
The 2023 Ingeus Disability Diversity
and Inclusivity Index

Evaluating Disability Diversity and Inclusivity in British Workplaces

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ingeus



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Executive Summary

Disability diversity and inclusivity are vitally important issues in the modern UK economy. While work is being done by both employers and jobseekers to improve the current situation, there is still a lot to be achieved.

To help drive change, Ingeus and the global market research consultancy, CoreData, have compiled a unique body of research that looks at the employment of people living with disability in the UK.

One in five (20%) of the working-age population in the UK has a disability or long-term health condition, emphasising the critical nature of this research in shining a light on both the barriers facing this valuable section of society and what employers can do to enable more people with disabilities to join and stay in the labour market.

This inaugural 2023 Disability Diversity and Inclusivity (DDI) Index assesses diversity and inclusivity, not only from employer perspectives, but from the viewpoint of jobseekers and employees with disability across three broad measures: Culture, Opportunity and Career Equity. It sets a benchmark against which improvements can be tracked over time.

This Index aims to add another layer to the growing body of work and conversation in this area and we hope to stimulate and enable more diverse workforces through increasing awareness of the inclusion of people with disability. The Index will allow progress to be tracked, barriers and challenges to be monitored, and the impact of changes made to workplaces and the lives of working-age British people with disability to be revealed.

There is clearly more work to be done to achieve diverse workforces through the inclusion of people with disability. Employers require more information about the types of support people with disability need most. Guidance on what are often small, inexpensive steps to create disability-inclusive workplaces is also needed, along with support for employers to implement these steps.

In 2022 the government achieved its stated goal to see one million more people with disability in work between 2017 and 2027, yet the number of working-age people with disability in employment has increased during this period, such that the disability employment gap remains high (at 29.8% in Q3 2022).

Whilst we hope this research serves as a useful guide for UK businesses, we're playing our part too. Last year Ingeus provided employability, wellbeing and youth services to over 29,000 people with a disability in the UK. More than eleven percent of our workforce self-declare as having a disability and this continues to grow, with every individual treated equally and as an integral part of the Ingeus team.

Attracting more people living with a disability into the workforce, with the support they need, is a win-win for everyone. Working is proven to be good for people's health, their families and society. It also makes economic sense. The Government is determined to combat inflation and grow the economy, and people with disability have huge spending power. "The Purple Pound" holds £274 billion of spending power each year in the UK.

Continued engagement with people with disability, coordinated cross-government action and wider societal change are all integral to enabling more people with disability to start, stay and succeed in work. If the UK is to realise its full economic potential and truly embrace all its citizens as equal, we need to go further and faster.

Fiona Monahan
CEO, Ingeus UK

Why Disability Diversity and Inclusivity Matter

One in five of the working-age population in the UK has a disability or long-term health condition, according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS).¹ Among this group, only slightly more than half (52.6%) or 4.9 million are in employment, compared to 82.5% of non-disabled people.

The government has made a commitment to reduce the gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people (known as the disability employment gap). The disability employment gap was at 29.8 percentage points in Q3 2022, its widest point since 2018 and an overall decrease of 4.4 percentage points since Q2 2013.

In 2022 the government achieved its stated goal to see one million more people with disability in work between 2017 and 2027². The number of working-age (ages 16-64) people with disability in employment has increased during this period, however, according to ONS, more people are reporting a long term health condition or disability than nine years ago, with this largely driven by an increase in mental health conditions. Statistics show the improvement in the number of people with disability in employment can largely be attributed to increased disability prevalence.

While our research suggests many employers demonstrate positive attitudes towards employing individuals with disability, the lack of disability diversity in most British workplaces proves significant barriers to doing so remain.

These barriers often reflect a lack of understanding of disability, as well as perceived administrative and financial burden of recruitment and inclusion of people with disability.

There is clearly more work to be done to achieve diverse workforces through the inclusion of people with disability. This Index aims to add another perspective to the growing body of work and conversation in this area. To do this, Ingeus has explored business attitudes, understanding and perspectives. Uniquely, however, Ingeus has also given voice to people with disability who are seeking employment.

The 2023 Ingeus Disability, Diversity and Inclusion Index assesses diversity and inclusivity not only from employer perspectives but from the perspective of jobseekers and employees with disability across three broad measures: Culture, Opportunity and Career Equity. Over time, the Index will allow progress to be tracked, barriers and challenges to be monitored, and the impact of changes made to workplaces and the lives of working-age British people with disability to be revealed.

Did you know?

Our research shows that people with disability are more likely than people without disability to be:³

- Working in lower-skilled occupations
- Self-employed
- Working part-time (and subsequently fewer hours)
- Working in the public sector
- Working for a small employer
- Working in health, retail and education

¹ Employment of disabled people 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) (updated 26 January 2023)

² Government hits goal to see a million more disabled people in work, 17 May 2022

³ Employment of disabled people 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



Methodology

Ingeus commissioned independent market research consultancy, CoreData, to undertake an holistic research project in the UK on disability diversity and inclusivity in British workplaces.

A key focus of this project was the creation of an index and benchmark of inclusion and equity for jobseekers and employees with disability.

The term “people with disability” refers to individuals who have an injury, illness or disability, whether this is a temporary or permanent state. For this research, we include jobseekers, employees, and those returning to work after injury.

A range of factors have been considered and measured in this research, including barriers, enablers and outcomes. We have also captured perspectives and impact, from both British businesses and people with disability. The findings presented in this report are the result of both secondary research (exploration and analysis of existing, publicly available data) and primary quantitative research.

