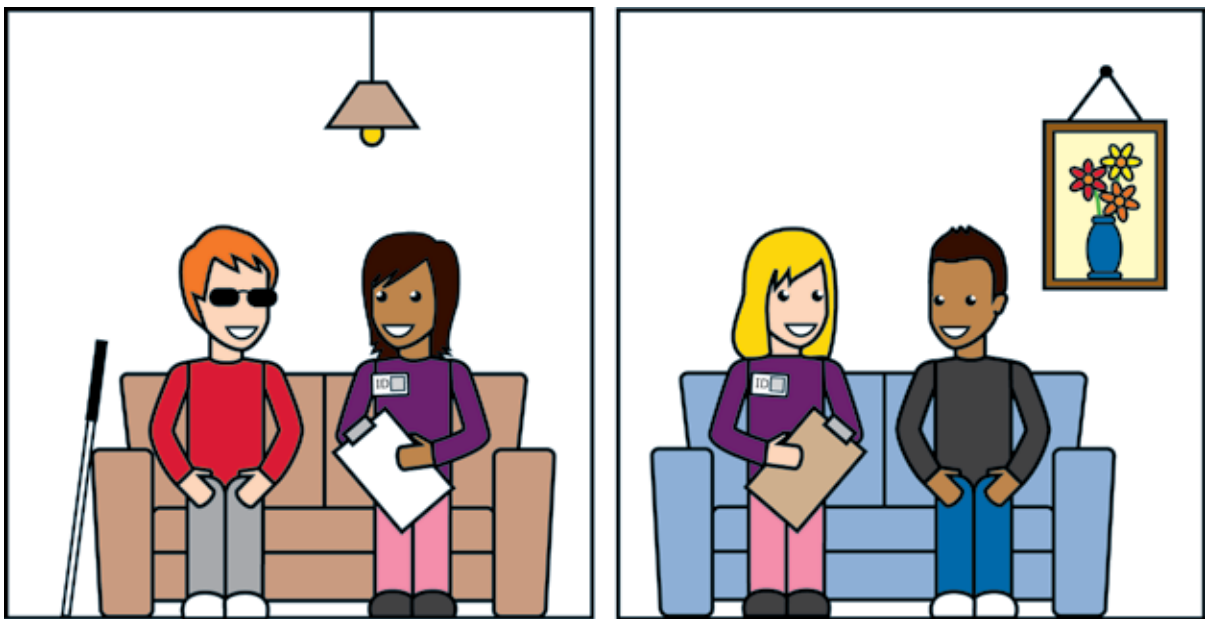




Office for Disability Issues

HM Government



The Life Opportunities Survey 2009-2010

Information from people who did not take part in the survey



Easy Read

Important

This is a big booklet, and we do not expect you to read all of it. Instead, look at the list of contents on page 1. It shows what is in the booklet. Look down the list to find things you want to read about.

Purple writing

In this Easy Read booklet we sometimes explain what words mean.

The first time we mention any of these words, it is in **bold purple** writing. We then write what the words mean in a blue box.

These words and what they mean are also in a Words list at the back of the booklet.

If any of the words are used later in the booklet, we show them in **normal purple** writing. If you see words in **normal purple** writing, you can look up what they mean by looking for the blue box earlier in the booklet, or by looking at the Words list.

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Contents

- What this booklet is about 2
 - About the Life Opportunities Survey 4
- What we did 7
 - What we talked to people about 8
 - About the people we filmed 10
- What we found out 11
 - Taking part in different areas of life 11
 - Education and training services 11
 - Working or trying to find work 12
 - Using cars, buses, trains and taxis 14
 - Using spare time 16
 - Keeping in touch with friends and family 17
- What we found out
 - The things that help people to take part 18
 - Using buses and trains 19
 - Support from family members 20
 - Access to equipment and adaptations 21
 - Using voluntary disability organisations 22
 - The way other people think and act 22
 - Buildings that are not accessible 23
 - Not having much money 23
 - The person’s impairment or health condition 23
- Word list 24

