

## Policy background and introduction

This publication provides detailed breakdowns of the characteristics of disabled and non-disabled people by employment status. These are additional to those available from the regular National Statistics estimates of overall disability employment published by the Office for National Statistics, as part of their UK Labour Market statistics bulletin: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/labourmarketstatusofdisabledpeoplea08>

It provides a more comprehensive picture of the situation in 2017, the starting point for the government's goal to see one million more disabled people in work by 2027, as set out in *Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability* in November 2017. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability>

*Improving lives* stated that a clear and ambitious goal was important to drive significant improvements in disability employment, but that it was also important to look at a broader evidence base to understand the trends.

There is currently no reliable data available to monitor trends since 2017, due to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) placing health warnings on their more recent estimates from the Labour Force Survey while they investigate an unexpected increase in numbers of people reporting disabilities from July-September 2017. More details on these health warnings are available from the link above. Until ONS conclude their investigations and provide further advice on how to use the more recent figures, the analysis presented here is limited to time periods up to April-June 2017.

To support a broader evidence base, this publication also provides comparisons of high-level estimates between different data sources. Estimates of disability employment at a given point in time are compared between the Labour Force Survey and the Family Resources Survey – a large household survey led by DWP (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-resources-survey--2>).

Estimates of movements in and out of work are compared between the Annual Population Survey variant of the Labour Force Survey and Understanding Society – a household longitudinal survey led by a team of scientific experts based at research centres across the UK (<https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/about>).

These alternative data sources are less timely than the Labour Force Survey and based on smaller sample sizes, so are not suitable for more detailed analyses. However, for overall estimates of disability employment, they show that the general trends are similar across different sources.

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Comments? Feedback is welcome

# Characteristics of working age disabled people in relation to employment

## All disabled people

See **Table 1** for full data

- Based on estimates previously published by the Office for National Statistics (see page 1), 17% of working age people in the UK reported that they were disabled in April-June 2017.
- 3.5 million disabled people (49.2%) were in employment in April-June 2017, an increase of 600,000 (5.6 percentage points) in four years.
- 80.6% of non-disabled people were in employment. The disability employment rate gap was 31.3 percentage points, having narrowed by 1.8 points in four years.

## Age

See **Table 2** for full data

- Disability prevalence increases with age. Those aged 50-64 account for 43% of all working age (16-64) disabled people.
- The employment rates for disabled people is highest for the 25-34 age group (at 60%).
- The non-disabled employment rate is higher than the disabled employment rate across all age groups.

## Gender

See **Table 3** for full data

- Over half (57%) of people reporting disabilities are women.
- Around half of disabled men and women are in employment (50% and 49% respectively).

## Health condition

See **Table 4** for full data

- Over half of disabled people report a mental health or musculoskeletal condition as their main health condition – 54% of those in work and 53% of those out of work.
- The highest employment rates (over 60%) are found among those whose main health condition is classified under 'severe disfigurements, skin conditions or allergies', 'difficulty in hearing' or 'problems with the stomach, liver, kidney or digestive system'.
- The lowest employment rates (under 30%) are found among those whose main condition was learning difficulties, mental illness or epilepsy.

## Highest Qualifications

See **Table 5** for full data

- 18% of disabled people and 32% of non-disabled people have a degree.
- 71% of disabled people with a degree are in work, compared with 20% of disabled people with no qualification.

## Full- and part-time employment

See **Table 6** for full data

- 36% of disabled people in employment work part-time, compared with 24% of non-disabled people in employment.

## Industry

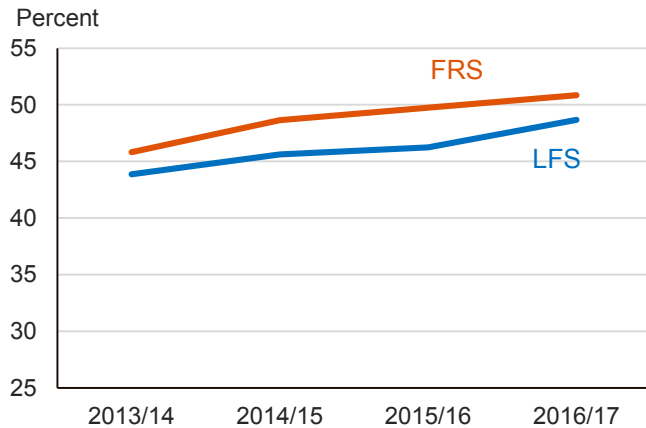
See **Table 7** for full data

- 42% of disabled people in employment are concentrated in the three largest industry sectors: health and social work; wholesale and retail; and education. This compares with 36% of non-disabled people in employment.

# Disabled people in employment: a comparison of sources

## The employment rate for disabled people is increasing in both data sources

Estimates from the Labour Force Survey and Family Resources Survey, 2013/14 to 2016/17



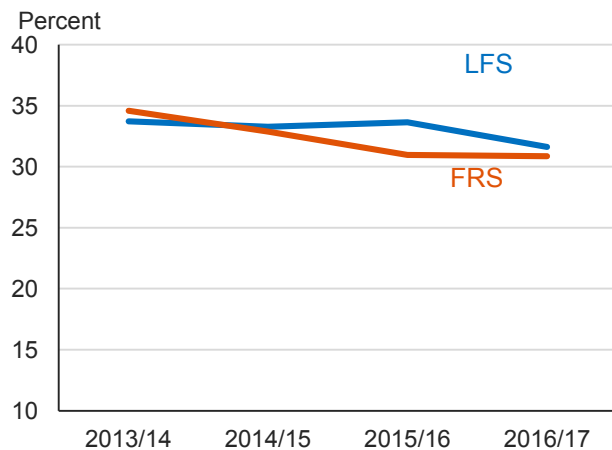
The estimated employment rate for disabled people is slightly higher in the Family Resources Survey than the Labour Force Survey. However, both surveys suggest an increase of around 5 percentage points between 2013/14 and 2016/17.