The quantitative research was informed by stakeholder consultation with subject-matter experts, including Ingeus’ Disability Advisory Group. We would like to thank the following members of the advisory group for their contribution to the research:

- Pat Ashworth
- Professor Amanda Kirby
- Corrie Brown
- Richard Day
- Grant Neems

The primary research insights cited in this report are based on three quantitative surveys conducted between 24 November and 9 December 2022. This included online surveys of 345 current clients of Ingeus; 500 British businesses, including small, medium and large employers; and 1,065 members of the British general public.

Methodology (Continued)

A profile of the businesses we heard from

More employers from manufacturing (29%) responded to this survey than any other industry, with another 11% operating in the construction industry. Both these industries have stringent health and safety requirements which may influence their ability or attitudes towards hiring people with disability.

Data from the Department for Work and Pensions shows manufacturing is one of the top five industries employing people with disability in the UK aged 16 to 64.⁴ The top five are: human health and social work activities (16%); wholesale, retail and repair of motor vehicles (15%); education (11%); public administration and defence, social security (7%); and manufacturing (8%).

By role type, more than a quarter (27%) of the employers surveyed were directors or managing directors, while a further 17% were HR or people and culture executives or managers. Ten percent were CEOs.

We heard from businesses operating across all regions in England, with 44% operating in Greater London. Gender balance was relatively evenly split between females (53%) and males (47%).

While the bulk of businesses were larger (200 or more employees), we also had representation from SMEs, with nearly one in five (18%) having 20-199 employees. At the larger end of the scale, more than one in five (22%) were representatives of businesses employing 2000 or more employees.

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021/the-employment-of-disabled-people-2021#employment





Scoring Methodology

The Disability Diversity and Inclusivity Index has been designed to measure and track three broad areas, or pillars:

Opportunity

How accessible employment is for people with disability and the barriers to employment.

Career Equity

The equity and parity of employment, training, and career progression opportunities for people with disability.

Culture

The level of recognition and understanding of disability and workplace inclusivity among British businesses, and the extent to which psychological safety is provided.

Index measures are based on self-reported attitudes/perceptions and actions/activities of businesses, and the experiences and perceptions of British people living with disability.

Each pillar is composed of two or three components. Each component is based on measures captured from businesses, people with disability, or both and contributes equally to the overall pillar score.

The pillars combine to form the overall Disability Diversity and Inclusivity Index.

Each pillar is assigned a score from zero to 100 and is separated across business and individual responses. The higher the component score, the closer we are to full inclusion and equity for British people with disability, and as a consequence, to genuinely diverse and inclusive workplaces as a norm.

In future years, the Index is intended to track how British workplaces are evolving in terms of attitudes and behaviours and, hopefully, becoming more inclusive of individuals with injury, illness or disability.

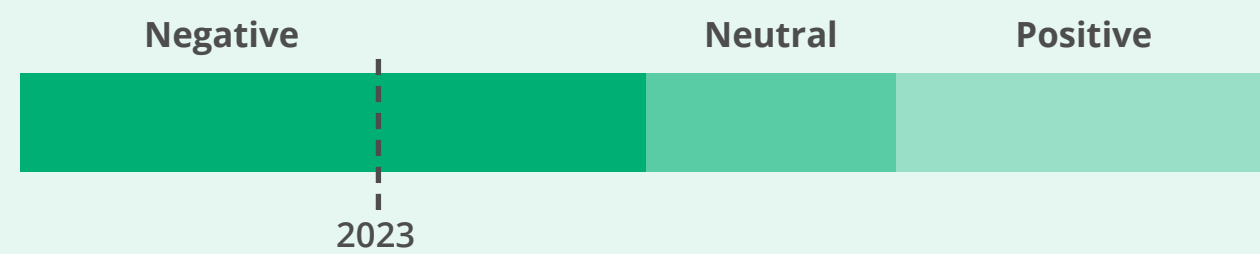
2023 Inaugural Index Score **54.9 / 100**

This inaugural 2023 Disability Diversity and Inclusivity Index sets a benchmark against which improvements can be tracked over time. As such, there was no specific target score set for the 2023 research.



1 in 5 of the working-age population in the UK has a disability or long-term health condition.⁵

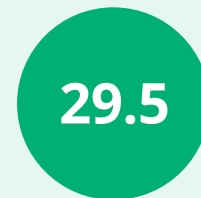
Opportunity | 42.2 / 100



- Nearly half of British businesses actively recruited one or more people with a disability or health condition in the last 12 months (48%).
- However, fewer businesses say they're ensuring as many roles as possible are suitable for people with a disability (36%). Only a quarter of employers believe people with disability, injury or illness ('people with disability') are well-represented in their workforce (25%), but nearly half are taking at least some steps to rectify this (44%).
- Unsuitable job locations and working times affect nearly half of people with disability (47%), with the vast majority of people with disability who are actively looking for work saying at least one thing made their job search harder in the last 12 months.
- Many people with disability don't have reliable access to things that would help them find work, like transport (37%) and software they need to be able to apply for a job at home (36%).



