. Disabled men with other qualifications are also less likely than non-disabled men to be in associate professional and technical occupations. Taken together, these findings suggest that disabled men without a degree or other higher education qualification, are less likely to be in associate professional and technical occupations than might be expected, compared with similarly qualified non-disabled men.

3.7 Number of hours worked

It has already been observed that disabled public sector employees are more likely to work part-time than their non-disabled counterparts, although the reported differences are comparatively small (Section 2.9). This is further confirmed (in this specially constructed sample of public sector employees) by the findings summarised in Table A.3.9 in Appendix A. Overall, 68 per cent of disabled employees work 30 hours or more a week, compared with 74 per cent of non-disabled employees. Gender differences in the extent of part-time working are more marked than differences associated with disability: 42 per cent of disabled women and 36 per cent of non-disabled women work under 30 hours a week, compared with

12 per cent and seven per cent of disabled and non-disabled men respectively.

Further analysis shows that disabled women work 30 hours a week on average, some two hours less than that of non-disabled women. Comparable figures for disabled and non-disabled men are 39 and 42 hours respectively, a difference of three hours on average. These differences vary somewhat across different public sector organisations, especially among female employees. For example: there is no difference in hours worked between disabled and non-disabled women working in Central government, the civil service and armed forces; in contrast, disabled women in a University or other grant-funded educational establishment work around five hours less on average than their non-disabled colleagues.

Variations in the hours worked by disabled and non-disabled people may reflect the terms and conditions attached to particular jobs, or the personal preferences and other responsibilities of employees. Table A.3.10 in Appendix A lists the reasons that respondents gave for working part time, where respondents themselves define the distinction between full-time and part-time work. Their responses indicate that the vast majority of part-time workers did not want a full-time job, and very few were working part-time because they could not find full-time work. This was the case whether they are disabled or not. Very few disabled employees mentioned explicitly that they were working part time because of illness or disability, though health reasons may, for some, lie behind a preference for not wanting a full-time job.

Unfortunately, full-time workers are not asked whether they would prefer a part-time job, so details of public sector employees' preferences around full-time or part-time working are incomplete. However, all respondents were asked whether they were looking for a different job, and among the reasons recorded are their preferences for working longer or shorter hours than in their current job. These

findings are presented in Section 3.11 and the extent of under-employment implied by their responses is estimated in Section 3.12.

3.8 Job-related education or training

All public sector employees were asked if they had taken part in any education or training in the previous three months that was connected with their current job. Overall, 44 per cent of disabled employees said they had done so, compared with 49 per cent of non-disabled employees. Disabled women were somewhat more likely to have received job-related training than disabled men: 45 and 42 per cent respectively.

Differences between disabled and non-disabled employees in access to job-related training may reflect age differences if older employees are less likely to get training. To investigate this further, disabled and non-disabled employees' experience of job-related training was compared among those aged 50 years and over. As expected, fewer employees in this age group had recent experience of job-related training: 39 per cent compared with 52 per cent of those who were younger. Moreover, there is little difference between disabled and non-disabled employees in the older age group in access to job-related training: 38 per cent and 39 per cent respectively said they had recently taken part in such training. The gap between disabled and non-disabled employees aged under 50 years also narrows slightly: 49 and 52 per cent respectively reported job-related training. These findings indicate that the overall difference between disabled and non-disabled employees' access to job-related training is driven in part by differences in their age structure.

Table 3.6 shows that recent experience of job-related training increases with employees' level of educational qualification. Disabled and non-disabled employees with a degree or other higher education qualification were more likely to have received job-related training than other employees. Among the more highly qualified public sector

employees, there is no difference in reported job-related training between disabled and non-disabled women, and only slightly fewer disabled men with higher education qualifications or degrees reported job-related training than did their non-disabled counterparts (around 53 and 56 per cent respectively).

Disabled employees with qualifications awarded outside higher education, and those with no qualifications, are often less likely to have received job-related training than non-disabled employees with similar or no qualifications. For example, 37 per cent of disabled men with GCE A level or equivalent had received some training in the previous three months compared with 46 per cent of non-disabled men with the same qualifications. Disabled women with unspecified or no qualifications (45 per cent taken together) are also less likely to have received job-related training than their non-disabled counterparts (54 per cent). Exceptionally, 41 per cent of disabled men with ‘other’ qualifications reported job-related training compared with 37 per cent of non-disabled men with similar qualifications.

Table 3.6 Proportion of public sector employees reporting job-related training in previous three months by highest educational qualification, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Women 100%
	Women	Men	All	
Degree or equivalent	61	52	57	60
Higher education	62	53	59	60
GCE A level or equivalent	50	37	44	50
GCSE grades A to C, or equivalent	40	40	40	40
Other qualifications	30	41	34	33
No qualification	15	19	16	17
All	45	42	44	44
Weighted base for All	2964	1612	4576	2019

The proportion of employees receiving job-related training varies according to their occupational position, as shown in Table A.3.11 in Appendix A. Access to job-related training generally increases with occupational status, although substantial minorities (over 40 per cent) of those in Personal service occupations reportedly received some training. Recent experience of job-related training among disabled men in Associate professional and technical occupations (51 per cent), or in Administrative and secretarial positions (36 per cent), is relatively low compared with non-disabled men in similar jobs (58 and 43 per cent respectively). Further, disabled men described as Managers and senior officials, or working in Skilled trades occupations, are somewhat less likely to have received job-related training than their non-disabled counterparts (47 and 32 per cent compared with 52 and 37 per cent respectively).

Differences between disabled and non-disabled women in recent experience of job-related training are comparatively small, although experience among disabled women in Personal service (46 per cent) or Elementary occupations (10 per cent) is less than might be expected compared with their non-disabled counterparts (50 and 15 per cent respectively).

3.9 Sickness absence

Just over six per cent of disabled public sector employees said that they had taken at least one day off work because of sickness or injury in the week preceding their LFS interview. The comparable figure for non-disabled employees is 2.5 per cent. Disabled employees comprise 27 per cent of those reporting sickness absence in the past week, and they account for 30 per cent of all sick days reported.

If ill-health were more prevalent in older age groups, it might be expected that age differences between disabled and non-disabled employees would account for differences in sickness absence. In fact, sickness absence rates are slightly higher among employees aged under 50 years, and this age group accounts for much of the difference between disabled and non-disabled employees in sickness

absence. The overall difference in sickness absence rates is 3.7 percentage points between disabled and non-disabled employees (based on rates of 6.2 and 2.5 per cent respectively). Among those aged 50 years and over, this difference decreases slightly to 3.2 percentage points (rates of 5.2 and 2.0 per cent respectively). In contrast, the difference in sickness absence rates between disabled and non-disabled employees widens to 4.3 per cent among those who are younger (rates of 6.9 and 2.6 per cent).

Self-reported sickness absence rates vary little according to non-disabled employees' occupational position or employing organisation (see Tables A.3.12 and A.3.13 in Appendix A). Among disabled employees, sickness absence rates range from four per cent among those in Skilled trades, to eight per cent among Managers and senior officials. The lowest sickness absence rates among disabled employees are reported by those working in a University or other grant-funded educational establishment (four per cent), the highest in Nationalised industry and state corporations (nine per cent) and in Central government, the civil service and armed forces (eight per cent).

3.10 Permanent or temporary public sector job

No more than eight per cent of public sector employees described their jobs as temporary in some way. This proportion does not vary by gender, or between disabled and non-disabled employees. The main reason for considering the job to be temporary, mentioned by more than six out of ten short-term employees, was working under contract for a fixed period or fixed task. Other reasons for people reporting jobs as temporary, each mentioned by fewer than one in eight short-term employees, include seasonal work, agency temping and casual work.

Employees in professional occupations most often reported that their job was temporary, especially those working in a University or other grant-funded educational establishment (see Tables A.3.14

and A.3.15, in Appendix A). This was the case among disabled and non-disabled employees alike.

3.11 Whether seeking a different job

Respondents to the LFS are not asked directly to rate their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their current job, but they are asked whether they are seeking a different job and if so why. Around five per cent of public sector employees, disabled and non-disabled alike, said they had looked for another job to replace their current one, in the week preceding interview. The proportion of employees seeking a different job varied by only two or three percentage points across different public sector organisations. It is not known whether they confined their search to jobs that would be classified as public sector employment.

The most frequently reported reason for seeking a different job was financial: around one in five felt the level of pay in their current job was unsatisfactory. One in ten wanted to change their hours of work, with women tending to want longer hours. Unspecified reasons for the current job being unsatisfactory in some way predominated.

These findings are summarised in Table A.3.16 in Appendix A. Differences between disabled and non-disabled employees in reasons for seeking a replacement job are small. Disabled employees were slightly less likely to give financial reasons (18 per cent compared with 21 per cent of non-disabled employees); however, disabled employees were more likely to give unspecified ‘other’ reasons for dissatisfaction with their present job (50 per cent compared with 34 per cent).

3.12 Under-employment in present job

The LFS questions on seeking a replacement job are part of a sequence that explores the extent of under-employment in the workforce. As noted in Section 3.11, around one in ten public sector employees who were looking for a different job said they wanted to change the number of hours they worked. Table A.3.16 (in

Appendix A) shows that, of those seeking a different job, only seven per cent of disabled employees, and five per cent of non-disabled employees, wanted to work longer hours. These findings indicate that very few public sector employees felt under-employed in their current job, at least in terms of hours worked. Other aspects of under-employment, including employees' degree of autonomy or responsibility, are not directly explored in the LFS.

However, the reasons for seeking a different job, and their frequency, may partly reflect the open-ended question that was asked (without prompts) to obtain respondents' motives. To investigate the extent of under-employment further, those not mentioning spontaneously that they wanted to work longer or shorter hours in a different job were asked explicitly about such preferences in the job they were looking for. This more direct question increased response rates, and trebled the number of employees wanting to vary their work hours.

Combining responses to the open-ended and the direct question shows that 17 per cent of those seeking a different job wanted to work longer hours, and 14 per cent wanted to work shorter hours. Disabled women were most likely to want to vary the number of hours they worked. Of those seeking a different job, 24 per cent of disabled women wanted one that offered longer hours, and 21 per cent one with shorter hours. The comparable figures for non-disabled women are 21 and 15 per cent respectively. Disabled men who were looking for a different job also tended to want longer work hours. Amongst male employees, 14 per cent of disabled men wanted a job offering longer hours, and eight per cent wanted one with shorter hours, whereas ten and 12 per cent of non-disabled men wanted a job with longer and shorter hours respectively.

These findings indicate that disabled employees more often expressed a preference for a job with longer hours than one with shorter hours. Disabled employees were also slightly more likely than non-disabled employees to want a job offering longer hours. Overall,

20 per cent of disabled employees who were seeking a different job wanted to work longer hours, with the implication that they felt under-employed in their current job. However, they represent only one per cent of all disabled public sector employees; that is, including those who were not seeking a different job.

The extent of under-employment in this latter group of employees who were not seeking a different job was also explored in the LFS: they were asked whether, given the opportunity, they would want to work longer hours in their present job at the current basic rate of pay. The findings show that eight per cent of disabled women and five per cent of disabled men would prefer to work longer hours in their present job. Comparable figures are six and four per cent for non-disabled women and men respectively.

The responses of those seeking a different job that offered longer hours, and those wanting to work longer hours in their current job, can now be combined. Whether seeking a different job in order to increase the number of hours worked, or wanting to work longer hours in their current job, fewer than one in ten public sector employees considered themselves to be under-employed. Overall, nine per cent of disabled women expressed a preference for working longer hours, as did six per cent of disabled men. These proportions are only marginally higher than those of non-disabled women and men: seven and four per cent respectively. It seems that feeling under-employed is only slightly more widespread among disabled employees, and is seen as an issue by a relatively small minority of them.

3.13 Gross pay

Respondents to the LFS are asked to say how much they earned, before any deductions, the last time they were paid, or to estimate how much they expect to earn if they have not already been paid. The Office for National Statistics uses this information to estimate respondents' current gross weekly earnings and their average gross

hourly pay. These estimates have been adjusted here to take account of inflation since spring 2001 using the Consumer Prices Index, and the findings are expressed in December 2003 values (see Appendix B). The median or mid-point value in the distribution of employees' earnings is used to represent their typical earnings: half the individuals have earnings above, and half below, the median figure for a group of employees.

Table 3.7 compares the median gross weekly pay, and the median gross hourly pay, of disabled and non-disabled public sector employees. It shows for example that disabled women earned around £231 a week, which is £29 less than that of non-disabled women (£260). Their hourly pay rates are estimated to be £7.7 and £8.2 respectively.

Table 3.7 Gross weekly and gross hourly pay of public sector employees by usual weekly hours, Great Britain (median £s)

	Weekly pay		Disability status
	Disabled	Not disabled	
Women	231	260	Disabled
Under 16 hours	50	55	Not disabled
16 to 29 hours	138	150	
30 hours or more	324	346	
Men	357	427	Disabled
Under 16 hours	50	55	Not disabled
16 to 29 hours	163	162	
30 hours or more	393	446	
All	277	317	Disabled
Under 16 hours	50	55	Not disabled
16 to 29 hours	141	150	
30 hours or more	346	387	

Overall, disabled employees earned around £40 a week less (or 13 per cent less) than that of non-disabled employees (£277

compared with £317), but the pay gap between them varies according to individuals' work patterns, and is larger for men than women. Disabled men working 30 hours or more per week earned around 88 per cent of what non-disabled men earned, equivalent to £53 less per week (£393 compared with £446). Disabled women working that number of hours earned 94 per cent of non-disabled women's pay, or £22 less per week (£324 compared with £346).

As would be expected, the earnings gap between disabled and non-disabled employees varies according to the number of hours worked. However, the relative differential in hourly pay rates produces a broadly similar pattern to that of gross weekly earnings. Disabled employees tend to have hourly rates of pay below those of non-disabled employees, and disabled men appear to be relatively more disadvantaged than disabled women. Thus, disabled men who work at least 30 hours a week earned £1.10 less per hour than their non-disabled counterparts; the comparable figure for disabled women is 50p less per hour. The hourly rates of these disabled men and women (£9.8 and £8.7 respectively) are 90 and 95 per cent of the hourly rates of their non-disabled counterparts (£10.9 and £9.2 respectively). Overall, disabled employees working 30 hours or more a week earn 80p less per hour (or eight per cent less) than their non-disabled counterparts (£9.2 and £10.0 respectively).

It was beyond the scope of this research to investigate the many factors that might explain variations in public sector pay. Tables A.3.17 to A.3.19 in Appendix A compare the typical earnings of disabled and non-disabled employees according to their highest educational qualification, occupational position, and employing organisation. The key findings are discussed briefly in turn, focusing on those situations where the earnings disparity exceeds 10 per cent, that is where disabled employees earned less than 90 per cent of non-disabled employees' earnings.

The weekly earnings of disabled and non-disabled women are similar when comparing those with like educational qualification, with one exception: disabled women with unspecified 'other' qualifications earned around 13 per cent less than their non-disabled counterparts, £150 and £173 respectively, a difference of £23. Disabled women with higher qualifications typically earned around 95 per cent or more

of what their non-disabled counterparts earned.

Disparities between the earnings of disabled and non-disabled men are often wider, especially when they have qualifications below those awarded in higher education. Thus, disabled men with GCE A level or equivalent, and those with ‘other’ qualifications, earned 84 per cent of the typical earnings of non-disabled men with similar qualifications, or between £52 and £59 a week less. Disabled men with GCSE grades A to C or equivalent earned £40 below what might be expected, that is 11 per cent less than their non-disabled counterparts’ gross weekly earnings (£327 compared with £367). The findings on earnings in relation to highest educational qualification are shown in Table A.3.17 in Appendix A.

When disabled employees are compared with non-disabled employees in similar occupational positions, disparities in their typical earnings narrow to less than ten per cent (Table A.3.18 in Appendix A). In no position, however, did disabled employees typically earn more than their non-disabled employees. The largest earnings gap in relative terms is found among Managers and senior officials: in these positions, disabled women and men alike typically earned no more than 91 per cent of non-disabled employees earnings, equivalent to £43 and £57 less per week respectively.

Table A.3.19 in Appendix A compares the gross weekly earnings of disabled and non-disabled employees working in different public sector organisations. Disabled women employed in Local government, or in a University or other grant-funded educational establishment, typically earned around 85 per cent of their non-disabled colleagues’ gross pay; those working in the Health service earned 90 per cent of what their non-disabled colleagues earned. These relative pay gaps are equivalent to between £27 and £45 less per week. In contrast, disabled and non-disabled women working in Central government, the civil service and armed forces typically earned similar weekly amounts.

Disabled men working in Local government, or the Health service, typically earned 20 per cent less than the amount earned by their

non-disabled counterparts, equivalent to between £86 and £90 less per week. The pay gap between disabled and non-disabled men working in Central government, the civil service and armed forces was smaller at 13 per cent, or £57 less a week. Gross weekly earnings were broadly similar between disabled and non-disabled men working in a University or other grant-funded educational establishment, or in Nationalised industry and state corporations.