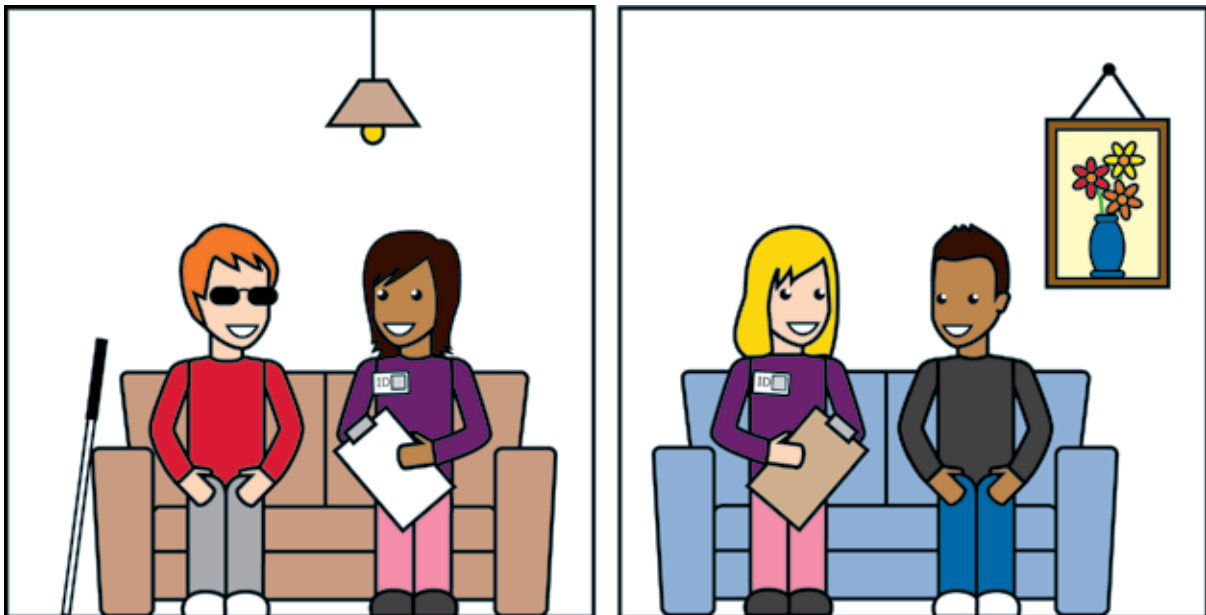
What this booklet is about

The Life Opportunities Survey is a big new **survey** that started in June 2009.

Survey

This is when we ask a big group of people a lot of questions to find out what they think about something.

The Life Opportunities **Survey** tells us a lot about the lives of disabled people and what needs to be done so that disabled people get full **equality**.



Equality

This means having the same chances in life as everyone else.

We spoke to a lot of people with different **impairments** to find out what they think about different things, such as working, learning and using buses and trains.

Impairment

This is something about the way a person does things. It may be things like being unable to walk well, not being able to see or hear other people clearly, not being able to think hard for a long time, or not being able to remember things.

But we knew that some people with learning **impairments**, memory **impairments** and **neuro-diversity impairments** would not be able to answer all the questions in the **survey**.

Neuro-diversity

There are lots of neuro-diversity impairments. They include impairments like autism, dyslexia, schizophrenia, dementia and Parkinson's disease.

So, we set up a project that was aimed just at people with learning **impairments**, memory **impairments** and **neuro-diversity impairments**. We asked the questions in a different way so they would be able to answer them in their own way.

This let us include what these people said about their lives in the things we found out from the Life Opportunities **Survey**. This made sure no one was left out of the project.

This project was done by a group of **researchers** from a company called Ipsos Mori. This easy read booklet is about the report the **researchers** wrote for the **Office for Disability Issues**.

Researchers

These are people who find out about things. They write reports about what they find out.

Office for Disability Issues

This is a group of people working for the government. They help government workers learn more about disabled people, and they help to make things fairer for disabled people.

About the Life Opportunities Survey

This is the first big survey by the **Office for National Statistics** to look at how **barriers** can stop people with **impairments** from living their lives the way they want to.

Office for National Statistics

This is a government office that makes sure Parliament has really good information and facts about people's lives. It does **surveys** to find out information. The government then uses the information to think about how it spends taxpayers' money, what laws are needed, and what it should do to make things fairer.

Barriers

These are things that may stop people living their lives the way they want to, or stop them doing the everyday things they want to do. Barriers include things like being treated unfairly, or not getting enough support to do the things you want.

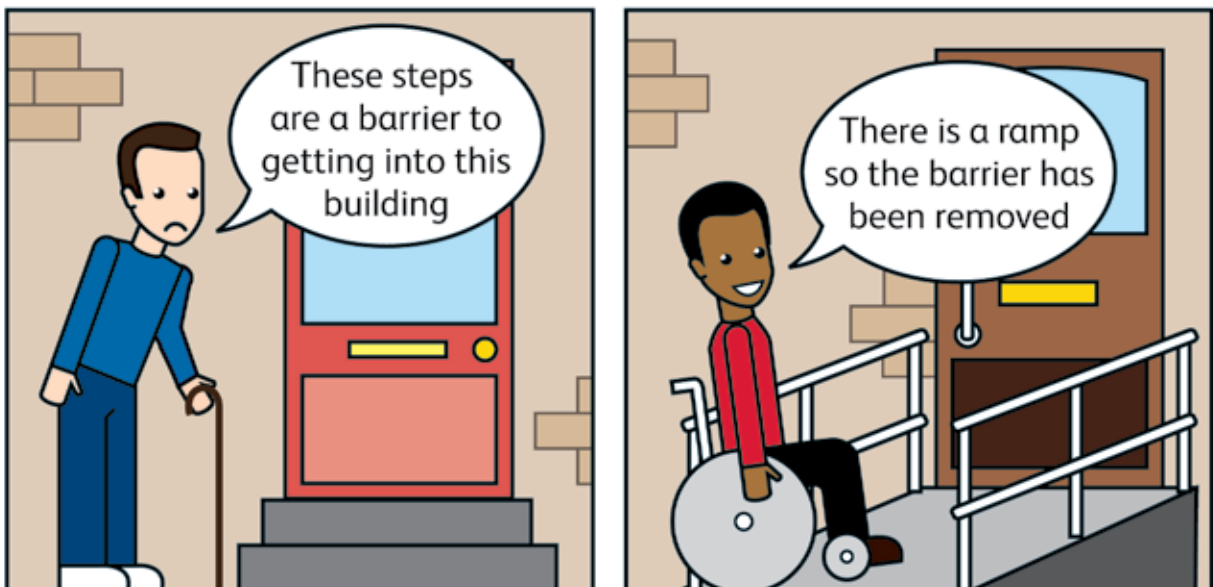
But having an impairment does not mean a person is **disabled**.