Barriers

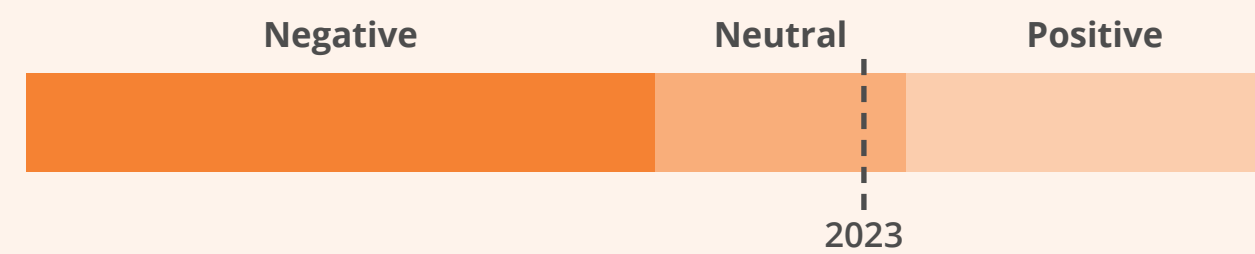


Accessibility



Action

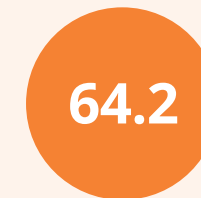
Career Equity | 61.5 / 100



- The majority of employers who have previously employed people with disability rate their quality of employment for those with disabilities higher than coworkers without disability (77%). Four in five (81%) rate themselves highly on providing career development opportunities once employed.
- However, fewer than a third (31%) of unemployed people with disability say that when working for their most recent employer, they felt confident that their disability or health condition wouldn't limit their chances of moving into senior roles.
- Fragile employment is impacting standard of living: only 36% of employed people with disability say their job pays enough to live comfortably, compared to 44% of employed people in the general population.

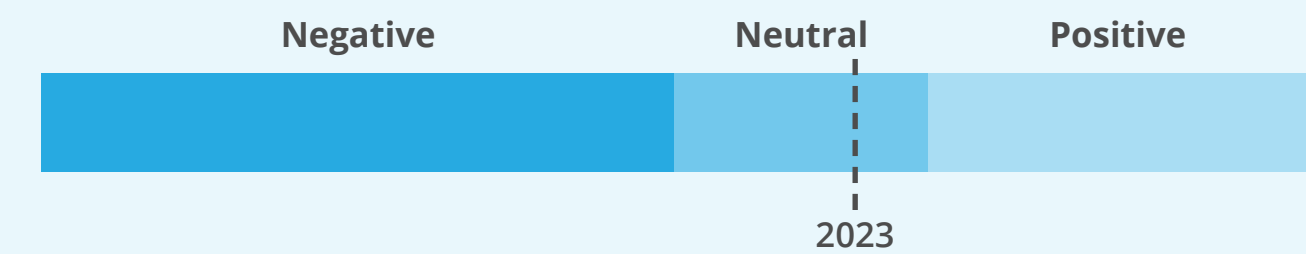


Quality



Progression

Culture | 60.9 / 100



- More than half of people with disability (54%) and three in five employers (60%) encountered negative attitudes about people with disability and health conditions while at work or job seeking in the last 12 months.
- While most employers believe they make it easy and safe for employees to disclose disabilities or health conditions (67%), more than one in five (22%) jobseekers say they'd never feel comfortable disclosing their disability to an employer.
- This was especially so for the 75% of people with non-visible disability. Nearly two-thirds of employers (64%) don't think non-visible disabilities are real disabilities and a slight majority (51%) think some people pretend to have a non-visible disability to get extra benefits.
- Despite this, most employers are trying to improve this situation, with most employed people with disability saying their employer is doing at least something to create an inclusive workplace (66%).



Misperception



Psychological Safety



Culture/Inclusion

⁵The employment of disabled people 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



The Current State of Disability Diversity and Inclusivity in British Workplaces

Overall Index Scorecard

54.9 / 100

The 2023 Disability Diversity and Inclusivity Index returned an overall score of **54.9**, which is in the neutral range. Composed of three pillars, the overall score was pulled downward by the Opportunity pillar, which returned a score in the negative range. The low score for this pillar reflects an unacceptably high number of people with disability struggling to find suitable work that allows them to live comfortably.

While work is being done by both employers and jobseekers to improve the current situation, there is still a long road ahead. Employers need more information about the type of support people with disability need most. Guidance on what are often small, inexpensive steps employers can take to create disability-inclusive workplaces is also required, along with support to implement these steps.

This inaugural Index has set a baseline from which improvements will be tracked over time.

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The application process is a nightmare for anyone who is neurodivergent. It's all phone calls or interviews where they don't look at what skills you bring to the table or what qualifications you've managed to obtain but rather score you on your social interactions - even if it's not a front-facing role you're applying for. They don't care if you CAN do the job or not, they're more interested in what irrelevant social cues you may or may not have, which is pretty ableist and discriminatory and sidelines those who are on the spectrum.

– Non-binary, 31yrs old

”

Opportunity Pillar Status

Opportunity | Negative – requires focus

42.2 / 100

Maximising the availability of suitable and accessible roles is essential for improving outcomes for people with disability. This was, however, the poorest performing of the Index pillars.

People with disability report both practical and cultural barriers to equitable participation in recruitment processes. Access to technology required to search and apply for roles, reliable transport to interviews and work, and flexible roles (both hours and location-wise) emerged as key challenges faced. This suggests the issue is not simply a limited number of vacancies, but rather how accessible these vacancies are to people with disability, and how difficult it is for them to engage with the recruitment process.

Addressing these challenges is not necessarily onerous. Most British businesses have successfully recruited one or more people with disability before, many within the last year. For those who have not, making clear in job advertisements an employer's interest in hearing from candidates with disability is a simple first step. A willingness to adopt more flexible recruitment processes is also likely to attract not only candidates with disability, but a more diverse range of candidates generally.