3.14 Conclusions

Disabled public sector employees are a diverse group of people, and the findings presented in this chapter draw attention to considerable variability in their employment patterns and experiences. Moreover, there is substantial overlap in the employment circumstances of disabled and non-disabled employees in the public sector, and differences between them are often hard to detect. For example, there are only small differences between disabled and non-disabled employees in:

- 1 highest educational qualification achieved, other than those holding a degree or equivalent qualification,
- 2 whether they regarded their job as temporary in some way,
- 3 sickness absence rates, especially among older employees,
- 4 recent job-search behaviour, and
- 5 feeling under-employed in their current job.

Some differences in employment patterns between disabled and non-disabled employees are influenced by other factors. For example, differences in access to job-related training are partly explained by age variations because older employees are less likely to participate in training and disabled people are older. Moreover, differences between female and male employees are sometimes more striking than whether they are disabled or not.

There are apparently some substantive differences in the employment circumstances of disabled and non-disabled public sector employees, notably those concerning occupational status and

earnings:

- 1 Disabled employees are less likely than non-disabled employees to occupy the more senior managerial, professional and technical positions in the public sector, and the differences in occupational status are more marked between disabled and non-disabled men.
- 2 Disabled employees often earn less than 95 per cent of non-disabled employees' earnings in comparable public sector occupations and organisations, and the disparities in earnings associated with disability tend to be greater for men than women.

On the face of it, these differences reflect the economic and social disadvantage and exclusion that some disabled people experience. However, such disparities have not been sufficiently explored to identify the ways in which the many factors involved (e.g. qualifications, previous employment experience, local labour market conditions, recruitment practices, etc.) combine to produce particular employment outcomes for disabled people. Moreover, the snapshot evidence presented here does not indicate how the relationship between being a disabled person and being disadvantaged in public sector employment develops over time. As other research shows, disabled and non-disabled employees differ in many respects other than disability over the life course (Burchardt, 2003; Jenkins and Rigg, 2004; Kidd et al., 2000). Thus, differences between the employment experience of disabled and non-disabled public sector employees identify entry points for further research, not least to establish their true nature and extent.

In the interim, the findings indicate that a range of policies and interventions tailored to disabled people's particular employment needs and circumstances, as well as their life experience, is likely to be most effective in challenging the disadvantages they face in the labour market. What works for some disabled people will not work for all, and interventions will need to be targeted at sub-groups defined for example by age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, occupational

group and income.

4. Review of the research literature on public sector employers' attitudes to and employment of disabled people

This chapter first looks critically at how public sector is defined in employer surveys and at some of the limitations of such surveys (section 4.1). Section 4.2 presents some data on differences across the sectors in reported employment of disabled people. We then consider how employers define and perceive disability (section 4.3). A review of employer awareness and knowledge of the DDA follows in section 4.4. The next section (4.5) considers attitudes and practices in the recruitment of disabled people, followed by a review of employers' policies in relation to employing disabled staff (section 4.6). Section 4.7 look at adjustments.

4.1 Definitions of public sector in survey design and analysis, and survey limitations

This chapter relies heavily on surveys of employers. In interpreting their findings it is important to understand that surveys define public sector in differing ways: thus, the term 'public sector' must not be seen as a universally agreed category.

Employer surveys in general classify respondents by sector in one of three ways:

- 1 by industrial sector using the Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (SIC 92)
- 2 by asking the respondent if they work in the public, private or voluntary sector
- 3 by LFS classification of organisation (see the public sector classification in Table 2.3 in Chapter Two).

The first approach places organisations in 15 categories or ‘codes’ according to their main business. Four of these codes (SIC codes L to O) consist of public sector organisations in the main, but not exclusively so. These are ‘public administration and defence, and compulsory social security’, ‘health and social work’, ‘education’ and ‘other community, social and personal service activities’. Other industrial sector codes contain ten per cent of public sector organisations.

Researchers group the SIC codes in their samples and analyses in different ways. Honey et al. (1993) and Dench et al. (1996), unhelpfully for our purposes, created a large ‘other’ group and did not explain which codes it contains, though we can work out that it includes the four predominantly public sector codes along with others. More usefully, but a little misleadingly, Bunt et al. (2001), Goldstone (2002) and Hurstfield et al. (2003) created a so-called ‘public sector’ group. Bunt’s comprised of ‘public administration and defence, and compulsory social security’, ‘health and social work’ and ‘education’ while other two surveys also included ‘other community, social and personal service activities’. Stuart et al. (2002) in their analysis grouped responses from public administration (etc), education, and health and social work but did not describe that grouping as ‘public sector’. To complicate matters, some surveys report on ‘public sector’ SIC code groups in different ways. For example, Hurstfield et al. (2003) in reporting their SME survey present separate findings for the ‘public administration and defence’ SIC group and the other public sector SIC groups combined.

The survey reported by Roberts et al. (2004) asked employers whether their workplace was in the public, private or voluntary sector, and used this sector breakdown in their analysis in addition to the industrial sector codes. However, a problem is that they exempted from their sample the armed services and emergency services, as

they were not covered by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995, and for reasons not explained excluded some workplaces in the education sector, specifically those in primary and higher education, while they included others in adult and further education. The large employer postal survey by Hurstfield et al. (2003) also asked respondents to say whether their organisation was based in the public, private or voluntary sector.

There are no examples in this review of surveys of employers, on the topic of employing disabled people, which used the LFS classification.

4.1.1 Limitations of sector as an explanatory variable

It is important to note that in survey analyses industrial sector or self-reported public/private/voluntary sector are not the only explanatory variables. Indeed, Honey et al. (1993) and Dench et al. (1996) in their employer surveys, the latter conducted in 1994 (one year prior to the enactment of the DDA), found no strong relationship between employing disabled people and industrial sector. Both studies did find, however, a clear association between employment of disabled people and employer size, and between size and having a policy addressing the employment of disabled people, whilst having a policy varied relatively little by industrial sector. Most recently Roberts et al. (2004) found that, whereas private sector industrial sector differences did emerge from analysis of their workplace survey, a multivariate model showed that, when analysed together, workplace size, the presence of a written disability policy, and awareness of Part II of the DDA are significant factors affecting the likelihood of having employed disabled people.

Given the salience of other factors in explaining aspects of employer behaviour relating to disabled people and, in several reports, the very limited priority given to public sector as an analytical variable, this review presents some of the wider findings and so avoids overstating

findings specific to the public sector. Some studies include ‘case study’ type evidence of employers’ policies and practices, some from public sector employers. We have included such qualitative findings here, but it is important to note that no evidence is presented to suggest systematic differences between the public and private sectors.

4.1.2 Further limitations of surveys

A further cautionary note is needed in interpreting survey findings on public sector employer behaviour. The respondent base differs from survey to survey. Some focus on workplaces (Goldstone, 2002; Roberts et al., 2004) while another reports on interviews with staff with personnel responsibilities at single site organisations and organisational head offices (Stuart et al., 2002). For this reason, and others relating to how the questions were worded and timing, it is unwise to draw comparisons across surveys.

Finally, some surveys have wider coverage than Great Britain. The survey relied on most heavily here, by Roberts and colleagues, also includes Northern Ireland and gives no analysis by country.

4.2 Reported employment rates

Several surveys have asked employers about whether the workplace or organisation employs, or has ever employed, a disabled person. Question wording varies and, as evidence presented in the following section indicates, employers’ idiosyncratic views on what defines a disabled person are likely to influence responses. Thus we do not report findings from every survey.

In any case, the bald results are hard to interpret without taking into account other factors, such as size of employing organisation, which might skew the results. Full interpretation requires sophisticated multivariate analysis such as that carried out in the most recent survey, by Roberts et al. (2004). In that survey, 37 per cent of employers reported that there had been employed at their workplace

'people with disabilities or significant long-term health problems that affect their day-to-day activities'. Multivariate analysis found that the odds of having employed disabled staff were one-and-a-half times higher for the public sector than the private sector, while two-and-a-half times higher for the voluntary sector compared with the private sector.

4.3 How employers define and perceive disability

Part I of the DDA defines disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. Despite the availability of Government and DRC guidance on what does and does not constitute an impairment, and on circumstances in which people have rights under the Act, research has consistently shown that the lack of awareness and detailed knowledge among employers regarding the definition of disability is still a major cause for concern. Research reported by Stuart et al. (2002) concluded that their organisation-based respondents, who had personnel responsibilities, often held a narrow definition of disability, limited to obvious physical or sensory impairment. This observation is based on low levels of reporting of having had a disabled employee, further explored in case studies with 50 participating organisations (of which only six were coded as 'public administration etc', 'education' or 'health and social work' organisations).

The prevalence of narrow definitions is confirmed by the workplace-based survey reported by Goldstone (2002), which unlike the research by Stuart et al. reports on 'public sector' differences. This survey interestingly first asked respondents whether or not there were disabled people working in their workplace by first inviting them to use their own understanding of 'disability', and then asking again by supplying a definition closer to that of the DDA and reminding respondents to include less obvious conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, dyslexia, back problems and mental illness. The proportion of respondents saying there was a disabled employee

almost doubled in the second question (from 34 to 68 per cent). In the public sector the proportions were 43 and 69 per cent; one interpretation might be that public sector respondents' own definitions of disability were more inclusive.

Other research reveals limited employer knowledge of impairments covered by the DDA. Roberts et al. (2004) note with some surprise the results of a survey question in which none of nine conditions listed that may qualify under the DDA were universally recognised by employers as a disability. In the case of facial or skin disfigurement recognition, as few as one in twelve respondents recognised it as a disability. A detailed breakdown of responses by sector was not reported, except a note that voluntary sector employers were more likely to list each of the nine conditions listed. When respondents in case studies were asked for their individual definition of disability, most referred to problems with mobility (often in relation to wheelchairs), or sight or hearing, with some respondents mentioning learning difficulties. Generally disability was perceived to be a long-term condition, often acquired from birth. There was a tendency among the case study respondents to equate disability with visible, physical, chronic and present impairment, not with hidden, intermittent or past conditions that are also covered under the legislation. Only five of the 38 case studies were in the public sector., however.

There are nonetheless some contrary findings. The survey reported by Bunt et al. (2001) found that three fifths of employers surveyed in eight ONE pilot areas strongly disagreed (on a four point scale) with the proposition that they associated disabled people with wheelchairs and not people with 'less severe disabilities' or mental health problems.

Employer lack of understanding of what disability is or how it is defined under the DDA is evident from a study of legal action initiated in response to discrimination claims under the DDA. Meager et al.

(1999a) found employers (27.5 per cent of which were from the public sector) expressing surprise, and even anger and disbelief, at having a disability claim taken against them, and that it was not uncommon for employers to report that they were not aware that the employee involved was actually disabled (especially noteworthy in cases involving conditions such as back problems, for instance).

Roberts et al. (2004), drawing on their case study findings, emphasise a lack of clarity among employers about how to distinguish between disability and sickness or illness and how to evaluate the severity of a condition, for instance when a problem with hearing becomes a disability. Some case study employers in this study were concerned about the extent of their responsibilities under the Act regarding staff and job applicants with hidden disabilities who choose not to divulge this information to the employer. Again it should be noted that only five of the 38 case studies were in the public sector. Further research would be required to ascertain how, why and in what ways such queries on the concept of disability specifically affect employers in the public sector.

Limited understanding of which disabled people might be protected by the DDA has consequences for implementing reasonable adjustments under the Act. Stuart et al. (2002) found that employers often interpreted the concept of reasonable adjustment to apply only to the physical adaptation of buildings, for example by improving access. They conclude that high levels of complacency about the DDA, combined with overly restrictive interpretations of what constitutes disability, imply that many of the reasonable adjustments intended under the Act are not being made.

4.4 Employer awareness and knowledge of the DDA

Goldstone (2002) reported that over seven out of ten respondents in her workplace-based survey said they had heard of the DDA. Awareness increased with size of the organisation. There was variation across the industrial sectors, with awareness highest in the

public sector industrial sector grouping (over eight in ten) and significantly lower in the construction and manufacturing groups.

Findings from the organisation-based survey by Stuart et al. (2002) were broadly similar. Three quarters of respondents said they had heard of the DDA, again awareness increasing with size, and those from the 'public administration etc', 'education', 'health and social work' and 'mining' industrial sectors were most likely to have heard of it. Stuart and his colleagues found that claims of awareness were highest in the first three sectors mentioned. These sectors had the highest levels of awareness of the legal requirement 'to provide facilities' for disabled employees. They had been aware of the DDA for the longest period of time, were more likely than other sectors to believe they were covered by the Act, and were more likely to have sought advice on it. Although not mentioned by the authors, the possible influence of size of organisation should be noted, as organisations from the public sector industrial sectors may have been larger than the others.

Roberts et al. (2004) found that just under nine in ten employers in the voluntary sector and nearly eight in ten in the public sector were aware of legislation granting rights to disabled employees and job applicants, compared to just under six in ten in the private sector. Both public and voluntary sector organisations were also more likely to have heard of the DDA, the highest proportion again represented by the voluntary sector (75 per cent) followed closely by the public sector (71 per cent), and lastly the private sector (61 per cent). Respondents in voluntary and public sector organisations were more likely to be able to name the DDA spontaneously, 26 per cent compared to seven per cent in the private sector. While bivariate analyses appear to establish an association between sector and awareness of the DDA, the results of the multivariate model employed by Roberts and colleagues showed that, when analysed together, workplace size, the presence of a policy giving rights to disabled employees and the current employment of a disabled person

remained significant factors in determining awareness of disability legislation, while sector did not.

The survey conducted by Roberts et al. (2004) distinguished workplaces that were service providers. Within this sub-group, public sector employers had a considerably higher awareness of Part III of the DDA (51 per cent) than those in the private sector (30 per cent) but slightly less than in the voluntary sector (54 per cent). Levels of awareness of Part III differed according to industrial sector, with the highest levels represented by the public and social services sector ('public administration, defence and compulsory social security', training providers, and 'health and social work'). Advanced statistical analysis showed that not only were public and voluntary sector organisations more likely to be aware of Part III of the DDA, but that they were also more likely than private sector organisations to have a policy for disabled customers and clients in place.

Roberts et al. (2004) singled out local public sector offices for special mention for being well informed about DDA provision. They suggested that this might be explained by access to resources available to large organisations, concluding that current practices in the public sector demonstrate the effectiveness of having systems in place to transmit information about the Act to workplaces and branch offices.

4.5 Attitudes and practices in recruitment of disabled people
In research relating to employment of disabled people employers say they look to appoint the best person for the job (Bunt et al., 2001; Loumidis et al., 2001; Aston et al., 2003) but evidence on recruitment practices and attitudes towards disabled people suggests that disabled applicants have unequal chances of being considered.

Perhaps the most telling evidence comes from the survey by Bunt et al. (2001), which reports differences across the public and private sectors. This survey was conducted with a sample of workplaces in

eight of the ONE pilot areas, with five or more staff, that had recruited new staff in the previous three years. When asked about the likelihood of recruiting in the next two to three years people in the three main ONE client groups – lone parents, long-term unemployed people and disabled people (questions restricted here to people with physical disabilities and people with mental health problems) - only nine per cent said they were very likely to take on people with physical disabilities and four per cent people with mental health problems. This compares with three in ten saying they were very likely to take on lone parents and 17 per cent long-term unemployed people. Likelihood of taking on people from ONE groups was higher among large employers, and among employers in the public sector along with those in the distribution and leisure sectors. Although not suggested by the authors, it is possible that responses were influenced by views that disabled people do not often apply for jobs.

The survey by Stuart et al. (2002) found that respondents that would not consider employing a person with a disability were almost exclusively from small organisations with less than 20 staff, which we can assume to exclude the public sector.

Roberts et al. (2004) asked respondents how easy it would be to employ at their workplace people with specified conditions or impairments. They give no breakdown by sector or size but it is interesting to note that high proportions of respondents said it would be hard to employ someone with any of the conditions described. As many as three in ten felt it would be impossible (on a three point scale) in the case of someone who was a wheelchair user and the same proportion felt the same about someone with impaired vision. Perhaps contrary to what might have been expected, just under four in ten respondents thought it would be easy to employ someone with learning difficulties, and nearly half said the same of clinical depression (among the highest ratings for the conditions posed). The ease of employing people with schizophrenia was placed on the middle of the scale (that is, 'difficult') by almost six in ten

respondents.

Goldstone (2002) found only one in five of workplace-based employers (personnel specialists and line managers) agreed with the statement that they actively encouraged job applications from disabled people. However, one in three in the public sector industrial sub-group agreed. Encouragement increased with organisation size. In Goldstone's survey those public sector workplaces that actively encouraged disabled applicants were particularly likely to publish job advertisements welcoming disabled applicants, half saying they did so compared with one third overall.

From a telephone survey of SME employers, Hurstfield et al. (2003) report the proportion of respondents saying they had not offered a job to someone with a specified condition on health and safety grounds, with just under one in six saying they had done so. One in five respondents were in the public sector but the authors provide no breakdown of the response by sector. Other research published in Hurstfield and colleagues' report suggests that this might under-represent the true picture. However, there were very low rates of response to their complementary postal surveys of large employers, of health and safety practitioners and of health and safety representatives, and it is thus unwise to cite them in evidence.

