

Accessibility outside the home

Key facts from the Life Opportunities Survey interim results, 2009/10

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a new large scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain. Interim results from the first year of the two year baseline survey were published on the 9th December 2010(1) and the information below presents some of the key facts from this report. In addition to these results, presented in boxes are some of the findings from the qualitative research that was commissioned to complement the statistics provided by the LOS(1).

The information below explores the accessibility of buildings other than the home. Accessibility is explored in terms of the experiences of adults(2) getting into buildings and moving around or using facilities within them.

Buildings where difficulty with accessibility was experienced

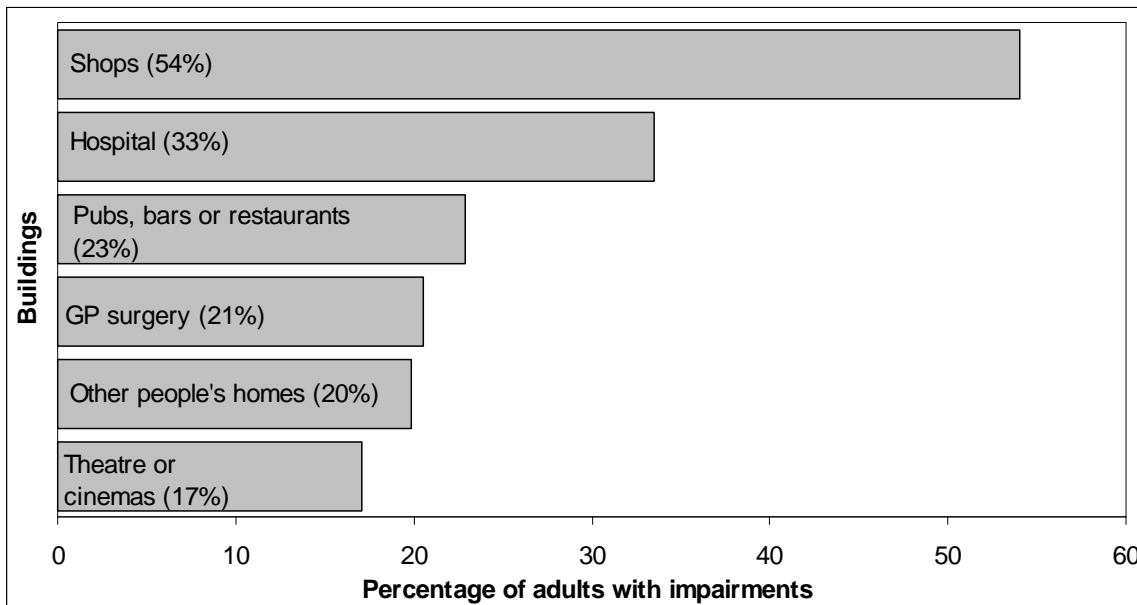
- Just under a third (29 per cent) of adults with impairments(3) found some buildings inaccessible compared with under a tenth (7 per cent) of adults without impairments.
- As seen in Figure 1, among adults with impairments the type of building where inaccessibility was reported most often was shops (54 per cent).
- The second most commonly reported building was hospitals (33 per cent), followed by pubs, bars or restaurants (23 per cent) and then GP surgeries (21 per cent).
- The findings are similar when using the Disability Discrimination Act(DDA) definition of disability(3).

1 See <http://www.odi.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/life-opportunities-survey.php> for more information.

2 Results presented are from adults (those aged 16 and over) who were interviewed as part of the LOS between June 2009 and March 2010.

3 Please refer to the definition of DDA disability and adults with impairments included in Chapter 1 of the LOS Interim Report, 2009/10.

Figure 1: Six most common buildings where difficulty with access was experienced for adults with impairments, 2009/10



Source: Office for National Statistics

Barriers to accessing buildings

- The most common barriers to accessing buildings among adults with impairments were:
 - moving around the building – for reasons related to stairs, doors or narrow corridors (42 per cent)
 - inadequate lifts or escalators (23 per cent)
 - parking problems (22 per cent)
 - approach areas – due to lack of ramps/handrails (21 per cent)
 - footpath design and surfaces (15 per cent)
 - difficulty with transport getting to the building (14 per cent)
 - lack of help or assistance (14 per cent)

The qualitative research shows the importance of having access to a good and accessible transport network in order to enable adults with impairments to access shops, including in areas where local services have been withdrawn.

“When the Post Office was there we could pay electricity and water. But when they done away with it the nearest place is four miles. When you get to our age you need facilities nearer to hand because it’s difficult to travel long distances.”

Participants with impairments also reported problems such as a lack of disabled parking bays close to the place they wanted to shop. Others described difficulties using a wheelchair in crowded places. Some participants

with impairments chose to manage these barriers by shopping outside of peak hours.

Participants with impairments in the qualitative research identified two key factors that made it difficult to access hospitals. The first was lack of transport to the hospital. For example, some expressed concerns about arriving on time for appointments as they did not know whether someone would be available to drive them to the hospital. The second was the time limit for parking at the hospital, meaning that some felt they ran the risk of being fined when their appointment took longer than expected.