Barriers



Accessibility



Action

Career Equity Pillar Status

Career Equity | Neutral – room for improvement

61.5 / 100

People with disability have slightly better experiences once they're employed, but sustainable outcomes require a long-term commitment to inclusion. Most in employment believe they are given the same upskilling and training opportunities as everyone else. Employers typically agree, reporting that they're working to make as many roles as possible accessible for people with disability. Most employers also believe that they are offering employees with disability a quality of employment equal or higher than that of their coworkers.

Despite this, we found that people with disability are frequently employed in fragile, lower-paid roles. Compared to the general population, workers with disability are overrepresented in both part-time and temporary employment. The impact of this is stark. Our research indicates just 7% of employed people with disability had personal income of over 30,000 pounds in the last year, compared to 54% of the general population. A simple step would be to offer permanent part or full-time roles, rather than less secure forms of employment. Identifying pathways out of temporary employment and for career progression will begin to reduce the number of people with disability who struggle to get by, despite having a job.

“

There's too many people searching for a job and not enough on offer. Jobs are badly paid in England and all the salaries need to go up. Employers should pay for candidates going for interviews because the train fares are so expensive; it's NOT fair to make jobseekers pay to get to interviews. Often you pay 50 pounds to get to a job interview and then you don't get the job because there's too many people being interviewed.

– Female, 56 yrs old

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Quality



Progression

“

Job hunting was a daunting experience for me. I had been through a lot of tough times, mentally and financially. I couldn't carry on if I didn't have support from the JETS programme. I have done a lot of interviews, and I felt as a minority, I couldn't get a job. [My employment consultant] helped me a lot. She patiently listened to my needs and found a way to assist me.

- Female, 43yrs old

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Culture Pillar Status

Culture | Neutral – room for improvement

60.9 / 100

The majority of employers report having processes in place to enable and support people to disclose their disability or health condition as well as any accommodations or support they need in the workplace. Despite this, people with non-visible disability are largely uncomfortable disclosing their disability during the recruitment process. In fact, many will avoid doing so until they are entrenched in their role and either know the business and employees well enough to feel safe or are forced to disclose for some reason.

As a result, the Culture pillar also sits in the neutral range. Most employers and people with disability encountered at least one negative attitude about people with disabilities and health conditions while job seeking or at work. Employers with no experience hiring people with disability fear there are business risks in doing so, suggesting a need for further education and a navigator to support employers to confidently employ people with disability.



Misperceptions



Psychological Safety



Inclusion

Income Stability of People with Disability

Income stability by employment type



Q: Does your current job provide you with any of the following things?
People with disability working full-time n = 53; Employed people with disability who aren't working full-time part-time or temp/casual/zero-hour contract) n = 68.

Legend ■ Full-time ■ Not Full-time



Key Finding 1

Adversity Impacts Employment

People with disability want to work. The vast majority (79%) of people with disability who responded to our survey say they have actively searched for a job in the last 12 months. Of those, 19% were already in a job but were looking to change. But looking for a job – and remaining employed – is hard when you have a disability or health condition.

While there's a strong desire to be employed, people with disability feel trepidation about finding a job. More than a third (37%) say they feel anxious and are scared they'll never find a job. That's more than double the rate of anxiety reported by other jobseekers (17%).

One in five (21%) feel hopeless, believing finding work they really love is out of reach. A similar proportion (20%) feel frustration at the lack of opportunity despite knowing they're capable of doing more.

This is a legitimate concern, since 53% of people with disability say they were not able to find jobs that were a good match for their skills and experience. This is much higher than the general population, where only 36% report the same experience. Only 40% of people with disability who are employed say they have an opportunity to make use of their skills, experience and qualifications.

Key Finding 1

Impact of Cumulative Adversity

People with disability universally report experiencing adversity in their life (100%). This often comes from a variety of sources. In fact, from a set of 14 different types of adversity people may face, 16% of people with disability reported experiencing eight or more (high cumulative adversity). Prevalence of adversity is similarly common among jobseekers without disability in the general population (98%). However, it is rare that these jobseekers would experience high cumulative adversity (4%).

People with disability who have high cumulative adversity encounter negative attitudes from employers more frequently when at work, or when jobseeking (70%), compared to those with low cumulative adversity (40%). The impact of this is seen in how people with disability feel about employment. As adversity accumulates, so do feelings of frustration about employment, soaring from 11% among those with low cumulative adversity to 43% among those with high cumulative adversity. The same is true for hopelessness, anxiousness and feeling alone.





Key Finding 1

Prevalence of cumulative adversity

Source	None (0)	Low (1-3)	Moderate (4-7)	High (8+)
People with disability	0%	27%	56%	16%
General Population	2%	32%	62%	4%

n=324 people with disability, n=321 jobseekers in the general population without disability
Note: due to the sensitivity of the question, it was non-mandatory for respondents to answer

When they are employed, people with disability tend to experience higher job satisfaction. Nearly half (48%) say they're content in their job and plan on staying in it for a while. This is higher than other employed people in the general population (41%).

And yet, having a job does not necessarily solve all problems. Nearly seven in 10 people with disability (69%) say their current job provides them with a reliable, regular income, but only 36% say it's enough to live comfortably. Alarming, 10% of employed people with disability say they've had to go without meals to afford their bills. Twice as many unemployed people with disability have had to go without (22%).