4.6 Policies covering employment of disabled people

There is considerable evidence that having a policy covering disabled employees is related to size of organisation (Stuart et al., 2002) or workplace (Goldstone, 2002; Roberts et al., 2004). Multivariate analysis by Roberts and colleagues found that the odds of workplaces with policies employing disabled staff were one-and-a-half times those of workplaces that had no policy. The last mentioned study found that respondents in workplaces with 100 or more staff were more likely than those in smaller workplaces to report their organisation having a policy covering the rights of disabled employees and applicants, with 86 per cent of the larger workplaces having a policy. However, smaller workplaces that were part of a

larger organisation were almost twice as likely to say that their business had a policy in place than those that were single-site.

The case studies reported by Stuart and colleagues and by Roberts and colleagues suggest that few organisations and workplaces had a dedicated policy on disability, and that policies usually took the form of an overall Equal Opportunities policy that was part of a generic policy against discrimination on the basis of gender, 'race' and sometimes age or religion.

The workplace-based survey reported by Goldstone (2002) found that formal policies covering the employment of disabled people were more common in the public sector than in other industrial sector groupings: reported by exactly seven in ten public sector respondents compared with just over half of both services and trade, and around one third of both manufacturing and construction sector respondents. Roberts et al. (2004) analysed the responses of surveyed employers who were also service providers. Their evidence indicates that workplaces in the public sector were the most likely to have policies for both disabled employees and customers in place.

Roberts et al. (2004) found from their case studies that it was because public sector organisations were more likely to be larger employers with HR/personnel specialists that made them more likely to have disability policies in place, supporting the Goldstone (2002) survey finding that organisations with a dedicated human resource specialist more commonly had employment policies regarding disabled people.

Further evidence on the public sector comes from the survey of SME organisations with less than 250 employees reported by Hurstfield et al. (2003). A surprisingly large proportion of respondents were in the public sector: three per cent in the 'public administration and defence' industrial group and 22 per cent in other public sector groups combined. (Although the authors refer to 'organisations' it seems

possible that workplaces were sampled, but no sampling details or response rates are given.)

Rather under half of respondents reported having a policy on disability. This proportion varied by industrial sector, with public sector organisations considerably more likely to have a disability policy than private sector companies ('public administration and defence' highest at 80 per cent, followed by the remainder of the public sector at 65 per cent).

Goldstone (2002) provides a breakdown by sector grouping of features included in formal policies covering the employment of disabled people. Differences are quite small but it is interesting that the public sector lagged behind the other three sector groups in featuring adapting working hours and working time as necessary, and behind two groups with respect to equipment/personal support for disabled employees. However, the same study found that the public sector was especially likely to have a formal written policy on recruitment of disabled people; this feature also was associated with larger workplace size.

The details of policies are not reported here but it relevant to note that, according to Roberts et al. (2004) and Stuart et al. (2002), there appeared to be little consistent and ongoing training for staff in relation to disability. Stuart and colleagues report that, where staff training was provided, it was typically carried out by larger organisations, usually as part of equal opportunities or induction training.

4.7 Adjustments

There are mixed findings on the propensity of public sector employers to make adjustments for disabled employees. Caution is needed here, as questioning differs.

Roberts et al. (2004) found that over three quarters of public sector

employers at workplaces where there had ever been a disabled employee had arrangements in place or planned to assist disabled employees through flexible working time or varied hours, compared with half of the private sector employers. On the other hand, an earlier survey reported by Goldstone (2002) found around four in ten public sector workplaces to have provided flexible working patterns/working hours for an existing disabled employee, and a similar proportion to have done so for a new recruit who was disabled. These last proportions compare badly with those in the trade industrial sector group (over seven in ten and nearly six in ten respectively).

In the survey reported by Roberts et al. (2004) the public sector performed strongly in the area of flexible work organisation (such as transfer to other jobs or rearranging work duties) with over half of public sector workplaces that had ever employed a disabled person having arrangements in place or planned compared to just under a third of private sector workplaces. There were also differences between sectors in arrangements for transferring people to jobs or to other premises to assist disabled employees (32 per cent in the public compared to 13 per cent in the private sector) and in providing physical assistance for disabled employees (35 per cent compared to nine per cent) but overall proportions that had made such adjustments were small (15 and 12 per cent respectively). In the survey by Goldstone (2002), the areas in which the public sector outperformed the other industrial sector groups were altering work or workplace by redesigning duties, provision of special equipment and modifying workplaces, though the differences were not large.

In the survey by Roberts et al. (2004), employers who had experience of disabled employees in their workplace were asked if they had actually had to make any changes to the workplace or working practices. Just over a quarter (had done so and nearly three-quarters of those said that these changes were easy to make. Employers at private sector workplaces were significantly more likely than those in

the public sector to say that making changes was easy. When asked why changes were made just over one in three employers said that the law required them to make the change: large employers were more likely to say this, and employers in the public sector were significantly more likely than those in the private sector to cite legal reasons (55 per cent compared to 29 per cent).

While a survey of personnel director and managers by Jackson et al. (2000) was conducted among private sector companies, it is nevertheless interesting to note that they found that willingness to make adjustments is predicted by attitudes towards disabled people and by knowledge of the DDA.

Amongst those employers who said they were quite or very likely to recruit ONE groups in the future, most said they were likely to make changes to accommodate them, the proportions being highest in the public sector and among the largest employers (Bunt et al., 2001).

Some service providing employer organisations, particularly larger multi-site organisations (which can include many public sector employers), considered the requirement to remove physical barriers under Part III of the Act which was to come into force in October 2004 to present a 'significant problem' (Stuart et al., 2002: 65), especially where listed buildings were involved. 'One public sector organisation was seriously contemplating the restructuring of all its 'corporate services' functions, such that those to which the public requires access are accommodated in a single (more modern and accessible) building' (Stuart et al., 2002: 65).

Other case study findings reported by Stuart et al. (2002) indicate that service providing employers were not making links between Part II and Part III of the Act in a concerted effort to increase the employment of disabled people. This was especially evident in smaller organisations and where actions were undertaken in response to the legislation they tended to concentrate on only one

aspect of the Act. In larger organisations, the extent to which linkages were made between the two Parts of the Act depended largely on who was in charge of guiding organisational policy on disability. In cases where HR staff were leading, Part II tended to predominate to the extent that Part III received very little attention or in some cases none at all. Conversely, where staff in ‘corporate affairs’ took leadership, Parts II and III of the Act tended to be more effectively linked; these cases, however, were exceptions to the rule, as HR leadership on disability tended to be the norm. As a result, the case study findings suggested, Part II of the Act tended to be the main object of concern for most of the larger employers while Part III was the main concern of smaller and retail service providers.

4.8 Conclusions

Employer surveys categorise ‘public sector’ either by industrial sector, an approach that misclassifies a small minority, or by asking respondents to say whether they belong to the public, private or voluntary sector. None of the surveys reviewed here uses the LFS classification upon which Chapter Two and Chapter Three are based. Missing and inconsistent reporting on several aspects of public sector employers’ attitudes and performance also has hampered this review. In any future surveys it would be necessary to standardise the definition of public sector and to prioritise public sector as an analytical variable in order to track changes in public sector employers’ attitudes and behaviour.

The limited findings specific to the public sector are as follows.

- 1 Between seven in ten and eight in ten of public sector employers, depending on which survey is used, were aware of the DDA. In the most recent survey reviewed, respondents in one in four voluntary and public sector organisations named the DDA spontaneously.
- 2 In one survey, one in three public sector employers said that they actively encouraged job applications from disabled people.
- 3 Seven in ten public sector workplaces in one survey had formal

- policies covering employment of disabled people.
- 4 In the most recent survey reviewed, over half of public sector workplaces that had ever had a disabled employee had arrangements in place or planned for flexible work organisation. Of those public sector employers that actually had made changes to the workplace or working practices (just over one in four), one in three said the law required them to do so.

From the surveys reviewed here there are indications of the public sector out-performing the private sector, but not always the voluntary sector, though some conclusions are tentative and some are derived from a single study. The areas in which the public sector may perform better than the private sector are as follows.

- 3 Likelihood of employing and recruiting disabled staff
- 4 Somewhat more inclusive interpretations of 'disability'
- 5 Awareness of the DDA
- 6 Having a formal policy covering employment of disabled people
- 7 Making, or being willing to make, adjustments for disabled staff and citing the law as a reason for making changes.

There is no room for complacency, however, given low levels of performance in some aspects.

Caution is needed in attributing differences to sector alone. Size of organisation is recognised as a main variable leading to differences in results between the public and private sector. However, having taken size and other factors into account, Roberts et al. (2004) found that the odds of having employed a disabled person are one and a half times higher in the public sector than in the private sector.

These authors also found that the presence of a written policy relating to employment of disabled people and awareness of the DDA are significant factors in this respect. Accordingly, we need to consider the interaction between size, having a policy and DDA awareness if we are to fully understand differences within the public sector. Again,

it would be helpful if future surveys used a standardised typology of public sector organisation. Using the LFS typology would allow for ‘read across’ from secondary analysis such as that reported in Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

5. Sickness absence and leaving employment

This chapter first looks at rates of sickness absence among disabled people and at whether employers perceive that disabled employees will take more sick leave than non-disabled staff. Differences between public and private sector employers’ attitudes are not known here, however. We then examine recent evidence on sickness absence in the public sector (section 5.2) and public and private sector differences in the management of sickness absence (section 5.3). The chapter then reports findings of an important study that takes account of sector in characteristics associated with increased risk of job loss (section 5.4). The concluding section (5.5) outlines the key points.

5.1 Sickness absence among disabled people and employers’ perceptions

Chapter Three revealed that sickness absence, as measured by the Labour Force Survey (LFS), is somewhat higher for disabled than non-disabled people in the public sector: 6.1 per cent of disabled workers, compared with 2.5 per cent of non-disabled employees, had taken at least one day off work because of sickness or injury in the week preceding their LFS interview.

Barham and Leonard (2002) used autumn 2001 LFS data to show the differences in sickness absence rates across all sectors amongst people of working age who had a ‘limiting longstanding illness, disability or infirmity’ (a different definition from that used in Chapter Three) and those who did not. They found that 7.2 per cent of men and 7.8 of women who were disabled according to that definition had been absent in the reference week, compared with 3.3 per cent of

non-disabled women and 4.7 per cent of non-disabled men. Sixty-five per cent of men and 62 per cent of women who were absent in the reference week were disabled.

There is limited evidence from employer surveys that a minority of employers may be deterred from recruiting disabled people because of fears that they will have higher levels of sickness absence than non-disabled applicants. In 1993 around one in eight respondents not employing disabled people, and seeing problems associated with their employment, identified concerns that disabled workers might have increased sick leave (Honey et al., 1993). On the other hand, a 1994 survey reported almost no adverse comments about the propensity of disabled people to take sick leave when respondents were asked about why they perceived people with specified impairments to be difficult to employ (Dench et al., 1996). Perceptions of disabled people's attendance and punctuality records range widely. In one survey, two in three respondents gave a neutral response to the statement that 'people with disabilities tend to have better attendance and punctuality records', 21 per cent agreed and 15 per cent disagreed (Goldstone, 2002). In another survey, only one in ten respondents who had ever employed a disabled person identified as a business benefit of retaining disabled employees that disabled staff tend to have better attendance and punctuality records (Stuart et al., 2002).

5.2 Sickness absence in the public sector

In 1998, the UK government set itself the target of reducing rates of sickness absence by 30 per cent by the year 2003. In the 2004 Public Spending Review, the Chancellor of the Exchequer outlined plans for the better management of sickness absence, particularly in the public sector where the figures are reported to be highest. A stream of media reports encourages the growth of public concern over the purportedly dire situation in the UK public sector, quoting figures in excess of £4bn a year that taxpayers are paying for public sector staff sick leave, a cost reported in the Financial Times as being

'...equivalent to an extra 1p on income tax and another 1p on fuel duty, with millions left over' (Turner, 2004). The Guardian reports that public sector employees in the NHS are the 'worst offenders' (Jones, 2004). The following sub-section looks at the data.

5.2.1 Survey data on sickness absence rates

A main source of these reports is the 2004 survey of sickness absence published by the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD). These data have been used by the media to rebuke public sector employees for taking on average almost 11 days off per year due to sickness compared to the average of eight days per year for employees in the private sector (CIPD, 2004). In terms of percentage of working time lost to absence, the public sector rate was 4.7 per cent, compared with 3.4 per cent in the private sector. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) latest annual survey also shows a notable difference between the public and private sectors in average days of work missed due to sickness, with public workers missing an average of 8.9 days compared to 6.9 days for those working in the private sector (CBI, 2004). The CBI annual surveys acknowledge an association between size of organisation and absence levels: their 2004 report states that organisations employing over 5,000 averaged 10.2 days per employee, while those with less than 50 staff averaged 4.2 days.

Surveys such as these capture media attention despite their methodological deficits. The response rate in the CIPD (2004) survey, for example, was 16 per cent, and the report acknowledges that 17 per cent of respondents did not collect information on sickness absence rates. Barham and Leonard (2002) caution that the accuracy of the data is likely to be severely biased as a result, and also warn of under-reporting within organisations. They cite an earlier CIPD survey that found a third of organisations responding believed that managers under-report their own absence, estimated to be on average about 27 per cent of their actual absence. In an earlier CBI annual survey report, it was noted that reported figures tended to be noticeably

lower where senior managers were directly involved in procedures for absence management (CBI, 2001).

The LFS gathers data from the employee and not the employer, and as already explained, asks about absence in the week prior to the interview. The analysis by Barham and Leonard (2002), relating to autumn 2001, shows sickness absence rates of 3.8 per cent in the public sector compared to 2.8 per cent in the private sector: that is, lower rates and a narrower gap between sectors than in the 2004 CIPD employer-based survey. Barham and Leonard acknowledge that LFS respondents may under-report their sickness absences. Looking at industrial sector, Barham and Leonard found public administration to have the highest absence rate in autumn 2001.

While valuable because it distinguishes the public from the private sector, the data on sickness absence is of limited usefulness to this review because of the way in which sickness absence is presented as rates and not as spells or durations. Evidence concentrates on rates and average days lost to employers, and little attention is paid to long-term absence that might lead to disability. The CBI (2004) survey tells us that long-term absence accounted for just five per cent of all absence cases but was responsible for a third of time lost through absence. Data on length of spells of absence is lacking, however. Data is not available from the LFS, of course, because of the way in which it records absence in a reference week.

5.2.2 Causes of ill-health and sickness absence in the public sector

A 'lay persons' guide' to the Whitehall II study of men in the civil service, edited by Ferrie (2004), emphasised the relationship between increasing levels of stress at work and the overall rise in ill health linked to sickness absence. This epidemiological study concluded that causes other than those normally associated with medical health and well being are significant contributory factors to the rises in levels of sickness absence. Specifically, the authors see

the economic recession and deregulation of the labour market in the 1990s, resulting in widespread practices of downsizing among employers in post-industrial countries, as contributing to the detrimental effects that new patterns of work are having on the 'surviving' employees. This is reflected in increased levels of medically certified sickness absence for stress-related conditions such as mental illness and heart disease; this is consistent with the latest CIPD findings (CIPD, 2004). Other factors that contribute to a rise in sickness absence attributable to stress at work include increasing levels of alcohol dependency and obesity.

This study finds that these conditions can result from inadequate social support networks at work combined with the deterioration of social relationships outside of work, and that these are linked to developments in work-based culture in post-industrial societies such as longer working hours, heavy workloads, lack of job security and low levels of employee control. Many of the conditions listed as being on the increase could develop into a disability by the DDA definition. Evidence is emerging to show that in some cases UK workplace practice itself is responsible for high levels of sickness absence, and that increasingly employers might find themselves incurring the costs of making adjustments stipulated under the DDA as an outcome of current employment practice.

In a systematic literature review Michie and Williams (2003) examined studies of the association between work factors and psychological ill health among healthcare workers in the UK. These studies showed that among nurses workload pressure was the most frequently reported source of psychological ill health, and among student nurses distress has followed from low involvement in decision-making and use of skills as well as from low levels of support at work. Bullying, mainly by managers, was prevalent in a study of health care workers and associated with both anxiety and depression.

5.3 Public/private sector differences in the management of sickness absence

Within the literature on employers' management of sickness absence and rehabilitation provision, one article looks at differences between the public and private sectors. Drawing on a postal survey and follow-up interviews with HR specialists in 30 organisations, Dibben et al. (2001) found that public sector organisations had access to a larger number of sources of expertise than those in the private sector. Occupational health, health and safety, and rehabilitation providers were more available to the public than to the private sector organisations. There were statistically significant differences in there being a requirement on the organisation to consider provision of rehabilitation, this being the case for four in ten public sector organisations compared with one in five in the private sector.

5.4 Risk of leaving employment on becoming disabled

Burchardt (2003) used longitudinal data from the LFS to estimate how many people in employment become long-term sick or disabled (according to the DDA definition) over a given period; to establish the rate at which they leave employment; and to identify characteristics associated with increased risk of leaving employment.