Disabled

We say someone is disabled if they have an **impairment** and **barriers** stop them doing the things in life that they want to do.

Barriers for adults with **impairments** included things like

- being treated unfairly.
- people thinking and acting towards them in a different way.
- buildings that wheelchair users cannot get about in.



- difficulty using transport services like buses and trains easily.
- not getting the equipment or changes to their way of working to help them live and work like other people.

When we did the Life Opportunities **Survey**, we talked to people with **impairments** and to people without **impairments** about many things. For example

- 1 Using learning and training services.
- 2 Working, or trying to find work.
- 3 Paying bills, a loan, or for a holiday.
- 4 Using transport services, like buses and trains.
- 5 Using spare time to do the things people enjoy – for example, sport and doing **voluntary work**.

Voluntary work

This is work people do for which they are not paid. For example, working in a charity shop or teaching children to play a sport.



- 6 Keeping in touch with friends and family.
- 7 Getting into different rooms at home.
- 8 Getting about outside.

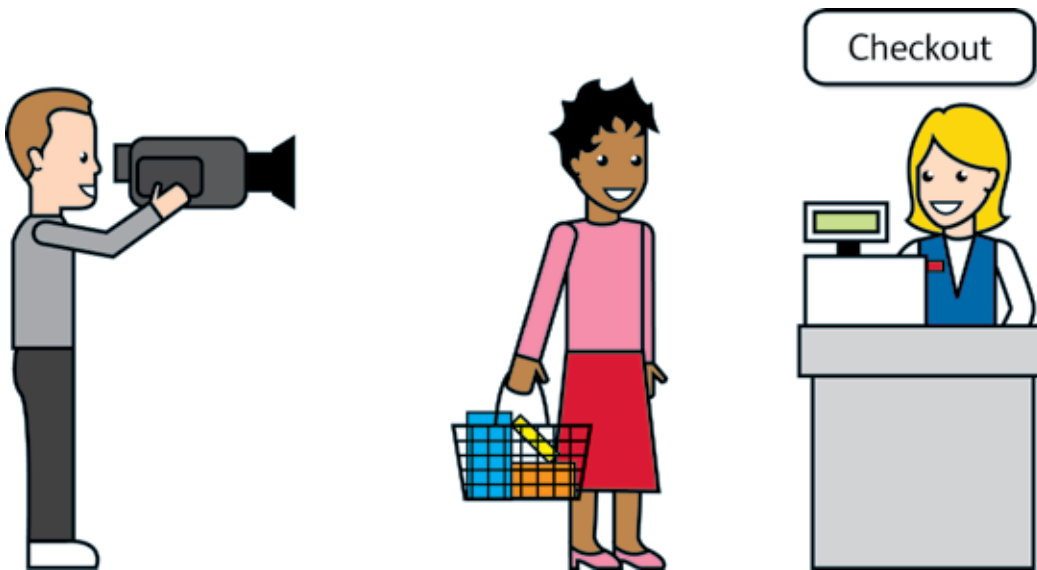
What we did

Earlier this year we talked to 25 people face-to-face to find out what they think. These people had learning **impairments**, memory **impairments** or **neuro-diversity impairments**. Some of these people had other **impairments** as well.

We asked these people questions about most of the things that were in the Life Opportunities **Survey**.