The vast majority of people with disability are not feeling isolated or lonely when at work. Only 9% say they rarely - or never - feel included or valued by their co-workers. That beats other jobseekers, who experience loneliness at a rate of 11%.

Key Finding 1

Our data found that people with disability have better chances of employment outside Greater London or working for SMEs

Employers in Greater London are less likely to recruit people with disability, with 44% saying they have recruited one or more people in the last 12 months, compared to 52% of businesses in other regions. In total, 70% of employers in other regions say they are experienced hiring people with disability compared to 63% in Greater London. Lastly, nearly seven in 10 (69%) large employers with 200 or more employees say they've never recruited anyone with a disability or a health condition, compared to 31% of enterprises with less than 200 employees.





“

My experiences have been a little frustrating and disappointing on/off over the last 12 months, as I have not been getting any interviews. However, the process will continue, hopefully with better results in the coming months.

– Male, 41yrs old

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Key Finding 2

Jobseekers and Employers Lack Awareness About Available Support

Most people with disability who responded to our survey (62%) said they were currently unemployed. Six in 10 preferred full-time work, while one-third said part-time work was more preferable.

For people with disability, securing employment is often a discouraging undertaking.

More than four in 10 jobseekers with disability (41%) say it took them longer than a year to find a job. Only 28% of the respondents to our survey said they were successful in their job search. More than a third (35%) say they are still looking but haven't had any interviews. One-quarter said they did have interviews but didn't get the job.

Businesses in the UK have demonstrated an openness to hiring people with disability. More than three-quarters (77%) of jobseekers with disability say employers are either more willing to employ people like them (29%) or are unchanged (48%) in the past 12 months. Encouragingly, 46% of jobseekers with disability in the UK have not experienced negative attitudes in their job search.



Did you know?

Disability Confident is creating momentum for change, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop people with disability. More than 18,000⁷ have signed up to the Disability Confident scheme.

Key Finding 2

So why aren't there better employment outcomes in the UK for people with disability? One reason could be that they are unaware of support available to help them stay in employment.

The majority of respondents to our survey (57%) say they have never heard of Access to Work⁶, a government initiative to help people with disability stay in work. Of those who have heard of it, only 30% have used it and another 26% say they don't know how to use it.

Employers are not fully aware of the Access to Work⁷ scheme. Only 45% of employers have used the service and those employers with experience in employing people with disability are more likely (55%) to use it. Three-quarters of employers with no experience employing people with disability (75%) – say they have either never heard of it (24%) or have heard of it but not used it (51%).

Some of the frustrations and anxiety experienced by employers and jobseekers with disabilities could be alleviated through greater awareness of Access to Work. Six in 10 people with disability who used Access to Work say it either enabled them to do their job (38%) or helped them keep their job (22%). More than half (53%) say they would recommend Access to Work to other people like them.

⁶ Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition (www.gov.uk)

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-confident-employers-that-have-signed-up

Did you know?

The number of people reporting mental health conditions is rising. The number of disabled people with a mental health condition has grown by a million people between 2013 and 2022, an 84% increase.⁸

Key Finding 3

Employers Need a Navigator

Our data found two in three UK employers have experience of diversifying their workforces through the inclusion of people with disability. Nearly half (48%) say they have actively recruited a person with a disability or health condition in the last 12 months. Another 19% say they have recruited in the past, but not recently. That means more than two-thirds (66%) have experience hiring people with disability. However, our research shows the road to employment is more difficult than it needs to be.

Employers are more rigid in their hiring processes than they may realise and may not be aware of how they can better attract people with disability. Despite the openness to recruiting people with disability, many employers leave the impression they either won't consider a person with disability or health condition, or they show little consideration for accommodating these candidates in their job advertisements. Only 17% of employers say they would proactively reach out and discuss the needs of a candidate and offer accommodations to meet their specific needs. A quarter (24%) say they could make adjustments to their hiring process with little or no difficulty.

That means nearly six in 10 employers in the UK are leaving the impression they either won't consider a person with disability or health condition (14%), expect people with disability to adhere to their existing hiring process (23%), or would find it difficult to adjust their hiring process to accommodate a candidate with a disability or a health condition (22%).

Employers are often aware of the challenges they're facing when hiring people with disability. They know prospective employees may not divulge a disability or health condition in the recruitment process – or at all. Close to half (46%) say they believe there are people in their organisation who have not disclosed this information. Only 16% say they are certain they have not hired people with an undisclosed disability or health condition.

⁸ Employment of disabled people 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



Key Finding 3

Jobseekers confirm this finding as a quarter (24%) say they would not feel safe telling a prospective employer about their disability or health condition until after the job interview, at the earliest. A further 22% say they would never divulge this information unless they absolutely had to. Younger managers, in particular, are less likely to believe their organisation has a process that makes it safe and easy for candidates and employees to disclose any disabilities or health conditions. Only 24% of managers with 1 – 5 years in their current role have a process compared to 40% of managers with 5 – 10 years, 41% of managers with 10 – 20 years, and 44% of managers with more than 20 years in their current role.

Employers recognise the need for getting help. Working with an employability organisation and having ongoing placement support for at least six months are the top type of supports that employers say would help them to recruit and retain employees with disability (41% respectively). Nearly six in 10 employers (59%) who have recruited people with disability in the last 12 months have used an employability organisation. Half of these employers (55%) say they have used ongoing placement support. In contrast, 79% of employers with no experience recruiting people with disability say they have never heard of it (28%) or have heard of it but not used it (51%).