Burchardt used the four main SIC codes that cover the public sector, explained in Chapter Four above. Her analysis found that working in the public sector reduces the risk of leaving employment following the onset of DDA disability, independently of other factors considered in the model. The risk of leaving employment following onset of DDA disability was found to be lower in the public sector than in any other sector, and significantly lower in the public sector than in the manufacturing and construction sector (but probably not significantly lower than in the financial services and other services sectors).

5.5 Conclusions

Sickness absence rates are higher amongst disabled than non-disabled employees. Surveys have found minorities of employers

believing that disabled potential recruits might have take more sick leave or have worse attendance and punctuality records than non-disabled people. On the other hand, similar sized minorities were found to believe that disabled people have better records than non-disabled people.

Sickness absence rates amongst all employees are higher in the public than in the private sector. The gap between sectors is narrower when data is gathered from the Labour Force Survey than when the less reliable employer surveys are used. Further analysis would ascertain whether the gap is explained by public sector organisations being larger on average than private organisations, sickness absence being higher in larger organisations.

Findings from employer surveys, despite deficits in how they gathered their data on sickness absence, have been widely used by the media to castigate the public sector for a poor and costly sickness absence record with little regard for underlying reasons for sickness absence.

Ill-health and sickness absence in parts of the public sector have been linked to levels of stress at work, which can result from inadequate social support networks at work, combined with deteriorating social relationships outside work, as well as from a work culture of long working hours, heavy workloads, low levels of employee control and bullying by managers.

Evidence on differences between sectors in the management of sickness absence is extremely limited. The only study to make comparisons suggests that public sector organisations are better placed than those in the private sector to offer rehabilitation.

Sickness absence can lead to disability. Analysis of the Labour Force Survey found that the risk of leaving employment after becoming disabled as defined by the DDA was lower in the public sector than in

the other industrial sector groups. Whether this difference is related to greater rehabilitation efforts in the public than in the other sectors is an open question.

6. Review of research on disabled people's employment experiences

Within the small body of research exploring disabled people's experiences in getting, being in or leaving employment, there is little published literature on experiences in the public sector apart from a few studies relating to disabled employees' experiences in certain public sector workforces. In wider studies, either sector information is not gathered or reports do not present it as an analytical variable. An example of the latter is the report of the survey that Meager et al. (1999b) carried out in 1996, as a baseline assessment of the extent of employment participation of disabled people. If used as a variable in the analysis, the LFS typology used to describe employers in the survey would have permitted exploration of differences between sectors in experience of discrimination in a work context, and of who disabled people thought were responsible for treating them unfairly.

This chapter first reviews studies relating to disabled employees' experiences in specific public sector workforces (section 6.1). It then puts these findings in the wider context of disabled people's experiences in employment more generally, by drawing on some of the more important or recent literature (section 6.2). The concluding section (6.3) summarises the main findings.

6.1 Public sector employment experiences

We identified a small number of studies of disabled employees in particular public sector workforces – social care, mental health services, primary care and education. Given the scarcity of the research literature we include two studies that pre-date the Disability

Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 by a few years.

The National Institute for Social Work carried out a survey of statutory social services employees in five departments in England, two in Scotland and in all four Health and Social Services Boards in Northern Ireland in 1993-94 and 1995-96, before the DDA came into force. An article by McLean (2003) presents an analysis relating to respondents who reported a long-term illness or disability (according to Census questions) and who also said their daily lives were affected by an illness or disability (along with a very small set who were registered disabled or considered themselves to be disabled but were not registered). Respondents in this category, termed 'people with long term illnesses and disabilities affecting their daily lives' constituted eight per cent of the achieved sample.

There were striking differences in aspects of job satisfaction. Professional workers (managers and field workers) in the aforementioned category were significantly less satisfied than the rest of the sample with the amount of responsibility, opportunity to use their abilities, job security, rate of pay and the way the department was managed. Amongst direct care workers, men with long-term illness and disabilities which affected their daily lives were less satisfied than other men with most aspects of work, especially pay. In direct care work, mean stress scores were higher for employees with long-term illness and disabilities which affected their daily lives than for those without.

In the same study respondents were asked to describe briefly the ways in which their working lives were affected by their illness or disability. Most often mentioned, and hardest to deal with, was continual, intermittent and sometimes unbearable pain, and colleagues were thought often to lack insight into its effects. Colleagues, too, appeared not to understand mobility obstacles the respondents experienced. There were some feelings, for example among people with epilepsy, that colleagues and managers viewed

them differently from other workers, although work was not affected by the condition, and even that they discriminated against them in terms of opportunities available to other workers. McLean stresses the importance of social care employers assessing needs and developing strategies to support employees with long-term illnesses or disabilities, especially in the context of the recruitment and retention problem in this workforce and the research finding that job commitment was unaffected by long-term illness or disability.

Moloney et al. (2000) carried out semi-structured interviews with 15 disabled primary care workers - GPs, practice managers and ancillary staff. Their brief article highlights the 'tips and techniques' that informants brought forward to minimise the effects of disability or chronic illness, which were primarily the suggestion to raise co-workers' awareness of the effects of disability and ideas for workplace adjustments. It seemed that overcoming functional and practical difficulties had been left to individuals, sometimes with supportive colleagues, with little proactive or reactive help from employers.

A qualitative study by Rooke-Matthews and Lindow (1998) reports on interviews with 36 professionals who worked as social workers, mental health nurses and in other jobs in statutory and voluntary sector mental health services and who had also used psychiatric or community mental health services. The authors do not distinguish public and voluntary sector employment experiences, although it appears likely that most informants were public sector workers. Many interviewees expressed strong beliefs that their experiences added value to their work with other service users. They felt that they had a fuller understanding of others' lives, behaviours and experiences of discrimination; that they were better placed to help their clients or patients to look positively to the future; and that they were a useful resource for fellow workers in offering a perspective on experiences as a patient.

Rooke-Matthews and Lindow highlight the dilemma their 'user employees' faced in deciding whether or not to disclose past or current psychiatric treatment. The minority who had been honest about their use of mental health services felt that they were seen by their colleagues as more vulnerable, devalued and subject to increased surveillance; that they had to work harder than colleagues in order to be taken seriously; that their complaints about the conditions of work or the service were interpreted as associated with their mental health condition; and that colleagues believed they over-identified with clients and patients.

Rooke-Matthews and Lindow (1998) comment that few advertisements for posts in mental health services state that they welcome applications from mental health service users. They give an example of one of their interviewees who, encouraged by an advertisement that stated a preference for applicants who had experienced mental health problems, was selected for the post.

Perkins et al. (1997) report on an initiative in an inner London mental health service, dating from 1995, that specifically recruited to existing posts within clinical rehabilitation teams people who had personal experience of serious mental health problems. Service users recruited were employed as mental health support workers and as nursing, care, physiotherapy and occupational therapy assistants. The project provided support to applicants that included help with completing application forms, guidelines on preparing for an interview and an offer of interview training. Support to recruits to establish themselves in their post was wide-ranging, based on good practice in supported employment. It is unclear whether the article reports the first-hand experiences of people employed in this project. It reports 'user employees' being concerned about over-identification with other users, though it is said that this was addressed in initial training and through ongoing supervision, and also anger on the part of these employees arising from poor practice on the part of other staff such as talking down to them.

In an innovative approach the ADP (Association of Disabled Professionals) produced, with Employment Service funding, a booklet which presented in their own words the experiences and advice of ten people who identified as a disabled person about working as lecturers, school teachers, trainers and private tutors (ADP, 1999). Including contact details for more information, the booklet is intended as a starting point for disabled people who want to teach and for teachers who become disabled.

An in-depth study of how deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) and hearing people work together in statutory organisations was carried out by a deaf and a hearing researcher in 1996-97 (Young et al., 1998). Two specialist psychiatric services for deaf people and a school for deaf children took part in the study. Nearly nine in ten of the deaf staff in the teams studied were employed at unqualified grades, a pattern attributed by the authors to an educational system that means deaf people leave school with few qualifications, to limited chances of gaining relevant work experience and to professional bars to qualifications whereby deaf people who use BSL could not become qualified nurses. Yet most deaf staff had the essential skill of communicating in sign language with deaf service users better than their hearing colleagues, and they were valued for their understanding of deaf culture. Deaf staff could feel frustrated by the limitations of their role, and feel they were challenging the role of qualified hearing colleagues, while hearing staff could feel undermined. Young and her colleagues found that the most successful approach to solving this tension was to provide training for unqualified deaf staff that accredited specific professional skills. Thus all staff could be distinguished in terms of competency rather than qualification.

Young and her colleagues concluded that hearing people using BSL in the presence of deaf staff, rather than talking, is fundamental to good working relationships between deaf and hearing people. It was

found to be key to full professional involvement, to foster confidence amongst deaf staff, to foster social relationships and to demonstrate respect for deaf staff. But teams in their study struggled to create a signing environment in which deaf and hearing staff interacted well.

Other experiential research publications not reported here, as they were carried out well before the DDA, are a study of the working lives of visually impaired physiotherapists (French, 2001) and a small study of nurses who became disabled (Moon, 1990).

6.2 Selected wider research on employment experiences

While the above findings are intrinsically interesting and offer up lessons for the public services studied, they are not necessarily particular to the public sector. This sub-section draws on some of the wider research on disabled people's employment experiences to provide some context.

The baseline survey by Meager et al. (1999b), referred to in the introduction to this chapter, found that overall nearly three in ten (28 per cent) of DDA disabled respondents who had worked or had looked for work thought their disability made it harder to get and keep work, and one in six economically active respondents (16 per cent) had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment in the work context. Most discrimination had been experienced while applying for jobs. The most common complaint was that it was assumed they would not be able to do the job as well as a non-disabled person, reported by four in ten of economically active people who had experienced discrimination. Just over a fifth of this sub group stated that the job interview focussed on disability rather than ability to do the job. Very similar perceptions were identified by disabled informants in a small, local qualitative study (Edwards et al., 2000), which also found strong beliefs amongst deaf people who used BSL that they had been discriminated against because they were deaf and that prospective employers had inherently negative perceptions of them.

Research conducted by Duckett (2000) suggests that the interview process can be a barrier to the employment of disabled people. His review of previous research concludes that existing interview models prioritise the needs of the employer over the interviewee. Duckett's own research found that the interview experience was dominated by feelings of anxiety and manipulation. He highlights the need to develop more reflective, innovative and ethical approaches to interviewing to minimise the negative effects on interviewees. He also argues for a departure from the 'victim blaming ideologies' which dominate research into why disabled people fail to convert interviews into job offers, a blame culture that mistakenly focuses on faults in the disabled interviewee rather than the flawed interview situation itself.

In the survey by Meager et al. (1999b) nearly one in five of economically active people who felt discriminated against stated that they had been dismissed because of disability. A small semi-structured interview study explored the experience of involuntary retirement or redundancy due to disability and found that all of the 11 participants, who had become disabled while in employment, felt either that they had been pressured into leaving employment as a direct result of their impairment or that disability had directly contributed to their redundancy (Bradley et al., 2004). Caution is required in interpreting this finding as the authors do not divulge the wording of their advertisements used to recruit participants. The lack of accounts of how disabled people experience employment was identified as a gap by a review of the research literature on disabled people and employment carried out for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Barnes et al., 1998). On the basis of that review, the Foundation commissioned a study that explored the strategies used by disabled workers to get by in the workplace and looked at the nature and role of supports they received (Roulstone et al., 2003). The report combines findings from a postal survey, conducted among people who had responded to a GB-wide call for participants via media disabled people use and disabled people's organisations, and

a qualitative study among 33 of the survey respondents. Six in ten of the postal survey respondents worked in the public sector. Public sector representation in the qualitative study is not stated but is not likely to be high as 13 of the 33 respondents worked in organisations for or of disabled people and thus were likely to be working in the voluntary sector.

Roulstone and his colleagues found from their qualitative interviews with disabled people that there were no universal strategies disabled workers used to ‘thrive and survive’ at work, that what worked for one person might be unhelpful or risky for another in view of their specific employment context, length of time in post, and HR and financial environment. However, they also found that the gradual introduction of some strategies was helpful, and that typically it was necessary for disabled people to change these strategies over time as employment circumstances, management and personnel styles, corporate priorities and impairment levels also changed. It was also remarked that the use of strategies contained risks, and that being for example too assertive or too sudden in demanding that barriers be removed was perceived as potentially counter-productive.

In order of priority, Roulstone and colleagues outline strategies used as:

- 1 being assertive and direct
- 2 being open about impairment, disability and barriers
- 3 seeking external support (e.g. family, medical, benefits)
- 4 using new technologies to aid communication choices
- 5 information management and targeting
- 6 seeking the validation of other disabled people
- 7 seeking flexible working
- 8 getting legal help
- 9 engaging in personal development
- 10 using impairment knowledge to get work
- 11 gradually building up strategies over time.

Roulstone and colleagues reported that disabled workers in organisations of and for disabled people were more likely to receive substantial levels of support, acceptance, flexibility and empathy in the workplace than in other types of organisations. In these organisations, diversity was more likely to be perceived positively as an asset, difference as a source of validation and being disabled as a mark of identity and pride. People in disability-related work reported that they found their work highly rewarding and that the experience validated and enhanced their feelings of self-worth beyond employment.

Messages from the research for employers, managers and colleagues were to value diversity, recognise disabled workers' strengths not weaknesses, build trust so that disabled employees felt able to voice their concerns, be well informed about external sources of support, and train key staff in disability equality issues as part of personal development at work.

6.3 Conclusions

Key findings from the small body of research on the experiences of disabled and deaf people working in health care, social care and education are as follows.

- 6 Levels of job satisfaction among disabled social services staff were strikingly lower than among other staff surveyed.
- 7 Social care workers identified pain as the chief barrier at work.
- 8 Health and social care workers found colleagues had limited awareness of disability and how it affected them at work.
- 9 Disclosure was perceived to have negative effects on colleagues' attitudes to staff with a hidden disability or a mental health condition.
- 10 'User employees' in mental health services held strong beliefs that their experiences as service users added value to their work with other users.
- 11 Working and social relationships between deaf and hearing staff who use BSL can be improved, and deaf staff's confidence

fostered, if hearing staff use BSL in the presence of deaf staff. The power imbalance between unqualified deaf workers and qualified hearing staff can be reduced by recognising competency rather than qualification.

Key findings from the wider research are as follows.

- 1 Employment-related discrimination had been experienced by just one in six of people surveyed in 1996 who met the DDA definition and had worked or were looking for work. However, the very limited qualitative research revealed some strong perceptions of unfair treatment, especially among deaf BSL users.
 - 2 Most discrimination is experienced while applying for jobs, with a focus by employers on disability and not ability at the interview stage.
 - 3 Organisations of and for disabled people have been found to be more supportive, accepting, flexible and empathetic than other employers. Rewards are high when diversity is seen as an asset, difference a source of validation and disability a mark of identity and pride.
- 7. Review of research on the role of external services in promoting employment of disabled people in the public sector**

There is a plethora of evaluations of government programmes that aim to support disabled people amongst others into work, such as evaluations of specialist disability services and New Deal programmes for unemployed and economically inactive people. Remarkably few report employment sector as a destination for programme participants who enter employment. Section 7.1 attempts to interpret employment destinations of participants in the New Deal for Disabled People. The main source of data on the role of external services is a survey of users of the Access to Work programme,

reported in section 7.2. Section 7.3 looks at the evidence relating to supported employment where a public sector body is the employer or initiator of the service.

7.1 The New Deal for Disabled People

Active help and encouragement to people receiving incapacity benefits to enter, re-enter or remain in employment is a key element of the Government's strategy to raise employment levels among disabled people. The New Deal for Disabled People Personal Adviser Service pilot was extensively evaluated (Loumidis et al., 2001), more so the current New Deal for Disabled People National Extension that has pilot status, and early findings from the various elements of that evaluation are synthesised by Stafford with others (2004). Data on the destinations of people entering paid employment after contact with the New Deal for Disabled People nationally extended programme are reported in terms of occupational position, and these data provide some clues that the public sector is an under-represented destination, given what we know from Chapter Three about the disabled public sector workforce. Stafford reports that participants entering employment were over twice as likely as employees at the national level to enter Elementary occupations (25 per cent compared with 12 per cent). Conversely, 15 per cent entered Managerial, Professional or Associate occupations compared to four in ten nationally (39 per cent). It must be noted here that recipients of incapacity benefits are not necessarily disabled according to the DDA definition.

7.2 The Access to Work programme

The Access to Work programme is designed for people who meet the DDA definition of disability and who need extra practical support to do a job. This Jobcentre Plus programme advises on solutions to disabled applicants' needs and helps with the costs of three broad types of support: physical and environmental aids and adaptations; human support on the job or in getting to work; and fares for travel to work. A GB survey, as representative of Access to Work users as is possible, was conducted by Thornton et al. (2001) in 2000.

Employment sector, drawing on respondents' selection from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) typology, was a main analytical variable and several interesting differences are reported between public sector users and users in the private and voluntary sectors combined.