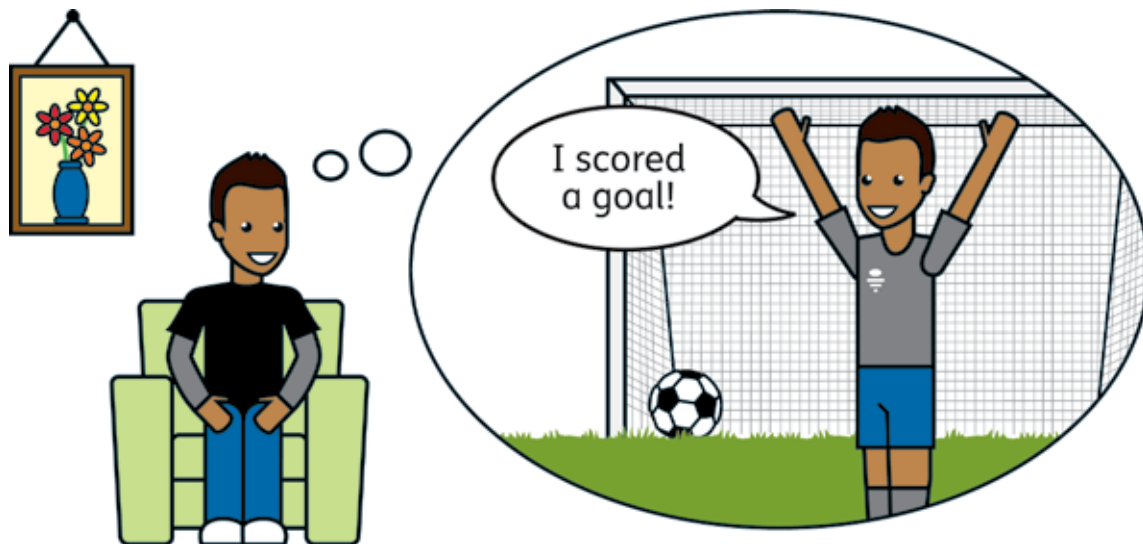
We made sure that these people could talk about things that had happened to them in their own way.

We also made 3 films that gave us a lot more information about the way people live and the **barriers** they face.



What we talked to people about

We asked these people to tell us about the things that had happened to them in different parts of their lives and what they wanted to happen in those parts of their lives.



We asked these people to tell us the **barriers** that were stopping them taking part in these 5 areas of their lives.

- using education and training services.
- working, or trying to find work.
- using buses and trains.
- using their spare time.
- keeping in touch with their friends and family.

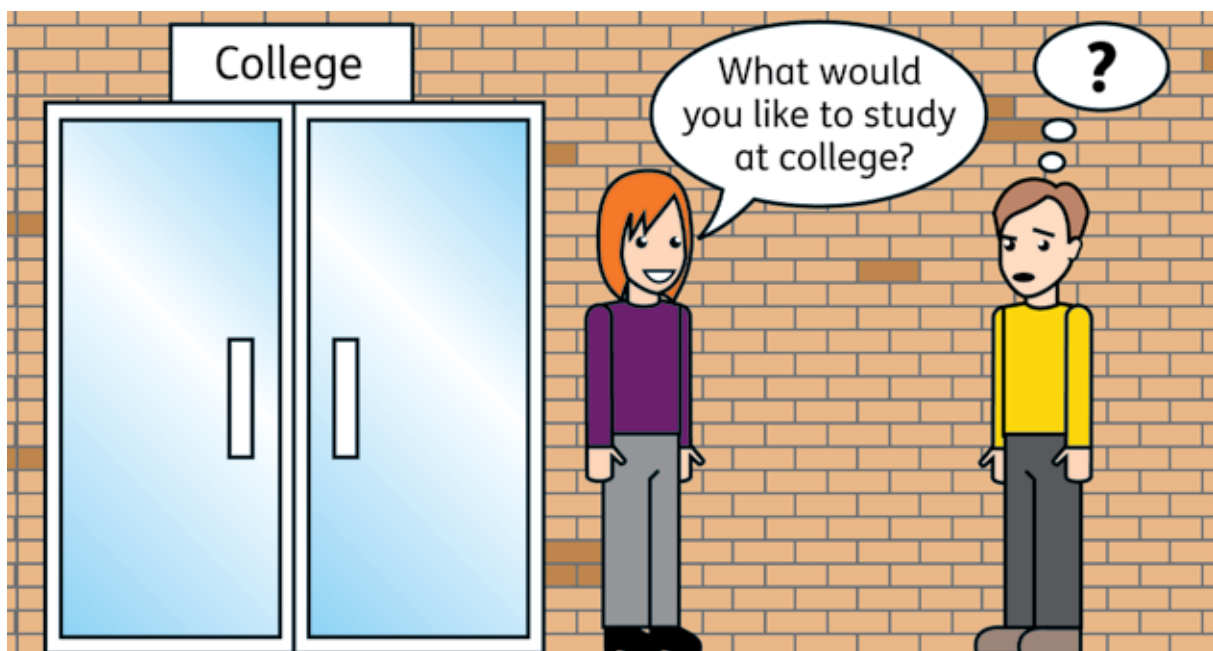
We also asked what could be changed to let them take part more in these 5 areas.

We started off by asking people to talk about what they liked and did not like about the 5 areas of their lives. We then asked them if they had been able to do the things they like as much as they wanted to.

We used pictures to help some people tell us about the things that had happened to them.

People found it easier to think about their normal day-to-day life. Most people could not answer the more difficult questions like

- should they work or not **or**
- what should they study at school or college.