Employability organisations supporting jobseekers are able to assist with successful and sustainable work placements. They are also instrumental in furthering the understanding of the advantages and responsibilities of employing people with disability.



“

I never disclose my health problems when applying for jobs. I feel it would directly affect my chances of gaining employment.

– Male, 47yrs old

”

Key Finding 4

Attitude Trumps Costly Modifications When it Comes to the Workplace Needs of People With Disability

What jobseekers with disability or health conditions want or need to do their job is often different to those things that employees offer. Making the wrong investments to accommodate people with disability can lead to employers missing out on finding ideal candidates and building an inclusive workforce.

Jobseekers with disability or health conditions say psychological safety is the most important criteria for finding a suitable job. More than a third (36%) of active jobseekers say feeling safe to tell potential employers about disability would make it easier for them. Three in 10 (30%) say it would be easier if the job ads made it clear the employer would consider someone like them.

Key Finding 4

Financial support to help with the cost of attending interviews (25%), help getting qualifications (25%) and support to improve computer skills (24%) would enable a quarter to find suitable work.

Fewer than three in 10 (27%) say they need or want specialised equipment, on the job adjustments to allow for sensory needs (25%), or adjustable lighting (24%), while even fewer say they require workplace modifications for physical access (15%). Only 6% say a fully accessible workplace is one of their top three most important requirements for a job.

Despite this, employers are not always focusing on the on-the-job supports that would have the greatest impact on people with disability in the workplace. There are stark differences between what people with disability want or need and what they say employers are offering them.

- The most prevalent need for people with disability is flexible working hours, with 61% citing these as necessary to working in their current job. Currently, 43% of employers offer flexible work, though that may change with new flexible work legislation introduced in December 2022.⁹
- Nearly six in 10 (58%) say having someone who knows their needs and checks in to make sure they have the right support would be helpful, but only 30% of employers offer that kind of personal support.
- More than half (57%) of people with disability who are employed say it would be useful to have someone they can safely and privately discuss work issues with, but only 40% have that available to them at work.
- More than two in five employees (42%) say they would benefit from support or tools to help them organise their workday, but fewer employers (31%) offer this.

Working from home: A key element of workplace inclusion

The large majority of British employers (89%) allow some (60%) or all (29%) staff to work from home. This is important, because more than two in five (45%) employed people with disability say they want or need the option to work from home some or all of the time, and one in five (20%) say the ability to work from home is one of the top three most important things to them in a job.

Allowing staff to work from home can also ensure jobs are accessible to people with disability, 63% of whom do not have transport to get to and from interviews or a job.

Positively, the trend prompted by Covid-19 looks set to continue, with nine in 10 (90%) employers planning to offer the option to work from home to at least some staff in the next 12 months. Among those not currently offering this, 13% intend to allow some staff to work from home in future.

⁹ Consultation outcome: Making flexible working the default (www.gov.uk)



Did you know?

Not all disability is diagnosed. There are social and environmental factors that impact whether someone has a diagnosis.

Key Finding 4

Overall, larger employers are more likely to be making expensive modifications, possibly because they have more budget. Close to six in 10 (57%) offer all staff specialised equipment compared to 46% of SMEs who do the same. More than half of larger employers give all employees the option to have a support worker at work, compared to 40% of SMEs. Almost a quarter of SMEs (24%) don't offer the option to any of their employees.

A large majority of employers in the UK acknowledge and support people with non-visible disabilities. Despite this, almost eight in 10 employers (79%) require proof of diagnosis before they will provide support to an employee with a non-visible disability. This is more commonly the case for large organisations (82%) than SMEs (71%).

While 89% of SMEs say they treat people with disability the same, regardless of whether the disability is visible, fewer large employers (77%) offer the same consideration. More than half (56%) of large employers are concerned, however, that making accommodations for workers with non-visible disability would alienate other staff. In comparison, 43% of SMEs feel the same way.

Having a partner can help employers shift workplace attitudes and guide them to make the most meaningful adjustments needed to employ people with disability and health conditions. Ingeus UK – as an employability support provider – will support people with disability to identify required reasonable adjustments and advise how to present these to employers in a positive manner. At the same time, employers get the help they need to access funding and information to support the adjustment. These funded services can make all the difference to employers who want to reap the many benefits of a diverse and inclusive workforce.



Did you know?

Not all disability is visible. In the UK, it is estimated that 70-80% of disabilities are invisible.² These include impairments or conditions not necessarily visible to others, including: mental health conditions; autism and other neurodivergences; cognitive impairments; hearing, vision and speech impairments; and energy-limiting conditions (such as fibromyalgia). People with disabilities can have both invisible and visible impairments, or impairments that are only visible in certain circumstances or settings.

Key Finding 5

The Barriers to Disability Employment Are People

There's a disconnect between employer attitudes to hiring people with disability and how jobseekers are perceiving their opportunities. These misperceptions can create barriers to employment that are frustrating for employers and prospective employees.

From an employer perspective, uncertainty over how to support employees with disabilities or health conditions and fear of work health and safety risk are the most prevalent attitudes observed by leaders and colleagues of employees inside and outside their business (16% each)

A similar proportion has observed the attitude that employing people with disability would be a hassle or burden on other team members or the business (15%), or uncertainty over how to recruit such individuals (14%).

Interestingly, inertia may be the biggest barrier to hiring people with disabilities. Two-thirds (67%) of employers with no experience employing people with disability say they have formal policies in place to support diversity and inclusion. That's a great first step. More than three-quarters (76%) of employers with no experience of employing people with disability believe that hiring people with disabilities would (37%) or may (39%) provide benefits to their organisation.