It must first be noted that over nine out of ten people in that survey were already in paid work when they last applied to the programme for assistance, and nine in ten respondents were working as employees at the time of the research interview. Access to Work is in practice a programme that supports job retention. Research on the impact of Access to Work found that help with travel costs is particularly effective in sustaining employment, and help with the substantial costs of adaptations to premises and of support workers promotes both recruitment and retention (Thornton and Corden, 2002).

Turning to sector variations, the first striking finding from the survey by Thornton et al. (2001), bearing in mind that the public sector accounts for less than one in five jobs (Black et al. 2004), is that over half (53 per cent) of survey respondents were public sector employees. Of those, one in four worked in local government, 15 per cent in central government/civil service and only five per cent in a health authority or NHS Trust. This distribution is very different from what one would expect if Access to Work use were evenly distributed across the public sector (see Table 3.4 in Chapter Three) and suggests that Access to Work is more widely used in central government/the civil service than in other types of public sector organisation. Women users are more likely than men users to be public sector employees; this is not surprising, given the picture drawn in Chapter Three.

In the same survey, the types of support people got from Access to Work varied across the sectoral divide, though it is hard to know what to make of the variation. Employees in the public sector were more likely than those in the private and voluntary sector combined to have help with support workers and with aids and adaptations within the

workplace, while those in the private and voluntary sectors were more likely to have help with the costs of getting to work. However, Access to Work recipients can have more than one element of support (half had at least two) and employees in the private and voluntary sectors combined were somewhat more likely than those in the public sector to receive three or more different elements of Access to Work support.

Thornton et al. (2001) found public sector users were less impressed with their employers' involvement than those in the other two sectors combined. When asked to rate their employer's involvement in the process of obtaining support through Access to Work users in the public sector were twice as likely to say it was no better than 'fair', and a higher proportion of the private and voluntary sector respondents rated it as 'excellent'. The differences might be explained in part by the lower satisfaction among public sector employees with the time taken for the Access to Work support to be provided (it was rated 'poor' or 'very poor' by 40 per cent compared with 25 per cent in the combined private and voluntary sectors). It was clear from respondents' explanatory comments that employers were implicated in delays and that bureaucracy within public sector organisations was a factor.

Users in public sector organisations had lower opinions of Access to Work. They were less likely than users in the private and voluntary sectors combined to say the support agreed or arranged through Access to Work met their needs 'completely' or 'mostly' or to report that they could not work without Access to Work. Asked for an overall opinion of the programme based on their experience of using it, they were less likely than the combined private and voluntary sectors to rate it as better than 'fair'.

7.3 Supported employment services

A study by Beyer et al. (2003) is a source of views of disabled people, meeting the DDA definition, who are employed in the public sector in the very specific setting of a supported factory for disabled people.

This study of the net costs and individual benefits of the Supported Employment Programme (known as WORKSTEP since April 2001) included a postal survey of a representative sample of supported employees. They were employed either in a supported factory operated by Remploy (a public sector body according to Black, 2003), a local authority or a voluntary organisation, or in an open employment job supported by one of these bodies. Supported factories, and the organisations contracted to provide support in open employment jobs, employ staff to support disabled people in their jobs and help them develop as appropriate.

In the postal survey respondents in local authority and Remploy factories were the least satisfied with the support they received. Local authority and Remploy factories were rated less highly than voluntary body factories in all the aspects of supported employees' working lives asked about, especially in the interest of the job, learning new skills and becoming a quicker worker. When asked to speculate on their likely situation without their supported employment programme job, two thirds over all employment settings felt they would not now be in a paid job. The only significant difference here was a higher proportion of workers in Remploy factories feeling that they otherwise they would have got a paid job on their own.

The social firm is another type of employment setting for disabled people, some set up by public sector bodies. There is no universally agreed definition of a social firm, with debates over the necessity for full commercial viability as a criterion and over what minimum proportion of the workforce should be disabled people, or people with other disadvantages on the open labour market, so as to create an integrated work setting. Local authority social services departments and health trusts have been prominent among bodies establishing social firms, though it has been found that some such firms have sought to separate from their parent organisations (Secker et al., 2003), and indeed one article defines them as independent from the statutory services (Gosling and Cotterill, 2000). There are much

larger numbers of ‘emerging social firms’ and ‘potential social firms’; terms increasingly adopted for what previously might have been called sheltered or therapeutic workshops. Secker and her colleagues report from their qualitative study in late 2001 a common view among network coordinators working for Social Firms UK that health and social care agencies, along with voluntary agencies, at the time lacked both staff with the skills to develop business plans and the right organisational culture. Workers in social firms were not interviewed, because of the short duration of the study, and Secker and colleagues identify the worker experience as an area that would benefit from further research.

According to Secker et al. (2003) one aspect especially worth investigating is how far local authorities and other statutory organisations aiming to establish social firms meet the challenge of integrating genuine worker participation at all levels in social firms. Gosling and Cotterill (2002) give a detailed and damning account of the lack of participation by users, carers and staff in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project they evaluated. The consequences were very limited belief in, or commitment to, the project’s objectives and, along with other barriers, a perceived lack of change for the service users.

7.4 Conclusions

Despite the plethora of evaluations, there is remarkably little research that shows the employment sector of participants, disabled or not, who leave government programmes for work. Scrutiny of early findings from the evaluation of the New Deal for Disabled People national extension (the Job Broker service) suggests that the public sector may not be well represented as an employment destination.

The only good data on the role of external services in promoting employment of disabled people in the public sector come from a GB-wide survey of users of the Access to Work programme, that is, people who meet the DDA definition of disability. Key findings are as

follows.

- 5 Access to Work is used much more in the public than in the private and voluntary sectors, and particularly in central government.
- 6 Public sector users were somewhat more likely than others to have a bigger package of Access to Work supports but were less satisfied with the extent to which Access to Work met their needs.
- 7 Opinions on public sector employers' involvement in the process of getting Access to Work were less favourable, and public sector users were less satisfied than those in the other sectors with the time it took for the support to be provided.
- 8 Public sector users had a lower overall opinion of Access to Work than those in the private and voluntary sectors combined.

Evidence from public sector supported work settings is that:

- 1 Supported employees in local authority and Remploy supported factories (that is, in the Jobcentre Plus Supported Employment programme now known as WORKSTEP) were the least satisfied with the support they received, compared with those in voluntary sector businesses or in supported jobs with ordinary employers. They rated less highly especially the interest of the job, learning new skills and improvement of their pace of work.
- 2 There are suggestions that public bodies aiming to establish social firms need to develop genuine worker participation in the planning and implementation stages, and in monitoring.

8. Retrieval and review of unpublished documentation produced by public sector employing organisations

The research design recognised that public sector employer organisations were potentially important sources of unpublished documentation. The purpose of the enquiry was to identify effective policies and practices. Additional work was undertaken beyond that in

the original research design, as the material received initially was disappointing. The further work produced more material but evidence of effectiveness remained extremely limited.

The chapter details how documentation was retrieved from public sector employer organisations, and how that documentation evidences effectiveness. Section 8.1 outlines the aims, methods and contacts achieved. Section 8.2 quantifies the response and speculates on why it was limited. The types of material retrieved are briefly described in section 8.3. Section 8.4 considers the limited evidence on effectiveness. The final section (8.5) draws out general themes from the documents retrieved.

8.1 Aims and methods

The aim was to gather material that provided evidence of the effectiveness of public sector employers' approaches to recruitment, employment and retention of disabled people; examples of 'living' policy and practice documents known to be used effectively; and examples of effective workforce monitoring, audits, disability networks, consultations with disabled staff, disability awareness training and other employer-led interventions.

8.1.1 The nature of the public sector and sampling decisions

Both the diversity of organisations that comprise the public sector and the large number of organisations within sub-sectors posed a considerable challenge for a comprehensive review. Given the numbers involved, and the limited time and resources available for the study, a 100 per cent sample of public sector organisations was not possible. The options of a random sample and of direct approaches to sub-samples, having identified individuals to target through Internet searches and follow-up telephone calls, were considered. However, such strategies unavoidably would miss organisations with useful material.

The agreed strategy was to work in partnership with umbrella

organisations and organisations representing employers and staff in central government, local government, health, and further and higher educational sub-sectors. As the category 'public non-financial organisations' is extremely diverse and has no umbrella organisation, responses from this sub-sector were not specifically sought.

8.1.2 Requesting evidence

An initial working list of umbrella organisations to be approached with a request to circulate members, or other contacts, was drawn up and agreed. Subsequently the DRC provided supplemental lists and, in many cases, contact people within umbrella organisations.

Elsewhere, the researcher explored ways to identify the appropriate person within each organisation to approach.

Contact was begun with organisations on the list. Unfortunately, the identified person in some cases felt they were not the right person to be dealing with the request, and contact had to be established with a colleague, or sometimes with more than one. When an initial contact had been made by telephone, or in a small number of cases identified by other people, primarily DRC staff, an appropriately tailored email was sent which introduced the review and the material sought.

Umbrella bodies contacted were expected to act as a conduit to their member or contact organisations, getting them to respond directly to the researcher if they had material. In some instances the umbrella or representative organisations might themselves have had relevant material to offer.

In the light of a lack of response and disappointing material received initially, it was agreed that a more direct approach should be taken in trying to elicit documentation from public sector employers. A revised contact email was created. This was sent to all those who had already contributed, most of whom also had been approached with a supplemental enquiry about evidence of effectiveness. It was also sent to all contacts made thereafter, as well as to contacts being chased up. The revised email was more explicit about types of

evidence of effectiveness sought.

Documents requested included policy and practice documents that had been used, and were known to be used effectively, such as:

- 1 information for job applicants
- 2 recruitment and selection policies
- 3 dignity at work policies and similar
- 4 equality and diversity policies
- 5 reasonable adjustment or retention policies
- 6 sickness absence management policies and guidance for managers
- 7 staff handbooks and guidelines
- 8 staff networks covering disability
- 9 disability training programmes and resources.

In addition evidence of effectiveness was asked for, which might have come in the form of:

- 1 workforce monitoring with year on year comparison
- 2 recruitment monitoring with year on year comparison
- 3 workplace and working practice audits, general perhaps in conjunction with a service audit, or more specific such as a mental health audit
- 4 reports of consultations with disabled staff
- 5 staff satisfaction surveys generally
- 6 evaluation of disability awareness or equality training
- 7 European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model and Diversity Excellence Model assessments.

Initial feedback was that the revised approach made it easier for organisations to understand the nature of the documentation sought. The suggestions of documents that might provide evidence of effectiveness were, in the main, drawn from the documents already sent and from pointers within the documentation but were also derived from the researcher's knowledge of the public sector.

At this stage of the research, rather than asking for a broadcast request, the researcher specifically sought ideas about, and introductions to, employers within the umbrella organisations' remit who were known to be active in relation to disability. Most of those contacted with this request were specialists within equality and diversity. A few additional employers were identified as a result.

Additional avenues were exploited including making a public plea, and networking for contacts, at a consultation event focusing on the forthcoming public sector duty.

Although not within the agreed scheme of work, in efforts to encourage organisations to provide documentation it proved essential to speak directly to a number of public sector employers, and often to more than one individual in that organisation.

8.1.3 Contacts achieved

A total of 31 umbrella, or similar, organisations were contacted. These were primarily trade unions and employer organisations. However, a number of enquiries were also directed to government departments, in the three countries concerned, to identify any good practice employers they might be aware of as well as giving them an opportunity to identify their own department if appropriate. A few contacts, particularly if they had a specific disability focus, proved extremely useful in stimulating responses from their members or organisations they represented. Some emailed their whole, or appropriate, membership. However, even these provided a limited percentage response. One organisation emailed 147 of its public sector members, a breakdown of which, by main area of activity, covered the whole sector. This organisation sent a second follow up email, with the revised request, to all those initially emailed. The members who responded and produced material amounted to just under four per cent of those emailed. Other than through four key organisations, responses were minimal or non-existent.

The spread of material gathered was supplemented through Web searches of sites for organisations that had been identified, but may or may not have responded. For instance, trawling the Web gained a number of insights into statistics for organisations whose documents had already been received.

8.2 Response

Overall, the response was disappointing. In total documents were received, or acquired via the Web, from 22 employers. A few organisations promised information but it was not forthcoming within the timescale.

It must be borne in mind that this was a literature review. The request was for pre-existing material. More in depth questioning of individual employers would almost certainly have revealed additional evidence in a number of cases, but this was not within the research remit.

8.2.1 Reasons for lack of response

In navigating organisations, and speaking to employers and those representing them, a number of possible reasons for a lack of response were voiced, or might be implied, in addition to just not having been put in touch with the right organisations.

Limited awareness in umbrella organisations

It seems that there was limited knowledge within umbrella organisations of what members or networks were doing around disability. Disability equality and the employment of disabled people generally appeared not to be seen as a key business issue. In the second stage of the trawl, where umbrella organisations were asked specifically for contacts with employers whom they felt could provide useful material, very few contacts were given. From these, extremely limited evidence of significant activity, let alone effectiveness, was found.

Little evidence about effectiveness

It may be that there were not significant numbers of employers to be found where evidence on effectiveness was available, even to back up seemingly good policies and practice, and that is why response was limited. Certainly, it was clear from those organisations that did respond with documents that robust measuring or evidence of effectiveness was limited. Moreover, beliefs that evidence existed were not always borne out. For example, one organisation identified as a potential source of effective practice did not respond to the request for detailed information and, on exploring their website, it became clear that their percentage employment statistics for disabled employees were not above average.

Organisational and policy change

Of those employers spoken to, one known to have been doing a significant amount on disability, and we believe effectively, declined to contribute due to organisational changes that were underway. Others were clearly just introducing new policies, procedures and strategies, and proof of effectiveness would not have been possible.

It was clear that a number of employers were focused particularly on the changes to the Disability Discrimination Act being introduced on 1 October 2004. This appeared especially true in those uniformed services that were having to respond to the extension of employment rights. Responding to the new physical rights in relation to access to services was also concerning many.

Level of, and confidence in, activity

There was clearly a strong response in some organisations to other diversity issues, although not necessarily all the same ones. Disability appeared for many a strand that had yet to be fully responded to. In addition, some organisations felt that sending information would not be useful as they were 'not doing any more than anyone else'. Without seeing their documents this would have been hard to judge

but, bearing in mind the variability of the material received, it may have meant some useful information was not gathered.

Lack of strategic awareness

It was clear, from the way in which people in some organisations responded on the telephone, and from the documentation selected by some to send through, that few had a strategic view of an organisational impact on disabled people's employment. It seems that no organisation sent a complete picture. In a number of organisations race was clearly an issue where strategic thinking was taking place.

8.3 Types of material retrieved

A significant number of documents were sent electronically, for which the researcher had expressed a preference, and a few sent copies by mail. Much of the time the Internet was referred to.

The documentation received for each organisation was different. Some employers sent only disability specific documents; others focused on mainstream. One sent an information pack for job applicants and a small selection of other documents. From networking enquiries it seems this may have been a fairly effective employer, but the volume of information was insufficient to assess this. As already said, it is unlikely that a complete picture from any one employer was achieved.

The detail of the documents varied considerably, from a collection of one to three page statements with a slightly longer recruitment and selection policy; to detailed but concise documents around 30 pages in length; to weightier documents of over 100 pages; to over 1,000 pages of intranet printouts and supporting documents from a government department, including an interactive learning pack. One higher education sector employer, the Open University, sent a DVD and a video, and a Civil Service employer sent a range of published material, mainly from the Employers' Forum on Disability or Jobcentre Plus, to distribute to staff.

A number of documents received were clearly very new or, indeed, still in draft form.

8.4 Practices and evidence of effectiveness

The review failed to draw out any significant level of documentation that evidenced effectiveness. There were, however, some examples that, in the light of the researcher's knowledge of existing good practice, might have been evidenced as effective practice if more monitoring or evaluation had been undertaken or, in the case of new policies, once use had been embedded.

There were some clear examples of disability projects which had been seen as needed but had not, in the event, yet come to fruition. One was a disabled staff audit, the other a register of reasonable adjustments. This may be indicative of the priority given to this area of work.

Some element of monitoring or staff consultation evidence was acquired for 17 of the 22 organisations. There were also reports of use of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme and of staff training but with no evidence of their effectiveness. In addition there were very limited reports of external accreditations.

There was little or no opportunity for comparison between organisations, because of the diverse nature of the evidence acquired. Responses came from across the public sector. There was no evidence that any part of the public sector stood out as being more effective than any other.

8.4.1 Monitoring

One employer had detailed analysis, comparing disability with other equality issues. Its employment figures did not provide any year on year comparisons and it was hard to see how this data could be simply and effectively used to improve the employment of disabled people. It might have evidenced effective retention policies, as no

disabled leavers were recorded, but with a four per cent ill health retirement figure, this could have been misleading. The figures certainly did not evidence effective recruitment policies around disabled people.

The recruitment figures for another organisation showed an even poorer situation with disabled people comprising 2.15 per cent of applicants, but only 1.75 per cent of those short-listed and 0.77 per cent of those appointed.