Some people could not talk about these things at all. When this happened we asked a family member what they thought the person would say.

Some family members found it very hard to say what the person wanted to do, or wanted to change. But by doing this we did not leave these people out of the project.

About the people we filmed

We asked these people to do the things they normally do. Then we asked them questions about what they had done and what they thought about different things.

The films gave us a lot of information about the **barriers** these people had when they tried to do the things they wanted to do.

The films also helped us to make sure that people who could not speak and tell us answers were not left out of the project.

What we found out

Taking part in different areas of life

Education and training services

Of the people we talked to, 3 younger people with learning **impairments** were taking part in special education programmes which looked at life skills and **independent living**.

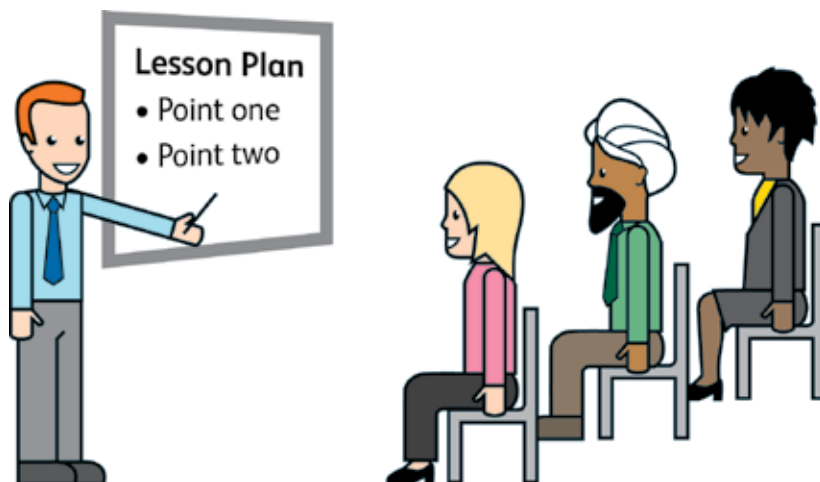
Independent living

This means people having choice and control over the care and support services they need to live their lives the way they want to.

Other people with different **impairments** had taken part in education and training in the past.

Family carers often helped people to find a course they wanted to do. This helps them take part in education or training.

Most older people felt that they were too old to learn or that their **impairment** would stop them learning. This was especially true for people with memory **impairments** to do with dementia.



Working or trying to find work

A few of the people we talked to had a job, either paid or unpaid. They had different feelings about their job.

One person wanted to get some training and get another job as she did not like what she was doing.

Another person was very happy in his job.

One person who was off work sick wanted to get back to work to stay independent.

Some people did **voluntary work**. They said it keeps them independent, but that they would like to be paid for doing the work.



People who did not have a job had different feelings about work.

Some people really wanted to work and thought about how they could manage to work with their **impairment**.

These people felt that they had the following **barriers** to work

- They would have to be trained to do the job.
- They thought that an employer would think about them in a bad way.
- They would have to be allowed to work flexible hours.



Some people felt that they were not able to work. Or a person who answered for someone with an **impairment** said the person with the impairment was not able to work.

Using cars, buses, trains and taxis

Most people we talked to needed help from other people to use cars, buses, trains or taxis.

Although most of these people live with someone who has a car, not all people with an **impairment** can drive, so they needed a family member to drive them around.

Having the use of a car was very important to people as they thought it was easier to use than buses and trains.

Many people used public transport, but usually they went with another person.