Key Finding 5

Despite having policies in place and generally feeling optimistic about hiring people with disability, nearly a third (32%) of employers with no experience, say there's nothing in particular stopping them (26%) or it's not something they've ever discussed or thought about (6%). This suggests the need for widespread cultural change, to recognise the economic and social benefits of including people with disability in the workplace.

Nearly three in 10 (28%) who actively searched for work in the last 12 months say the job advert made them feel an employer wouldn't genuinely consider a person with a disability or health condition. One in five (21%) said the application or interview processes were difficult to engage with.

“

“I struggle with applications and lack confidence despite having a lot of experience and being told I am good at my job.” – Female, 58 years old

“Some adverts, especially agencies, do not give precise locations of the place of employment, which is an important factor for travel to work, especially for people who rely on public transport.” – Female, 67 years old

”

Many people with disability are left in the dark about why they weren't successful. The majority (54%) say they had no response to job applications, so they don't know why they were unsuccessful. Nearly two in 10 said being able to ask questions beforehand and knowing who to contact to ask those questions (19% respectively) also would have made it easier for them to find a job.

Even when employed, there is a disconnect between jobseekers' experiences at work, and what employers say they are doing to create inclusive workplaces.

Fewer than one in five (19%) unemployed jobseekers say their most recent employer created an inclusive workplace where they felt comfortable and valued, while even fewer say wellbeing resources were available to all staff (15%), or that leaders proactively checked if they needed support to manage their disability or health condition (12%).

Including people with disability in the design of policies and processes that affect them would be a great way for employers to ensure the actions they are taking have the desired impact. More than a third of businesses (35%) say they only include people with disabilities or health conditions in the development of workplace processes and policies to some extent, or not at all.

Did you know?

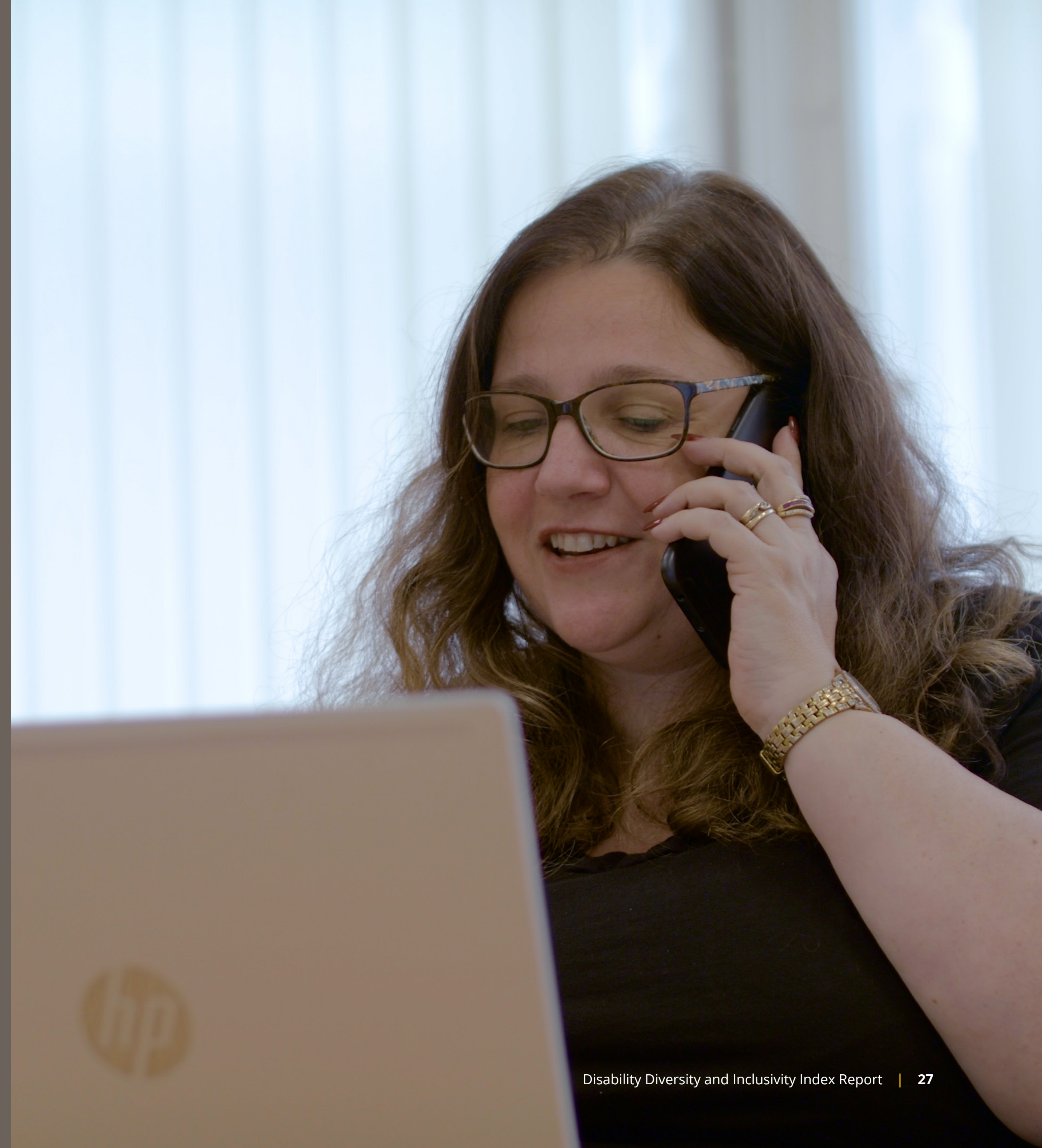
People with disability have huge spending power. “The Purple Pound” hold £274 billion of spending power each year in the UK¹⁰. The Purple Pound refers to the spending power of disabled households. A disabled household is a household in which at least one of the members has a disability.