Two employers had set clear targets for improving numbers of disabled employees. These were, in neither case, yet achieved. However, one had made significant progress, although their target appeared on the conservative side. A footnote states 'The target set for disability is five per cent of the staff population. The local census shows around 18 per cent of the population have a long-term chronic health problem or disability.'

One employer sent 30 months' figures. Although these showed some of the strongest percentage figures for the employment of disabled people, even these appeared to indicate a reducing effectiveness with a generally falling percentage of the workforce being returned as disabled people over the last two years. For three organisations two years of monitoring figures were attained, but none showed any significant increase or movement towards any indicated target. One employer sent what appeared to be two years' figures, but on analysis one document related to the overall workforce and the other to recruitment and selection, effectively for the same period. There was no comparison therefore available to provide evidence of whether the organisation's position, in relation to the employment of disabled people, was improving or not.

Perhaps the strongest figures found were for an NHS trust, South West and St George's Mental Health Trust. Its Website revealed that 20 per cent of staff have themselves experienced mental ill health,

and its February 2003 Commission for Health Improvement report stated:

The trust is actively promoting workforce diversity. For example, 33% of the staff employed in deaf services are deaf and 74% of staff have achieved the British Sign Language level 1 course. A scheme to increase access to employment within the trust for people who have experienced mental health problems has been successfully implemented. Approximately 20% of staff recruited last year had personal experience of mental health problems. The scheme is supported by the user employment programme support team and the occupational health service to gain and sustain employment within the trust.

The Employment Action File produced by the Employers' Forum on Disability (Employers' Forum on Disability, 2004) as a practical guide to monitoring disability in the workforce sets out much of the good practice sought in this study. Case studies in that publication come almost exclusively from the private sector but, even there, examples of monitoring evidencing effectiveness of action are limited.

8.4.2 Staff consultation and involvement

One government employer had undertaken a detailed staff survey. Although in many respects disabled staff's feedback was similar to that of their non-disabled colleagues, in a number of places it differed significantly and not favourably. An example was that disabled staff were 17.6 per cent more likely than average to report a refusal of a training request.

A higher education employer had employed disabled consultants to look at their work in this area. A disabled employee survey had been undertaken. Again there were many points where disabled staff did not feel they were disadvantaged. However, there were also serious problems highlighted ranging from unsatisfactory line management and bullying, to poor communication and provision of support available.

One NHS employer had undertaken an extensive staff consultation. Although it revealed limited areas of current good practice, it appears to have been an effective way of producing an agenda for them to take forward to improve their provision for disabled employees, or potential employees, as well as patients.

One local government employer had some extremely promising looking policies in place. The policies were firmly based on an equality approach, comprehensive in their coverage, written in clear language, and included, for instance, a well formed disability leave policy. On querying whether proof of effectiveness was available, the researcher was informed that an employee survey two years previously had provided a substantially poorer response on satisfaction among disabled employees than among their non-disabled colleagues. This had led to work being undertaken including the setting up of an employee network. Subsequent evidence on effectiveness is not yet available.

There were four employers who volunteered that they had, or were setting up, employee networks. No evidence of effectiveness was offered, although the Open University, which had good illustrative material of employee experience, also had a well-established network.

8.4.3 Guaranteed interviews

A significant number of employers operated the Guaranteed Interview Scheme. However, most policies showed, or allowed for, confusion around how this should be achieved.

The University of Sunderland had an exemplary “Recruitment Cover Note”, a front sheet for job application bundles sent to those short-listing, that told them whether any of the applicants were disabled and, if they were, what steps to take once they had completed their short-listing. It was clear from this that they should have been able to

operate the system effectively. No evidence was offered to demonstrate this, save that we understand that informal feedback indicates that the guidance and system are clear to the managers using them and have been well received.

The Metropolitan Police sent an extremely good set of guidance notes on the recruitment and retention of disabled staff. They contain clear instructions on how a guaranteed interview scheme should be appropriately assessed. Unfortunately there was no supporting evidence of effectiveness, although another document from an external source contained an illustration of the effective adjustments made for an employee with dyslexia.

8.4.4 Staff training

A considerable number of employers appeared to deal with disability within more general diversity training. To a significant extent it seemed to be included as part of induction training. Some referred to Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) training within recruitment and selection training. There was some evidence of others who were running equality based disability specific training but no evidence of effectiveness. Similarly, although no evaluation is available, the Employers' Forum on Disability interactive pack 'Making Your Organisation Disability Confident' (Employers' Forum on Disability, 2003), used and supported by the Department for Work and Pensions, appears to be a potentially useful training tool.

The Open University had produced a video and DVD that portrayed disabled staff talking about their issues in a realistic and useful way, to illustrate how other staff needed to respond. However, no evidence of effectiveness was offered.

8.4.5 Adjustments

Little other than general guidance on reasonable adjustments was found, but one employer, Derby City Council, had developed a third party support process through its equality standards project manager

for staff requiring adjustments. Another local government employer had a retention and redeployment policy, which gave some details of adjustments.

8.4.6 External evidence

External evidence that might indicate effectiveness was available for a limited number of organisations. A few indicated inspection reports that might have been fruitful sources of evidence but it was not possible to follow them all up. The Commission for Health Improvement report has already been mentioned. The only external award found, save from the Disability Symbol referred to below, was a national diversity award but the focus was on gender and ethnicity, not disability. Having been pointed to their Best Value review information on the Web, this failed to provide any evidence of significant effective work in the area of disability being undertaken by this employer, although it was there for race and gender.

There was one externally undertaken audit. This was of mental health support and it did not clearly identify effective practice. Indeed, it flagged up some significant issues for the organisation that would need to be addressed.

A significant number of employers appeared to look on the Jobcentre Plus Disability (2 Ticks) Symbol as an award and a significant assessment. One, for instance, reported that they had retained it since 1996, but they had no other monitoring or evidence of effectiveness that they could offer. They had been recommended as the leader in their area and category, by their umbrella organisation. One organisation provided a copy of their review from Jobcentre Plus, but this was not a detailed enough document from which to form any conclusions.

8.4.7 A strategic approach

A draft disability equality scheme was received from one local government employer, the Greater London Authority. The

consultation period has ended and the scheme is due to be published shortly. The scheme covered disability across all the functions of the authority. It indicated further strategic documents would be developed and was already supplemented by an extensive Equalities Toolkit (2002).

8.5 Commentary on documents retrieved

There appeared to be no consistent way in which public sector employers deal with disability, as a policy issue. Some employers had detailed guidance on disability in employment; others had broad statements and appeared to rely on mainstream policies. From the material retrieved, reliance on mainstream policies did not appear generally as helpful as it might have been. No employer seemed to have the evidence of effectiveness to indicate an overall strategy that worked.

In general, policies gave basic guidance, most of which was correct although there was the occasional place where advice was, at the least, debateable. However, they were perhaps not innovative enough to ensure that edge needed to achieve effective change. One employer, for instance, had a separate policy about employing disabled people that, on the face of it, looked positive. However, on closer analysis it in practice allowed for too much subjectivity and stereotyping in recruitment practice. There was a possibility it could have led to blanket exclusions.

There were examples of disability policies that were thorough in their coverage, for instance, of recruitment practice and potential adjustments. However, there was a failure to link these effectively with the mainstream policies. In some cases the disability policies were almost 'stand alone', leading to a danger for disability to be seen as different and not mainstream.

A limited number of mainstream equality and diversity policies were received. These clearly did include disability. The policies themselves

were of varying detail, but one in particular, from a higher education establishment, talked of 'people with impairments' and was clearly approaching disability from an equality perspective.

Bullying and harassment policies are examples of where disability may feature fleetingly. However, there is insufficient detail or illustration to assist those with little or no experience of disability to understand the potential problems. Bullying and harassment are not often acknowledged as significant disability issues, and even those familiar with disability find them hard to envisage.

There was one example of disability featuring prominently in an appraisal policy. This was not very helpful as it was presented negatively, as if management and those appraising should expect problems. Another employer had a clear policy on interview procedure for disabled job applicants, but this was generally relevant to everyone, and needed to be applied to all interviewees, not just disabled people.

Disability, sickness and long-term ill health were dealt with in positive policies by two employers who had established disability leave, although one did not specifically single it out as such. Unfortunately here there was nothing identifiable to support effectiveness, although it may well be available.

There was a tendency for documentation to be theoretical. Many of the documents detailed the requirements of the DDA and of good practice in employment issues, in very bald terms, often taken straight from legislation or other guidance. There was a lack of explanation and illustration tying it in to the real experience of disabled staff and their colleagues, or disabled job seekers, though the video and DVD mentioned in section 8.4.5 above were exceptions.

There were a number of policies where the issue of disclosure of an

employee's 'disability' was covered. However, it was clear that many were not at all clear on the boundaries. This was particularly true in recruitment and selection policies. It seems that misleading information is being given in many cases. Some policies appeared to indicate that there were occasions when details of an employee's 'disability', or the reason for making a reasonable adjustment could be disclosed to third parties – a line manager, work colleagues – without the consent of the disabled person. Very clear guidance and procedures need to be in place, and they were not evident.

Very few employers clearly took an equality (social model) approach to disability. Even where this appeared to be the intention, documents did not provide evidence of an embedded understanding of the implications. There was also very limited evidence of the consideration of those with more hidden impairments, such as mental health, learning difficulties or continence issues. For instance, explanations of the reasonable adjustment 'training' did not generally identify any possible need for additional or different training,

A number of the policies indicated review dates that, it appeared, had not been met.

8.6 External resources and partnerships

As indicated earlier a significant number of employers were signed up, or aspired to signing up, to the Jobcentre Plus Disability (2 Ticks) Symbol. Almost all employers offered information, of varying detail, on the Access to Work programme, and a more limited number on the role of the Disability Employment Advisor and other Jobcentre Plus programmes such as the Job Introduction Scheme.

A number were members of the Employers' Forum on Disability and drew heavily on their literature in particular. The Equality Challenge Unit, which has recently produced 'Employing Disabled People in Higher Education: Guidelines' (Equality Challenge Unit, 2004), appeared a key resource for that sector.

Some were members of formal or less formal disability, equality or diversity networks, in particular email lists. A small number worked, to a greater or lesser extent with disability projects, particularly with charities, around disabled people's employment, but no specific evidence of the effectiveness of these partnerings was offered. Otherwise, apart from two in the higher education sector that had used external disability consultants or trainers, there were few examples of external resources being drawn on.

8.7 Conclusions

The call for documented examples of effective policies and practices, conducted mainly via umbrella and representative organisations, produced a disappointingly low response and very limited evidence of effectiveness. It is acknowledged that there were limitations in the research method used, and in umbrella organisations' and employers' capacity to respond to the request. There are, however, indications of limited awareness among umbrella organisations of what their members are doing, uncertainty among public sector employers about whether they are doing anything special, a lack of an organisation-wide strategic view. It is possible that documented evidence of effectiveness is not widespread.

Many employers were only just beginning to look at monitoring and understanding the effectiveness of their policies. There was, exceptionally, some evidence of progress with employment targets. One example was found, in an NHS trust, of active promotion of workplace diversity resulting in high levels of recruitment of staff with personal experience of mental health problems. There was some evidence of staff surveys leading to an agenda to improve provision for prospective and existing disabled employees, including setting up an employee network.

Significant importance is attached to 'being awarded' the Jobcentre Plus Disability Symbol as a form of external accreditation. The

system of assessment does not appear to maximise the potential for improving employment opportunities that this reputation offers.

From the documents retrieved there were examples of good disability policies but also of failures to link them effectively with mainstream policies. There was a tendency for a lack of explanation and illustration to tie theoretical statements to the real experiences of disabled people and their colleagues. The view of disability was sometimes limited.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) asked the Social Policy Research Unit and Equal Ability to conclude the review by:

- 1 evaluating the evidence on 'what works' in the recruitment, promotion and retention of disabled people in the public sector and on the key factors that contribute to effective policy and practice
- 2 providing some recommendations to the DRC on taking forward development work in the light of the extension of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and the proposed statutory duty on the public sector to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other people
- 3 identifying gaps in knowledge to inform further research.

9.1 What works?

Given the scarcity of research addressing public sector employment of disabled people it is hard to identify 'what works'.

In a number of respects the public sector appears from employer surveys to work better than the private sector: likelihood of employing and recruiting disabled staff; possibly somewhat more inclusive interpretations of 'disability'; awareness of the DDA; having a formal policy covering employment of disabled people; and making, or being willing to make, adjustments for disabled staff and citing the law as a

reason for making changes. Moreover, the risk of leaving employment after becoming disabled (DDA defined) is lower in the public than in other industrial sectors.

It has been shown that some of these factors interact. The most recent, most sophisticated employer survey analysis (Roberts et al., 2004) identified the factors associated with having employed disabled staff at the workplace level: overall awareness of Part II of the DDA; having a policy for disabled employees and applicants; and workplace size. Although we cannot take for granted a causal relationship, it is reasonable to suppose that awareness of the DDA and having an employment policy are part of the explanation, as well as size, for being able to identify having employed disabled staff. There is otherwise no research evidence on ‘what works’, except that the Access to Work programme appears to be effective in meeting needs and enabling disabled people to work. We have shown that Access to Work users are over-represented in public sector jobs.

One dimension when thinking about ‘what works’ is the extent of equality between disabled and non-disabled employees within the public sector. It is encouraging that Chapter Three found no or only small differences in certain respects. The disparities in earnings and in occupying the more senior positions require investigation, however.

Another dimension is the quality of employment experienced by disabled public sector workers. Research evidence is extremely limited but there are some striking findings of significantly lower levels of job satisfaction among disabled compared with non-disabled social care workers.

9.2 DRC action on the public sector duty to promote equality of opportunity

At the time of writing, Government was consulting on the extension of the DDA to functions of public authorities, and on the introduction of a statutory duty on them to promote equality of opportunity for disabled

people (Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 2004). This section outlines what is involved and considers the implications in the light of the findings of this review.

9.2.1 The proposed public duty and the DRC role

It is anticipated that once the Bill has passed through Parliament the Disability Rights Act will impose a general duty on public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and harassment, and to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons by improving opportunities for disabled individuals.

The Act is expected to give the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and Ministers in Scotland, powers to use regulations to impose specific duties on public authorities. Specified public bodies would be required to publish a disability equality scheme with an action plan that sets out how the body will fulfil its duties in relation to disabled employees, disabled service users and disabled people generally. The action plan would cover the following three years and, subject to the outcome of the consultation, public bodies would be expected to report annually on progress. The disability equality scheme might be subsumed within a single equality scheme (covering race, gender and disability), be combined over time with a race equality scheme or stand alone.

The disability equality scheme would:

- 1 Demonstrate that disabled people had been involved in drawing up the scheme and setting priorities for the action plan; in relation to disabled employees a staff network group might be used, for example.
- 2 Set out how the impact on disabled people of existing and proposed activities will be assessed.
- 3 Set out arrangements to gather and analyse evidence in order to track progress and update the action plan, such as measures of recruitment, retention and career development of disabled staff and potential employees. Subject to the outcome of the

consultation, public bodies would be required to publish an annual report on the results of their monitoring activities.

Under the Act, after consultation on their content the DRC would be allowed to issue Codes of Practice on the specific duties, as well as on the general duty to promote equality and on any aspect of the extension of the DDA to functions of a public nature. In addition central government departments, and advisory and inspection bodies, would be expected to use their disability equality schemes, *inter alia*, to advise other public bodies on developing their schemes and monitoring arrangements.

Accordingly, it is important for the DRC, central government departments and advisory and inspection bodies to understand what public sector employers are currently doing and to develop ways of helping them to fulfil their new obligations under the law.

9.2.2 The public sector duty in the context of the review findings

The consultation document (Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 2004) identifies areas in which public authority employers might develop: human resource policies that recognise and include the diverse needs of disabled people; further staff training to embed disability equality within the entire organisation; reaching an understanding of the DDA definition of disability; and designing regular workplace surveys in a way that enables staff to disclose that they have an impairment. The evidence from this review indicates that these aspects of practice are under-developed.

Policies

As already noted, having a policy relating to disabled people is a factor associated with having disabled employees. It is widely reported that a small minority of employers have policies dedicated to disabled people. As observed in Chapter Eight, there is a danger that separate disability policies are seen as ‘stand alone’, with disability perceived as something different, and not linked effectively to

mainstream policies.

Involving disabled staff

Surveys of, and consultations with, disabled staff are key to understanding how organisations are taking forward their commitment to promoting equality. Employer surveys reported in Chapter Four and the trawl for evidence of effectiveness from public sector employers reported in Chapter Eight offer few indications of the involvement of disabled people in the design and development of employment practices affecting them. It should be noted that no survey asked this specific question and it is recommended that future surveys should do so; asking the question would raise awareness.

Training and awareness raising

Staff training on disability, where it exists, has been found to be part of equal opportunities training. It was exceptional in the review of documentation from public sector employers to find training materials that offered a realistic and useful guide to staff on how to respond.

A message that emerges from the research on disabled people's experiences in the public sector is the need to raise co-workers' and managers' awareness of disability. One potentially successful approach to recruitment and employment is to value the experience of being a disabled person that people bring to the job, and in some settings to specify that as prerequisite for the job.

