

## **Education and training participation**

### **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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 presents the educational attainment of adults(2), along with the barriers to learning opportunities.

#### **Educational attainment**

- A majority of disabled adults, as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)(3), had lower levels of educational attainment than non-disabled adults. This is the same when compared with the Office for Disability Issues disability equality indicator(4) B8 – ‘Highest educational qualifications in working age population’.
- As seen in Figure 1, just over one quarter (27 per cent) of adults with impairments(3) had no formal qualifications.

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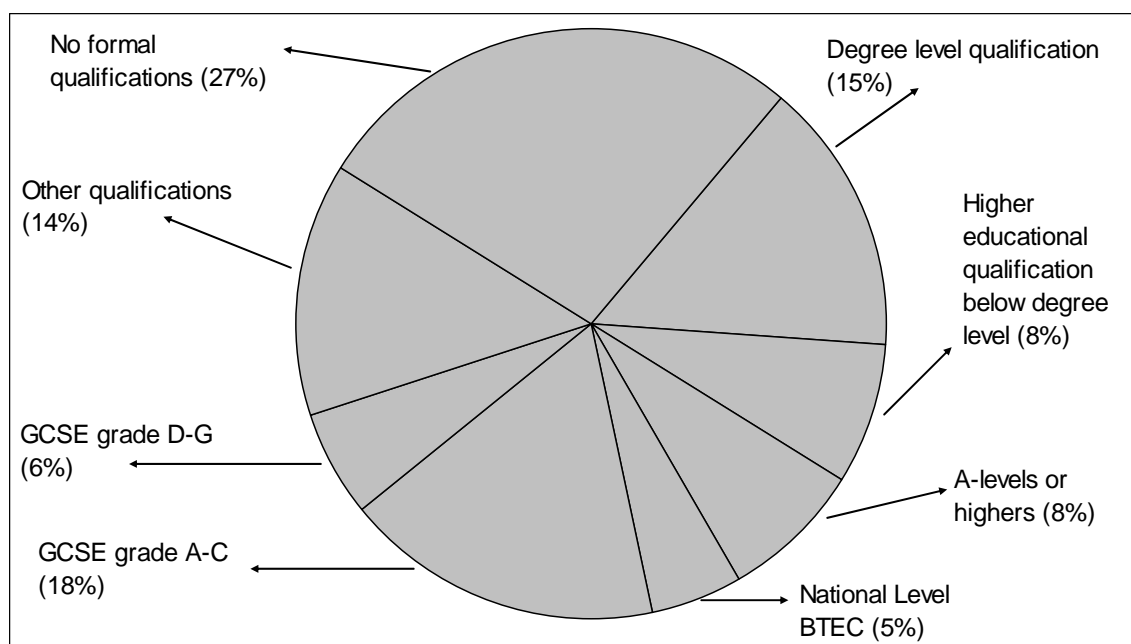
1 See <http://www.odi.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/life-opportunities-survey.php> for more information.

2 Results presented are from adults (aged 16 to 69) 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.

4 Further information regarding the Disability Equality Indicators can be found at [www.odi.gov.uk/indicators](http://www.odi.gov.uk/indicators)

**Figure 1: Summary of educational attainment of adults with impairments, 2009/10**



Source: Office for National Statistics

### **Barriers to learning opportunities**

- Just over one in ten (12 per cent) adults did not have access to all of the learning opportunities they wanted. Adults with impairments were almost twice as likely as adults without impairments to experience a barrier to learning (17 per cent compared to 9 per cent).
- Of those who experienced a barrier to learning, the most common barrier was financial reasons. This was identified by 46 per cent of adults with impairments and 52 per cent of adults without impairments.

The cost of education was a particular concern for younger participants with impairments 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.”

- The second most common barrier was being too busy or not having enough time. Adults without impairments were more likely to identify this as a barrier than adults with impairments (40 per cent and 23 per cent respectively).

The qualitative research shows how different barriers can interact to limit access to learning opportunities. For example, some participants with impairments 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 impairments 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 impairments were also likely to identify difficulties with transport (18 per cent), lack of help or assistance (17 per cent), having difficulty getting on a course or being refused a place (12 per cent) and the attitudes of other people (9 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.”

- In addition, 5 per cent of people with impairments reported that having difficulty getting into buildings was a barrier to accessing learning opportunities.