£
1

¹⁰ The Purple Pound – Infographic – Purple (wearepurple.org.uk)

Key Finding 5

If you're an employer, a good question to ask yourself is: *Does my workplace culture support staff to speak up about their needs at work? Do I have employees who have felt safe to disclose their disability or health condition? How do I know this?* This can provide you with an indication of whether or not you have created a psychologically safe work environment.





Key Finding 5

Jobseekers with disability have the same desires and expectations as other workers.

People with disability searching for employment want the same things all employees want. When asked what the most important things in a job were to them – other than income – the majority (51%) said they want to do something they really enjoy. Other top priorities for employment include feeling safe and welcome (41%), flexible work hours (39%), and a boss who genuinely considers and accommodates my needs (31%).

It's clear that information, awareness and confidence are key to closing the expectation gap between employers and people with disability. The Disability Confident¹¹ scheme helps employers recruit and retain great people while increasing the understanding of disability. It's a movement critical to dispelling myths and creating a positive working environment where people with disability have every opportunity to succeed and employers can reap the benefits of a high-functioning, inclusive work environment.

Key Job Requirements

People with disability	All jobseekers	Factor
51%	42%	Doing something I really enjoy
41%	32%	Feeling safe and welcome
39%	37%	Flexible work hours, for starting/finishing times and days of the week
31%	27%	A boss who genuinely considers and accommodates my needs

Q: Other than income, what are the three MOST important things to you in a job? Please select up to three. n=337 employed/unemployed people with disability, n=1065 general population

¹¹Disability Confident: list of employers that have signed up, Department of Work and Pensions, January 2023

Conclusion

Jobseekers with disabilities and health conditions have the same desires and expectations as other workers. But, with the disability employment gap at 29.8% and jobseekers with disabilities currently twice as likely to feel anxious and scared they will never find a job, there is still a considerable distance to travel before disability, diversity and inclusivity is fully achieved in our workplaces.

Ingeus' 2023 inaugural Disability and Diversity and Inclusion research found UK businesses are open to hiring people with disability or health conditions, but there is a disconnect between employer attitudes to hiring people with disability and how jobseekers perceive their opportunities. These misperceptions can create barriers to employment that are frustrating for employers and prospective employees.

Opportunity Findings

A simple first step to maximising the availability of suitable and accessible roles includes making an employer's interest in hearing from candidates with disability clear in job advertisements. A willingness to adopt more flexible recruitment processes is also likely to attract not only candidates with disability, but a more diverse range of candidates generally. The most prevalent need for people with disability is flexible working hours, with the majority (61%) citing these as necessary to work in their current job.

Career Equity Findings

People with disability are frequently employed in fragile lower paid roles. Employers can improve job security and stability for people with disability by identifying opportunities to offer permanent or part-time employment, rather than less secure forms of employment, such as temporary roles. And supporting career progression will reduce the number of people with disability who struggle to get by, despite having a job.

Culture Findings

Job seekers with disability or health conditions say psychological safety is the number one enabler that would help them find suitable jobs (36%). More than one third of people with non-visible disability are uncomfortable disclosing their disability until they are entrenched in their role and either know the business and employees well enough to feel safe or are forced to disclose for some reason.

Finally, employers with no experience hiring people with disability fear there are business risks in doing so, suggesting a need for further education and a navigator to support employers to confidently employ people with disability. The role of government programmes and employability service providers is valued by jobseekers and employers alike, and further awareness of these programmes would continue to support our collective journey to disability equity.



Glossary

A number of terms used within this report are explained below:

Person with disability – an individual who is living with an injury, illness or disability, whether temporary or permanent.

Employability organisation – providers are UK Government-funded organisations, such as Ingeus, who assist people with disability to secure and remain in ongoing employment.

Disability – a health problem that lasts 12 months or is likely to last the rest of a person's life and limits the ability to carry out day-to-day activities either a lot or a little, as defined by the Equality Act (EA) of 2010. A person may be born with a disability, acquire a disability through a workplace incident or an accident, or develop a disability as they age. A disability may be visible or hidden, may be permanent or temporary, and may have minimal or substantial impact on a person's life. Mental health conditions are considered a disability.

Large employer – businesses that employ more than 200 people.

SME (small to medium enterprise) – a business that employs 200 people or less.

Psychological safety – the belief that you will not be punished or humiliated for your disability or health condition. You can express ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and your workplace is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.

References

[Employment of disabled people 2022](https://www.gov.uk) (www.gov.uk) (updated 26 January 2023)

[Government hits goal to see a million more disabled people in work](#), 17 May 2022

[Consultation outcome: Making flexible working the default](#) (www.gov.uk)

[Disability Confident: list of employers that have signed up](#), Department of Work and Pensions, January 2023

[Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition](#) (www.gov.uk)

[Disability Confident campaign](#), HM Government

[Invisible Disabilities in Education and Employment](#), January 2023, UK Parliament

[What is psychological safety?](#)



Where to from here? **Ingeus is here to help.**

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