Monitoring

It is clear from employer surveys that employers across sectors were not monitoring representation of disabled people in their workforces. The organisation-based survey reported by Stuart et al. (2002) found only six per cent of respondents saying they had 'a formal written policy on the employment of people with disabilities' and under one in four of those said their policy included monitoring. In the same study, very few of the 50 case study organisations had formal systems to monitor the number of disabled applicants.

Employers have been found to be wary of the paperwork, uncertain how they would use monitoring information and questioning of its value, although they would welcome guidance (Roberts et al., 2004). There is increasing activity to promote monitoring. The Cabinet Office, for instance, recently worked with the Department for Work and Pensions to pilot a revised disability monitoring questionnaire for the Civil Service.

The issue of disclosure is one that has vexed employers as well as disabled staff. Guidance may need to assist the setting of realistic targets bearing in mind the fact that it is almost certain, whatever encouragement is given, all disabled people will not declare as such.

Need for further investigation

Further investigation of effective practice will be needed, and we recommend this be done through for instance:

- 1 existing equality and diversity networks including disability networks (possibly liaising with the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality to build a comprehensive list)
- 2 award winners such as NHS quality awards and diversity awards
- 3 assessment and accreditation systems such as Commission for Health Investment, Best Value, Disability Symbol, and Investors in People.

9.3 Issues in promoting the new public sector duty

The first challenge for the DRC is to inform public sector bodies about their new duty and what good practice looks like. Our work outlined in Chapter Eight suggests that employers use networks in the equality and diversity fields, and the research review found members of professional forums found them useful for gathering information.

The media was generally identified in the surveys and case studies as being employers' main source of information about disability and in

raising awareness. Here there is a role for the DRC to ensure that the media portray research findings accurately. The internet was the preferred way for staff actively seeking information about the DDA and on disability-related topics.

There was little spontaneous mention of the DRC as a source of information, and one possibility put forward by the authors of the most recent study is for the DRC to ‘... establish and market a dedicated service specifically to help employers and service providers comply with the Act’ (Roberts et al., 2004: 128). Roulstone et al. (2003) recorded from their interviews with disabled workers the view that the Disability Rights Commission could take a more active role as a key player in policy making, specifically with regard to providing education and liaising with other key policy making organisations in order to improve disabled people's employment opportunities.

The introduction of a requirement to have a strategic approach to disability should bring some consistency into the way employers respond to their responsibilities. It is clear that there is currently an extremely low baseline in this respect. An issue here is whether to target specific types of personnel with promotional material. There is an argument for targeting human resources staff given the surprisingly limited understanding among them found in the study by Stuart et al. (2002). On the other hand, as Stuart and his colleagues imply, a narrow concentration of responsibility for disability policy on HR staff could be to the detriment of a more integrative organisational approach that binds together a policy covering both employment and service provision.

It will be important for the DRC to understand what motivates public sector employers to change. Case study research with mainly private sector employers that were also service providers found that the DDA was often not the main driver; rather, employers referred to general business benefit, the reputation and standing of the business and

'moral obligations' (Stuart et al., 2002: 64).

As in previous studies, findings by Roberts et al. (2004) indicate continuing and widespread levels of misunderstanding, prejudice and myth on both the subject of disability and the actual experience of employing disabled people. For many people, disability is still identified with visible and physical impairment, and the lowest levels of knowledge continue to be represented in the area of mental illness. This suggests that the government and DRC need to take steps to counter these prejudices, actively campaigning to educate the public about disability in general and legislation on disability in particular, specifically promoting awareness of which conditions are included under the Act and helping to dispel myths about employing disabled people.

9.4 Future research to meet gaps in knowledge

In this section we first explain three ways in which further analysis of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) can add to the basic picture presented in Chapters Two and Three. We then consider some of deficits and gaps in the available published research and suggest some ways forward.

9.4.1 Further analysis of the Labour Force Survey

The LFS provides a rich source of data and analysis for understanding the employment experiences of disabled people and monitoring outcomes. This report has drawn on LFS datasets to examine recent trends in public sector employment as they affect disabled people, and describe their working patterns. The exploratory analyses reported in Chapters Two and Three used key variables to provide a broad quantitative description of the employment of disabled people in the public sector; they also form a foundation for further inquiry.

We have identified three, potentially fruitful avenues for further exploration of the LFS, and this section briefly describes in turn

multivariate analysis, comparisons with other employment sectors, and longitudinal analysis.

Multivariate analysis

The analysis described in Chapter Three examined various aspects of public sector employment in turn, drawing comparisons between disabled and non-disabled people. Differences between them were occasionally investigated further by gender and age, and some associations between disabled people's employment circumstances were also explored (for example, qualifications, earnings, hours worked, and job-related training by public sector organisation or occupational position).

Although these associations draw attention to the diversity of disabled people's public sector employment, and are suggestive of the disadvantages they might experience, there is considerable scope for more detailed investigations. Disabled and non-disabled people differ in many respects other than disability, and these differences need to be taken into account to distinguish their employment experiences.

This is a role for multivariate analysis, which makes it possible to examine the effect of each factor on employment outcomes while controlling for the effects of other factors. Multivariate analysis can also help identify the more important factors, and how these vary across sub-groups within the disabled population. Pay differentials between disabled and non-disabled people working in the public sector should be a priority for further analysis by multivariate methods. Multivariate analysis would also be required when comparing the employment experiences of disabled people working in the public and non-public sectors of the economy, as discussed below.

Comparisons with other employment sectors

This report has focused on the employment of disabled people in the public sector; however, most disabled people work in the private and independent sectors, including self-employment. As Table 2.1 shows

(in Chapter Two), an estimated 804,000 working age disabled people worked in the public sector in spring 2003. They comprise no more than 25 per cent of all disabled people of working age who were in paid employment at that time (estimated at 3,273,000 from the LFS). It seems likely that disabled people's employment experiences and working patterns vary between organisations located in the public and private sector. Comparisons of disabled people's employment situations across different sectors of the economy would provide a wider context within which to evaluate and interpret findings related to the public sector.

As an example, consider recent trends in disabled people's employment. Preliminary analysis of the LFS shows that the number of disabled people working in non-public sector employment grew from around 2,065,000 in 1998/99 to around 2,429,000 in 2002/03, an increase of 364,000 or 18 per cent over the four-year period. This rate of growth is identical to the estimated rate of growth in the number of disabled people working in the public sector (19 per cent shown in Table 2.1). On the face of it, these findings suggest that factors common to both sectors will account for some of the recent employment growth among disabled people.

Over the same period, disabled women's employment grew faster in the public sector employment than in the non-public sector: 24 per cent and 15 per cent respectively. By comparison, disabled men's employment grew fastest in the non-public sector: 20 per cent compared with 11 per cent in the public sector. These findings provide further evidence of gender mediating the impact of public sector expansion on disabled people's employment. Comparisons of the employment situations of disabled people engaged in similar kinds of work, but employed in different sectors, would open up further lines of inquiry.

Longitudinal analysis

The findings reported in Chapters Two and Three are based on

cross-sectional analyses of data from the LFS, and provide snapshot pictures of disabled people's employment in the public sector during particular periods of time (whether averaged over a particular quarter, or across several quarterly periods). This approach offers a limited basis for understanding their changing needs and circumstances, the transitions between different employment situations, and the factors associated with particular outcomes. Thus, the examination of disabled people's employment situation 12 months earlier (reported in Section 2.3) was hampered by not knowing whether they would have been previously defined by the LFS as disabled. Similarly, the trends analysis (reported in Chapter Two) could estimate only net changes in the number of disabled people employed in the public sector, and these are likely to be relatively small compared with the gross flows into and out of that sector.

Longitudinal analysis of LFS datasets is also possible. The LFS sample is based on a panel design in which individuals are interviewed five times at quarterly intervals. By linking together data on the same individual from consecutive interviews, information can be obtained about changes in their circumstances, and the duration, sequence and timing of events. Two longitudinal datasets are available from the LFS, linking two and five consecutive interview waves respectively. They include people of working age who responded at each of the waves. Following her review and analysis of five-wave panels, which link individuals over a twelve-month period, Burchardt (2003) concluded that the LFS is the preferred dataset for investigating short-run employment dynamics.

Two longitudinal studies of the five-panel datasets are proposed, focusing on the dynamics of public sector employment and the impact on employment of onset of disability respectively.

1 Dynamics of public sector employment

The aim here would be to analyse movements between the public sector, other employment sectors, unemployment and economic

inactivity. A further aim would be to investigate changes in individuals' employment circumstances within the public sector. Estimates of flows between the main economic activity and inactivity categories, and between public sector organisations, would provide insight into the choices and opportunities in employment that disabled people have, and how these compare with those of non-disabled people. Monitoring changes in individuals' circumstances over time would provide the information to construct a typology of employment trajectories, including recruitment and progression, and explore their implications for disabled people. These analyses would be based on respondents who are identified by the LFS as disabled or not disabled at all five interview waves.

2 Onset of disability

The aim here would be to replicate and extend the investigation by Burchardt (2003) on employment retention and the onset of disability. As already reported in Chapter Five (Section 5.4), she defined the public sector by combining industry divisions covering Public administration and defence, Education, Health and social work, and Other community, social and personal work. Burchardt found that employees in this 'public' division had a significantly lower risk of leaving employment following onset of disability compared with those working in other industry divisions.

Replication of Burchardt's analysis would complement and extend her findings in two directions. First, it would use the LFS preferred measure of public sector employment (as defined in Section 2.1) to explore the impact of different organisations within that sector on retention rates following onset of disability. This would require a larger sample than was available to Burchardt, but additional five-wave longitudinal datasets are now in the public domain. Secondly, charting time trends in retention rates, between employing organisations and sectors, across successive longitudinal datasets from spring 1998 onwards, would provide a useful yardstick for monitoring the employment experiences of disabled people, and evaluating the impact of recent and emerging policies and practices

towards disabled people.

9.4.2 Overcoming deficits and gaps in research

Throughout the review of the published literature we have pointed to the scarcity of literature that focuses on disabled people and the public sector. Hopefully this will change with the introduction of the public sector duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, including disabled staff and potential employees.

In future research, particularly in surveys among employers and disabled people, it will be important to consider how to categorise the ‘public sector’. There is a role for the DRC here, to promote a preferred classification system (such as that used in the LFS) and influence the government departments who commission such surveys. Similarly, future surveys should use a standardised sub-classification of the public sector.

Drawing overall conclusions from employer surveys has been dogged not only by the often limited attention to public sector as an analytical variable but also by important differences between surveys. Surveys have used different question wording, taken place at the level of the overall employing organisation or of the workplace, and variously interviewed human resources managers and line managers. (See Meager in Goldstone (2002) for a discussion of obstacles to making comparisons of employer survey findings in this field.) Consistency is required if the impact of the public duty is to be tracked over time.

A further deficit relates to evaluations of programmes that aim to help disabled people move into work. We noted in Chapter Seven that the New Deal for Disabled People evaluation does not capture the industrial sector of programme participants who take up employment. This is true too of research on other New Deals, where substantial proportions of participants are disabled people (one in three in New Deal 25 Plus).

There continues to be a need for research that explores what actually

happens within employing organisations. For example, how are policies put into practice: who uses them, in what circumstances and to what effects? Is there a mismatch between what is set down on paper and day-to-day practice? Some disabled people have questioned whether written policies are acted upon to support job retention, for example (Barnes et al., 1998). To answer questions such as these, and to establish what leads to change, it would be necessary to take account of the perspectives and experiences of disabled and non-disabled staff in different positions within employing organisations.

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Appendix A

Additional Tables

Table A.2.1 Estimated number of working age people in public sector employment, England, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

							Change
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	
Women							0

Disabled	334	365	376	391	446	434	
Not disabled	2617	2586	2675	2764	2744	2749	
Total	2951	2951	3051	3155	3190	3183	
Men							
Disabled	202	221	234	227	226	246	
Not disabled	1597	1632	1639	1617	1573	1617	
Total	1799	1853	1873	1844	1799	1863	
All							
Disabled	536	586	610	618	672	681	
Not disabled	4214	4218	4314	4381	4317	4366	
Total	4750	4804	4924	4999	4989	5047	

Table A.2.2 Estimated number of working age people in public sector employment, Scotland, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

							Cha
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	
Women							
Disabled	28	43	32	43	46	47	
Not disabled	333	321	358	348	348	357	
Total	361	364	390	391	394	404	
Men							
Disabled	27	24	22	32	23	29	
Not disabled	227	204	211	204	215	203	
Total	254	228	233	236	238	232	
All							
Disabled	55	67	54	74	70	77	
Not disabled	560	525	569	552	563	560	
Total	615	592	623	626	633	637	

Table A.2.3 Estimated number of working age people in public sector employment, Wales, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

							Change
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	
Women							
Disabled	22	35	25	19	26	29	
Not disabled	170	176	181	192	184	209	
Total	192	211	206	211	210	238	
Men							
Disabled	15	14	15	20	14	17	
Not disabled	114	111	110	121	108	103	
Total	129	125	125	141	122	120	
All							
Disabled	37	48	41	39	40	46	
Not disabled	284	288	291	313	292	312	
Total	321	336	332	352	332	358	

Table A.2.4 Estimated number of disabled working age women in public sector employment, English regions, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
North East	20	17	19	20	26	27
North West	50	46	60	58	66	59
Yorks. & Humberside	32	47	38	44	40	44
East Midlands	25	29	32	33	38	39
West Midlands	35	37	44	44	48	45
Eastern	35	36	33	46	46	47
London	50	54	48	47	59	57
South East	51	61	62	63	68	61
South West	35	39	41	35	55	54
All	334	365	376	391	446	434

Table A.2.5 Estimated number of disabled working age men in public sector employment, English regions, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
North East	16	11	12	14	14	19
North West	26	28	37	34	30	37
Yorks. & Humberside	22	23	25	24	25	30
East Midlands	16	15	19	15	17	16
West Midlands	17	24	23	24	21	29
Eastern	20	21	29	22	26	23
London	24	32	29	33	30	28
South East	36	42	39	33	41	37
South West	23	25	22	28	22	26
All	202	221	234	227	226	246

Table A.2.6 Proportion of disabled working age public sector employees, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	
Great Britain					
Women	11.0	12.6	11.9	12.0	
Men	11.1	11.7	12.2	12.6	
All	11.0	12.2	12.0	12.2	
England					
Women	11.3	12.4	12.3	12.4	
Men	11.2	11.9	12.5	12.3	
All	11.3	12.2	12.4	12.4	
Scotland					
Women	7.8	11.9	8.3	10.9	
Men	10.5	10.4	9.5	13.5	
All	8.9	11.3	8.7	11.9	
Wales					
Women	11.7	16.4	12.2	9.1	
Men	11.6	10.9	12.4	14.1	
All	11.6	14.3	12.3	11.1	

Table A.2.7 Estimated number of disabled working age public sector employees by employment situation 12 months previously, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Disabled women					
Working for same organisation	327	371	371	360	433
Working elsewhere	17	25	25	30	32
Not in paid employment	30	33	25	39	30
Total	375	429	421	429	495
Disabled men					
Working for same organisation	216	220	225	232	224
Working elsewhere	*	13	14	14	17
Not in paid employment	11	13	20	17	12
Total	237	246	258	263	253
All					
Working for same organisation	544	592	596	592	657
Working elsewhere	26	38	39	44	50
Not in paid employment	41	46	45	56	42
Total	611	675	679	692	748

* Under 10,000 in cell: estimate not shown.

Table A.2.8 Proportion of working age people in public sector employment, England, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	
Women					
Disabled	14.1	14.3	14.3	14.8	
Not disabled	22.0	22.0	22.7	23.3	
Men					
Disabled	7.7	8.1	8.3	8.0	
Not disabled	12.8	13.2	13.2	13.0	
All					
Disabled	10.7	11.1	11.2	11.2	
Not disabled	17.3	17.5	17.8	18.0	

Table A.2.9 Proportion of working age people in public sector employment, Scotland, spring 1998 to spring 2003
 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	
Women					
Disabled	10.1	15.3	11.2	14.2	
Not disabled	26.8	26.0	29.0	28.4	
Men					
Disabled	8.7	7.8	7.0	10.3	
Not disabled	17.7	15.9	16.7	16.0	
All					
Disabled	9.4	11.4	9.0	12.2	
Not disabled	22.2	20.9	22.8	22.1	

Table A.2.10 Proportion of working age people in public sector employment, Wales, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	
Women					
Disabled	12.1	18.3	12.6	10.9	
Not disabled	26.6	27.8	28.7	29.1	
Men					
Disabled	7.4	6.5	7.7	9.4	
Not disabled	16.7	16.6	16.1	18.0	
All					
Disabled	9.7	12.1	10.1	10.1	
Not disabled	21.5	22.1	22.2	23.5	

Table A.2.11 Proportion of disabled working age women in public sector employment, English regions, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001
North East	11.9	9.6	11.6	12.1
North West	13.2	12.0	14.7	14.5
Yorks. & Humberside	13.2	16.4	13.6	15.2
East Midlands	13.0	13.4	15.5	15.1
West Midlands	12.9	12.8	13.8	14.3
Eastern	15.4	15.3	12.4	17.2
London	14.8	14.2	12.7	12.0
South East	15.7	16.5	17.4	16.8
South West	16.3	17.0	15.9	15.3
All	14.1	14.3	14.3	14.8

Table A.2.12 Proportion of disabled working age men in public sector employment, English regions, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001
North East	8.2	5.9	6.7	7.7
North West	6.1	6.7	8.6	7.9
Yorks. & Humberside	7.1	7.3	8.0	7.2
East Midlands	7.6	6.4	8.1	6.3
West Midlands	6.4	7.6	6.7	7.2
Eastern	8.1	8.1	10.3	8.4
London	7.1	9.4	7.9	8.5
South East	10.3	11.0	10.0	8.1
South West	9.1	9.2	7.6	10.3
All	7.7	8.1	8.3	8.0

Table A.2.13 Industry division of disabled working age women in public sector employment, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Education	119	141	145	148	163
Health and social work	150	167	153	161	195
Public administration and defence	67	82	82	95	108
Other community, social and personal work	18	21	22	17	25
Transport, storage and communication	*	*	*	*	*
Other	25	28	27	22	23
Total	385	443	434	452	519

* Under 10,000 in cell: estimate not shown.

