

## **Education and training participation**

### **Key facts from the Life Opportunities Survey - Wave one results, 2009/11(1)**

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a large-scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain. Results from the full first wave of the survey were published on the 8th December 2011 and the information below presents some of the key findings from this report. The report and the key findings below update the interim findings that were published in December 2010 based on the first half of wave one interviews.

In addition to these results, presented in boxes are some of the previously published findings from the qualitative research that was commissioned to complement the statistics provided by the LOS(2).

The information below presents the educational attainment of adults, aged 16 and over, and the barriers to learning.

#### **Educational attainment**

As seen in Table 1, 15 per cent of adults with impairment(3) had a degree level qualification and 26 per cent had no formal qualifications.

The findings were similar when using the Equality Act definition of disability(3).

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1 [http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/los/index.php?page=los\\_wor](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/los/index.php?page=los_wor)

2 <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/life-opportunities-survey.php>

3 Please refer to the Introduction of the Life Opportunities Survey Wave one report, 2009/11, for the definition of impairment status.

**Table 1: Educational attainment for adults by impairment status, 2009/11**

| <b>Level of qualification</b>  | <b>Percentage of adults without impairment</b> | <b>Percentage of adults with impairment</b> |
|--|--|---|
| Degree level qualification (or equivalent)   | 26   | 15  |
| Higher educational qualification below degree level  | 9  | 8   |
| A-Levels or Highers  | 12   | 7   |
| ONC / National Level BTEC  | 5  | 5   |
| O Level or GCSE equivalent (Grade A-C) or O Grade/CSE equivalent (Grade 1) or Standard Grade level 1-3 | 19   | 18  |
| GCSE grade D-G or CSE grade 2-5 or Standard Grade level 4-6  | 5  | 6   |
| Other qualifications (including foreign qualifications below degree level)                             | 11   | 15  |
| No formal qualifications   | 12   | 26  |

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave One Results, 2009/11

### **Barriers to learning opportunities**

11 per cent of adults did not have access to all of the learning opportunities they wanted. Adults with impairment were more likely to experience a participation restriction to learning opportunities than adults without impairment (16 per cent and 9 per cent respectively).

Of those who experienced a barrier to learning, the most common barrier was financial reasons. This was identified by 48 per cent of adults with impairment and 55 per cent of adults without impairment.

The cost of education was a particular concern for younger participants with impairment who took part in the qualitative research.

“I need to study to do the other job that I want to do but it’s the expense of studying and the fact I couldn’t work and then pay for the studying.”

Being too busy or not having enough time was also a common barrier. Adults without impairment were more likely to identify this as a barrier than adults with impairment (40 per cent and 21 per cent respectively).

The qualitative research shows how different barriers can interact to limit access to learning opportunities. For example, some participants with impairment who wanted to retrain felt that they did not have enough time to do so.

“If I had 48-hour days, I’d be fine because I could still work 10 hours and then go and study and fit in sleep somewhere.... I’m only 20 and I’m trying to do my best.”

However, daytime classes were not suitable for participants with impairment who were working during the day, and attending evening classes was regarded as problematic because public transport was less frequent later in the day.

Adults with impairment also identified difficulty with transport (20 per cent), lack of information (20 per cent), no learning opportunities available (19 per cent), lack of help or assistance (17 per cent) and difficulty getting on course or refused a place (12 per cent) as barriers to learning opportunities.

Difficulties with transport were highlighted as a barrier to accessing learning opportunities by participants in the qualitative research.

“I must admit I would love to go back to college but they’re just too far away.... for me to get from here to the college is three buses and you have to be there by nine o’clock.”