These are some of the **barriers** people talked about for buses and trains

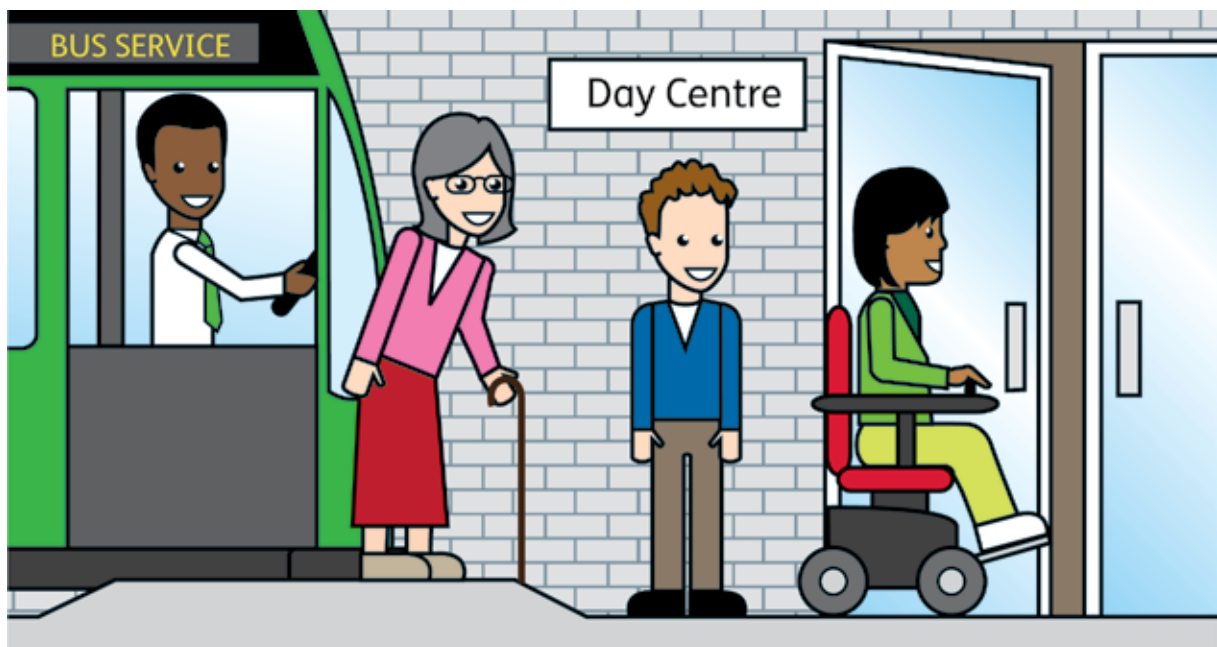
- Wheelchair spaces being taken up by suitcases or prams.
- Finding it hard to get on a bus because of steps or the step up to the bus being too high.
- No seats on the bus or at the bus stop.



In places where access to buses and trains had been made better with things like lifts in stations and step free access onto buses, more of the people we talked to used public transport.

People did not use taxis very often because they cost a lot more than public transport.

Many people we spoke to used door-to-door services like transport from their home to a day centre. People thought these services were very good as they got independence from family members and were very useful.



Using spare time

Most people we talked to took part in a lot of different activities in their spare time.

Some people went to day centres or social clubs which were run by voluntary disability groups. This let them do things they may not have been able to do.

Taking part in these activities also gave them the chance to meet other people, which they enjoyed.

Most people were happy with the activities they had access to. But some people who relied on activities run by day centres and charities wanted more short trips and days out.

Older people usually wanted fewer things than younger people. This is because they felt they could not do everything they used to do when they were younger.

Younger people often took part in activities run by day centres or colleges they went to, like discos, cooking and shopping, as well as seeing friends.

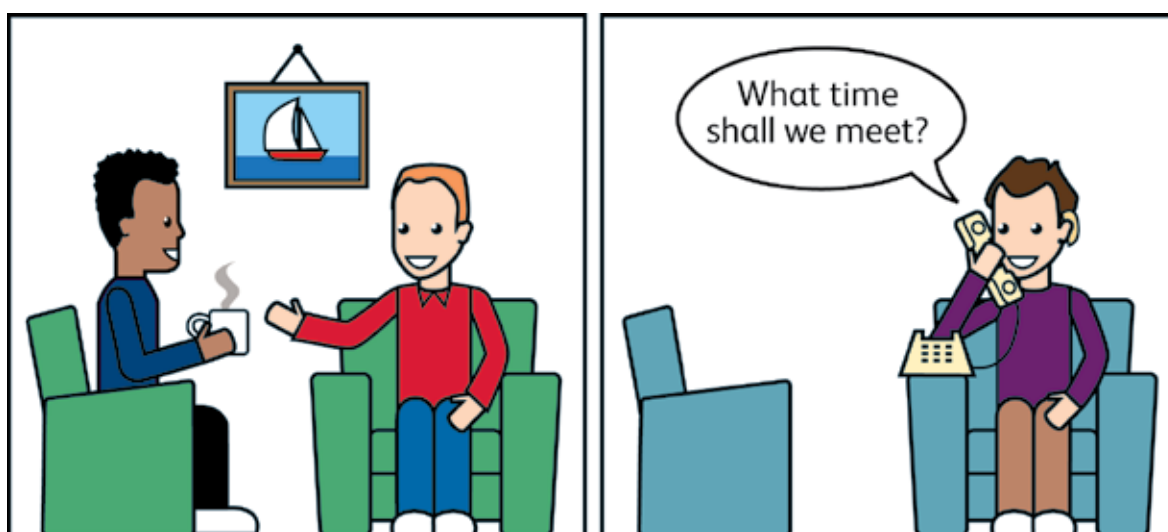


Some people wanted to be more independent, so they would not have to rely on family members when they were deciding what to do in their spare time, especially when they needed transport to the activities.

Keeping in touch with friends and family

Most people we spoke to had their close family and a few friends. They rely on this small group of people to help them meet new people.

Some people, often those people who felt more independent, knew more people and felt that they were able to see their friends and family when they wanted to.



We did not talk to anyone who did not usually meet or speak to anyone else. Most people we talked to lived with other people, like their parents, partners or children.

But some people, especially the older people with memory **impairments** to do with dementia, only saw and spoke to members of their family.