Table A.2.14 Industry division of disabled working age men in public sector employment, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Education	41	49	64	58	66
Health and social work	47	44	45	39	41
Public administration and defence	79	89	81	98	91
Other community, social and personal work	23	25	23	23	20
Transport, storage and communication	21	25	29	27	19
Other	32	26	29	34	26
Total	243	258	271	279	264

Table A.2.15 Occupational position of disabled working age employees in public sector employment, Great Britain, spring 2001 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

	Women		
	2001	2002	2003
Managers and senior officials	18	20	24
Professional occupations	82	94	97
Associate professional and technical	80	98	91
Administrative and secretarial	121	134	134
Skilled trades occupations	*	*	*
Personal service occupations	85	98	93
Sales and customer service occupations	*	*	*
Process, plant and machine operatives	*	*	*
Elementary occupations	54	62	61
Total	452	519	511

* Under 10,000 in cell: estimate not shown.

Table A.2.16 Estimated number of disabled working age people in public sector employment by age group, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (thousands, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Disabled women						
Under 30 years	51	48	46	58	57	50
30 to 39 years	86	95	86	91	104	109
40 to 49 years	130	139	142	146	161	166
50 to 59 years	118	160	160	158	197	185
Total	385	443	434	452	519	511
Disabled men						
Under 30 years	28	27	27	25	26	31
30 to 39 years	57	57	57	50	46	60
40 to 49 years	64	68	80	78	77	75
50 to 59 years	94	107	107	126	115	126
Total	243	258	271	279	264	293

Table A.2.17 Usual weekly work hours (including overtime) of working age public sector employees, Great Britain, spring 1998 to spring 2003 (per cent, not seasonally adjusted)

	1998	1999	2000	2001
Disabled women				
Under 16 hours	17	16	15	14
16 to 29 hours	26	23	24	27
30 hours or more	58	62	60	59
Non-disabled women				
Under 16 hours	13	12	12	12
16 to 29 hours	25	24	25	25
30 hours or more	62	64	63	64
Disabled men				
Under 16 hours	3	6	5	5
16 to 29 hours	6	6	5	6
30 hours or more	91	89	90	89
Non-disabled men				
Under 16 hours	3	3	3	2
16 to 29 hours	4	4	3	4
30 hours or more	94	93	94	94

Table A.3.1 Proportion of disabled public sector employees by age group, Great Britain (per cent)

	Under 30 years	30 to 39 years	40 to 49 years	50 to 59 years
Women	7.5	9.5	12.8	18.3
Men	7.2	8.6	12.1	18.2
All	7.4	9.2	12.5	18.3

Table A.3.2 Highest educational qualification of female public sector employees by age and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Under
	Under 30	30 to 49	50 & over	
Degree or equivalent	30	22	13	
Higher education	10	21	23	
GCE A level or equivalent	22	16	11	
GCSE grades A to C, or equivalent	31	24	16	
Other qualifications	4	9	17	
No qualification	4	9	21	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	276	1460	1211	34

* See Appendix B for details of sample weighting.

Table A.3.3 Highest educational qualification of male public sector employees by age and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Under
	Under 30	30 to 49	50 & over	
Degree or equivalent	25	27	27	
Higher education	7	14	13	
GCE A level or equivalent	25	24	24	
GCSE grades A to C, or equivalent	26	17	9	
Other qualifications	10	10	10	
No qualification	7	7	16	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	148	721	735	1

Table A.3.4 Industry division of employing organisation of public sector employees by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Wom
	Women	Men	All	
Education	33	22	29	
Health and social work	38	17	30	
Public administration and defence	20	34	25	
Other community, social and personal work	4	9	6	
Transport, storage and communication	1	7	3	
Other	4	11	7	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2969	1617	4586	202

Table A.3.5 Socio-economic class of public sector employees by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Work Wor
	Women	Men	All	
Higher managerial and professional	7	17	11	
Lower managerial and professional	38	36	37	
Intermediate occupations	23	13	19	
Lower supervisory and technical	4	11	6	
Semi-routine occupations	17	12	16	
Routine occupations	10	9	10	
Not elsewhere classified	1	1	1	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2969	1618	4587	20

Table A.3.6 Managerial status of public sector employees by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Women
	Women	Men	All	
Manager	18	25	20	
Supervisor	14	15	15	
Not a manager or supervisor	68	60	65	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2963	1607	4570	202

Table A.3.7 Occupational position by highest educational qualification of disabled women in public sector employment, Great Britain spring 2003 (per cent)*

	Degree or equivalent	Higher education	GCE A level or equivalent	GCSE grade A to C, or equivalent
Managers and senior officials	6 (7)	6 (5)	7 (5)	3
Professional occupations	58 (59)	24 (23)	7 (5)	1
Associate professional and technical	20 (22)	44 (47)	17 (17)	8 (8)
Administrative and secretarial	11 (8)	9 (10)	35 (39)	48 (48)
Skilled trades occupations	— (0)	— (0)	1 (1)	1
Personal service occupations	4 (3)	15 (13)	24 (25)	25 (25)
Sales and customer service occupations	1 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)	3
Process, plant and machine operatives	0 (0)	— (0)	0 (0)	—
Elementary occupations	0 (0)	1 (1)	6 (6)	12 (12)
Weighted base (= 100%)	554 (5370)	608 (3704)	423 (2755)	624 (414)

* Figures for non-disabled women shown in parentheses.

Table A.3.8 Occupational position by highest educational qualification of disabled men in public sector employment, Great Britain spring 2003 (per cent)*

	Degree or equivalent	Higher education	GCE A level or equivalent	GCSE grade A to C, or equivalent
Managers and senior officials	12 (14)	9 (13)	7 (9)	5
Professional occupations	59 (61)	28 (25)	6 (6)	4
Associate professional and technical	18 (16)	42 (43)	28 (35)	29 (29)
Administrative and secretarial	7 (6)	10 (7)	15 (12)	21 (21)

Skilled trades occupations	0 (0)	3 (4)	17 (16)	4
Personal service occupations	2 (1)	5 (4)	8 (8)	12
Sales and customer service occupations	– (0)	– (1)	– (1)	0
Process, plant and machine operatives	0 (0)	– (1)	5 (4)	5
Elementary occupations	1 (1)	3 (3)	15 (9)	18 (
Weighted base (= 100%)	427 (3990)	210 (1272)	392 (2521)	228 (16

* Figures for non-disabled men shown in parentheses.

Table A.3.9 Usual weekly hours (including overtime) of public sector employees by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			W
	Women	Men	All	
Under 16 hours	15	6	12	
16 to 29 hours	27	6	20	
30 hours or more	58	88	68	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2923	1571	4494	

Table A.3.10 Whether public sector employees work full-time or part-time by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			W
	Women	Men	All	
Working part-time	49	13	36	
Does not want full-time job	(40)	(8)	(29)	
Could not find full-time job	(4)	(3)	(3)	
Ill or disabled	(4)	(2)	(3)	
Student	(1)	(1)	(1)	
No reason given	(0)	(0)	(0)	
Working full-time	51	87	64	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2968	1618	4586	

Table A.3.11 Proportion of public sector employees reporting job-related training in previous three months by occupational position, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			V
	Women	Men	All	
Managers and senior officials	60	47	54	
Professional occupations	64	54	60	
Associate professional and technical	60	51	56	
Administrative and secretarial	41	36	40	
Skilled trades occupations	*	32	29	
Personal service occupations	46	43	45	
Sales and customer service occupations	*	*	*	
Process, plant and machine operatives	*	26	23	
Elementary occupations	10	18	13	
All	45	42	44	
Weighted base for All	2964	1612	4576	

* Base under 50 cases: estimate not shown.

Table A.3.12 Proportion of public sector employees reporting sickness absence in previous week by occupational position, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Women
	Women	Men	All	
Managers and senior officials	8	7	8	
Professional occupations	7	5	6	
Associate professional and technical	5	7	6	
Administrative and secretarial	6	9	7	
Skilled trades occupations	*	3	4	
Personal service occupations	6	4	5	
Sales and customer service occupations	*	*	*	
Process, plant and machine operatives	*	6	7	
Elementary occupations	6	8	7	

All	6	6	6	
Weighted base for All	2969	1617	4586	202

* Base under 50 cases: estimate not shown.

Table A.3.13 Proportion of public sector employees reporting sickness absence in previous week by employing organisation, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled		
	Women	Men	All
Local government or council (including police, fire service and local authority controlled schools or colleges)	6	6	6
Health authority or NHS Trust	5	5	5
Central government, civil service, armed forces	8	8	8
University, polytechnic, or other grant-funded educational establishment	3	5	4
Nationalised industry or State Corporation	*	10	9
Other public sector organisation	3	3	3
All	6	6	6
Weighted base for All	2969	1617	4586

* Base under 50 cases: estimate not shown.

Table A.3.14 Proportion of public sector employees in temporary jobs by occupational position, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Work
	Women	Men	All	
Managers and senior officials	5	7	6	
Professional occupations	17	13	15	
Associate professional and technical	7	5	6	
Administrative and secretarial	5	10	6	
Skilled trades occupations	*	7	6	
Personal service occupations	11	6	10	
Sales and customer service occupations	*	*	*	
Process, plant and machine operatives	*	2	1	
Elementary occupations	4	6	5	
All	8	8	8	
Weighted base for All	2961	1611	4572	20

* Base under 50 cases: estimate not shown.

Table A.3.15 Proportion of public sector employees in temporary jobs by employing organisation, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			Work
	Women	Men	All	
Local government or council (including police, fire service and local authority controlled schools or colleges)	10	9	10	
Health authority or NHS Trust	5	5	5	
Central government, civil service, armed forces	3	4	4	
University, polytechnic, or other grant-funded educational establishment	22	17	20	
Nationalised industry or State Corporation	*	3	3	
Other public sector organisation	6	6	6	
All	8	8	8	

Weighted base for All	2961	1611	4572
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* Base under 50 cases: estimate not shown.

Table A.3.16 Whether public sector employees were seeking a different job by gender and disability, Great Britain (per cent)

	Disabled			W
	Women	Men	All	
Not seeking a different job	95	94	94	
Seeking a different job	5	6	6	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent)	2967	1616	4583	2
Of those seeking a different job:				
Pay unsatisfactory in present job	15	22	18	
Present job may come to an end	13	19	15	
Present job to fill in time before finding another	6	7	7	
Journey to work unsatisfactory	6	7	6	
Wants longer hours	10	3	7	
Wants shorter hours	6	4	5	
Other aspects of present job unsatisfactory	47	54	50	
Other reasons	28	25	27	
Weighted base (= 100 per cent*)	101	152	253	

* Percentages sum to more than 100 because some respondents gave more than one reason.

Table A.3.17 Gross weekly pay of public sector employees by highest educational qualification, Great Britain (median £s)

	Disabled			
	Women	Men	All	
Degree or equivalent	404	538	478	
Higher education	321	423	346	
GCE A level or equivalent	231	316	271	
GCSE grades A to C, or equivalent	196	327	221	
Other qualifications	150	280	208	
No qualification	108	241	137	

Table A.3.18 Gross weekly pay of public sector employees by occupational position, Great Britain (median £s)

	Disabled		
	Women	Men	All
Managers and senior officials	420	557	478
Professional occupations	442	548	485
Associate professional and technical	346	423	381
Administrative and secretarial	231	288	246
Skilled trades occupations	*	306	286
Personal service occupations	160	231	183
Sales and customer service occupations	*	*	*
Process, plant and machine operatives	*	*	*
Elementary occupations	68	249	105

* Under 50 cases in cell: estimate not shown.

Table A.3.19 Gross weekly pay of public sector employees by employing organisation, Great Britain (median £s)

	Disabled		2
	Women	Men	
Local government or council (including police, fire service and local authority controlled schools or colleges)	205	342	
Health authority or NHS Trust	250	310	2
Central government, civil service, armed forces	280	393	3
University, polytechnic, or other grant-funded educational establishment	255	448	3
Nationalised industry or State Corporation	*	381	3
Other public sector organisation	*	*	2

* Under 50 cases in cell: estimate not shown.

Appendix B Sample design for cross-sectional analysis

The analysis described in Chapter 3 is based on a specially prepared dataset derived from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The main reason for constructing this dataset was to maximise the number of cases available for analysis and thus increase confidence in the precision of the findings. Although each quarterly LFS dataset contains records of interviews with between 130,000 and 140,000 adults, a relatively small minority of these are both disabled and work in the public sector according to the definitions outlined in Section 2.1 of Chapter 2.

For example, the LFS for spring 2003 contains over 134,000 respondents. Of these, 13,600 are public sector employees in Britain, of which 1,872 are disabled (646 men, 1,226 women). With these numbers, it can be appreciated that cell sizes dwindle rapidly when cross-tabulating variables with a large number of categories, such as occupational position (nine categories) and highest educational

qualification (six categories).

One solution is to merge the categories of such variables but that might mean losing important details. Another solution, and the one preferred here, is to combine LFS datasets from two or more quarters. However, this is not straightforward because of the LFS sample design. Since 1992, the LFS has been conducted with a panel design in which the sample of 60,000 households is made up of five waves, each of approximately 12,000 households. Each quarter a fifth of the sample is replaced by a new wave of households, and their adult members are interviewed for the first time. The same adults are interviewed four more times at quarterly intervals.

Two problems arise when consecutive quarters are combined. First, approximately four-fifths of respondents appear twice, creating an unrepresentative dataset with dependent observations. Secondly, because some LFS questions are not asked at every interview wave, data merged from successive quarters would contain missing values for many respondents.

A database of distinct cases was required, one in which respondents are included only once. It was decided to construct the database from respondents in wave one; that is, those giving their first interview in each quarterly survey. Focusing on wave one interviews offers two advantages for the quality and coverage of the data:

1. Almost all first wave interviews are conducted face-to-face, whereas around 90 per cent of interviews are conducted by telephone at subsequent waves.
2. Information on respondents' earnings is collected only at interviews for waves one and five; however, wave five respondents were excluded because they would appear twice when combining more than four successive quarterly datasets.

In the event, 12 quarterly datasets were combined covering the period from spring 2001 to winter 2003 inclusive. The decision to

commence the observation period in spring 2001 was taken because several revised survey questions, covering key topics such as managerial duties, occupational group, socio-economic class, days off sick, and highest educational qualification, were included for the first time in that quarter. Incorporating earlier quarters would have created significant discontinuities in the data.

Each quarter, first wave interviews identify around 2,800 people working in the British public sector, including about 360 disabled and 2,440 non-disabled employees. Across the 12 combined quarterly datasets, the study sample encompasses 4,400 disabled and 30,000 non-disabled public sector employees.

An important issue concerns the weighting of the study sample. ONS researchers attach two sets of weights to each quarterly dataset, one for each person in the sample and another to weight their incomes.

The aim of weighting LFS samples is twofold:

1. To correct for non-response and the effects of sample design.
2. To give estimates of the number of people in certain sub-groups and the whole population.

It was not appropriate to produce population estimates from the study sample because it is based on first wave interviews only, covering three years. The ONS weights were therefore adjusted to retain the correction for non-response and design effects but to remove the element that produces population estimates. In practice, this meant dividing the two sets of weights by their mean or average value.

When applied to the quarterly datasets, these weights do not alter the achieved sample size but they do affect the size of key sub-groups according to variations in non-response and the effects of sample design.

The findings reported in Chapter 3 represent ‘average’ patterns of employment in the public sector across the three years of the study period. During that time, inflation has eroded the value of employees’

earnings. The revised income weight, described above, was therefore adjusted for inflation using the monthly Consumer Prices Index (CPI), published annually by the Department for Work and Pensions (2004). The CPI for each month from March 2001 onwards was divided by the index for December 2003. Each respondent's income weight was then multiplied by the appropriate weight for inflation effects according to the date of interview. Thus, the findings on gross earnings, reported in Chapter 3, are expressed in December 2003 prices, and take into account the effects of non-response and sample design.