What we found out

The things that help people to take part

There are different things that stop people from doing what they want to do. These are called **barriers**. There are other things that help people to do what they want to do. These are called **enablers**.

Enablers

These are the things that help people to live their lives the way they want to, and do the everyday things other people do. Enablers at work include having a personal assistant and being allowed to change working hours.



The people we spoke to often talked about a number of **barriers** and **enablers** to taking part.

Most people found it easier to say what the **barriers** are rather than what the **enablers** are.

Using buses and trains

An important **enabler** is **accessible buses and trains**.

If accessible buses and trains are available, people can take part in different activities. But if **accessible buses and trains** are not available people cannot take part in the activities.

Accessible buses and trains

Accessible buses and trains are made so that people with impairments can use them easily. They have things like areas just for wheelchair users and ramps to make it easy to get on and off.

Accessible buses and trains are very important so that people can get to and take part in different activities.



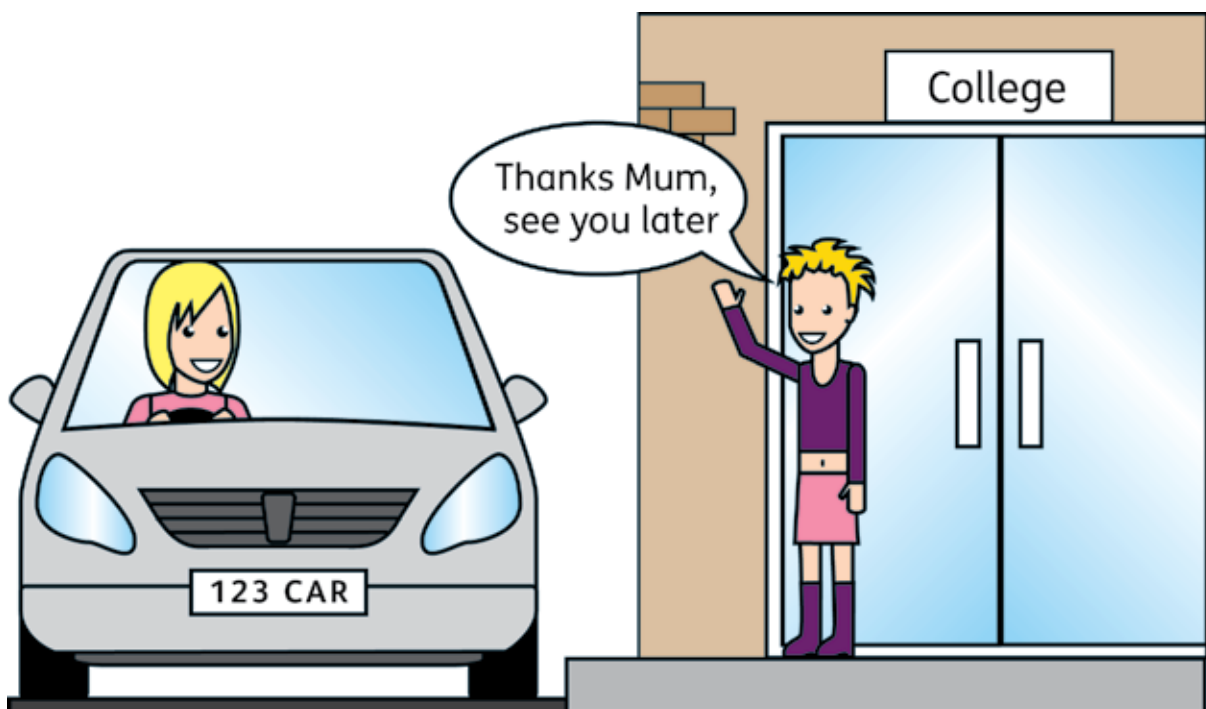
Support from family members

Support from family members is an important **enabler**. The help and support people got from family members played a big part in helping them take part and choose what they want from the different life areas.

Family members were very important when people wanted help with things like

- choosing what type of course to take at school or college.
- choosing the type of job they wanted to do.
- finding out about benefits.
- doing new things and going to new places.

Some people also needed family members to take them or go with them to school or college, the place where they work or when they went somewhere in their spare time.



Access to equipment and adaptations

Access to equipment and adaptations is an important **enabler** for some people.

For example, some people who got help from the **Motability Scheme** thought it was very useful. This is because it cut down the cost of running a car and let them choose an accessible vehicle.

Motability Scheme

This is a scheme that lets disabled people use part of their benefit to rent a car, a powered wheelchair or a scooter.

Other people could not think of any equipment or adaptations that would help them to take part in the different life areas.

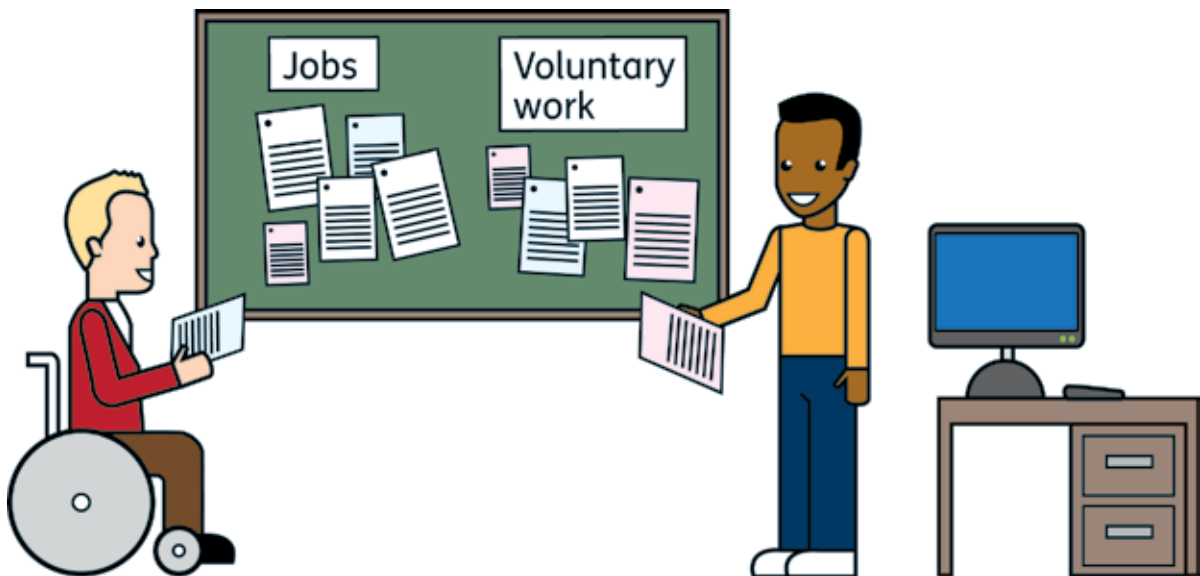


Using voluntary disability organisations

People who used voluntary disability organisations had a bigger choice of activities and jobs.

This is because voluntary disability organisations organise activities and give people the chance to do voluntary work. This gives people more independence.

This means that voluntary disability organisations were an important **enabler** for the people who used them.



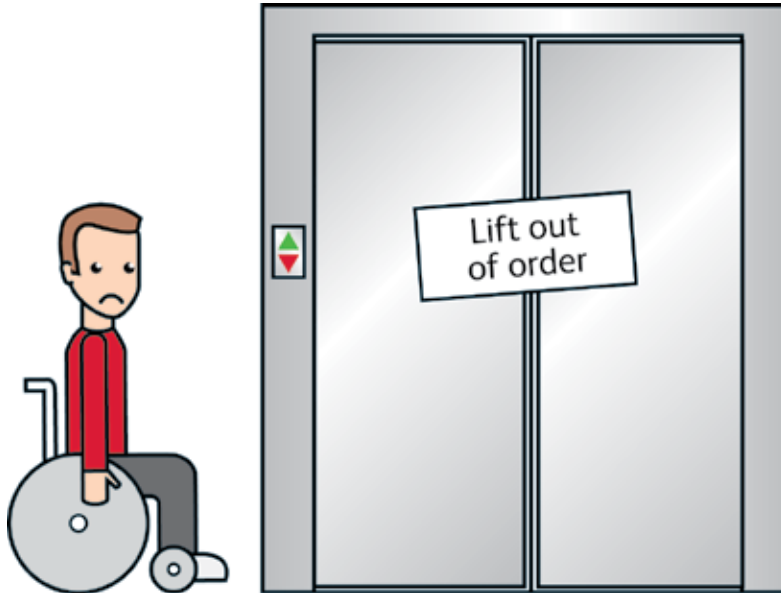
The way other people think and act

The way other people think and act towards people with **impairments** was sometimes a **barrier** to taking part in different life areas. This is because it could stop people from doing what they wanted to.

A few people talked about being bullied and people acting towards them in a bad way. This put them off going to school or college.

Buildings that are not accessible

Some buildings are not accessible for people with **impairments**. This can be a **barrier** to them taking part in activities in their spare time and can also stop them from meeting up with other people.



Not having much money

A few people said that not having much money was a **barrier** to them taking part in education, activities and using public transport.

The person's impairment or health condition

Some people said that their **impairment** or health condition stopped them getting a job, taking part in activities and staying with friends or other people.

Some people who gave answers for someone with an **impairment** said the same thing. This was mainly the case for people with dementia.

Word list

Accessible buses and trains

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Researchers

These are people who find out about things. They write reports about what they find out4

Survey

This is when we ask a big group of people a lot of questions to find out what they think about something2

Voluntary work

This is work people do for which they are not paid. For example, working in a charity shop or teaching children to play a sport6

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More information

You can get more information about the Life Opportunities Survey on our website at www.odi.gov.uk

ISBN: 978-1-84947-470-2

Produced by the Office for Disability Issues

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Produced in the UK, December 2010