Both sources suggest that around 1 in 5 working age people report a disability in the UK, although the proportion is slightly higher in the Family Resources Survey, having increased faster over this period.

See **Table 8** for full data.

## The disability employment rate gap is falling in both data sources

Estimates from the Labour Force Survey and Family Resources Survey, 2013/14 to 2016/17



The disability employment gap is defined as the difference between the employment rates for disabled and non-disabled people.

Both sources show that the gap has fallen between 2013/14 and 2016/17, although it was slightly higher in the Labour Force Survey at the end of that period (32 percentage points compared with 31 percentage points).

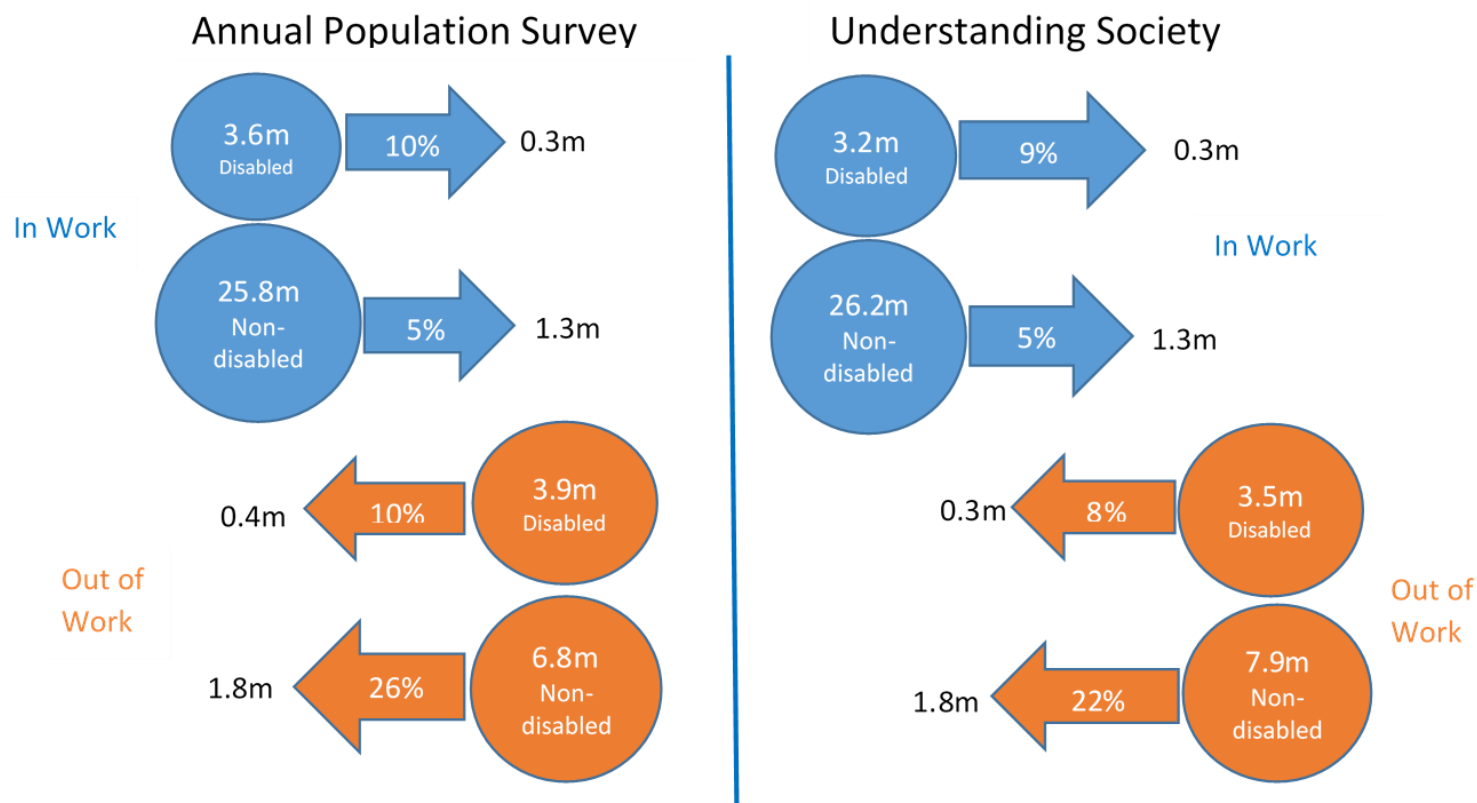
See **Table 8** for full data.

It is clear that there are some differences between the data sources, despite using the same definition of disability and asking respondents the same harmonised questions. This may not be surprising, given that the designs of the underlying surveys are different, and disability status is a subjective concept self-reported by the respondents. However, the results suggest that these sources can be used to validate the other's estimates of high-level trends in disability employment, and provide a more robust picture than one source alone.

# Moves in and out of work by disability status: a comparison of sources

## Similar proportions moving in and out of work in both data sources

Estimates from the Labour Force Survey (Annual Population Survey) and Understanding Society, 2014-2015 to 2015-2016



The estimates of moves in to and out of work based on the Annual Population Survey have previously been published in *Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability* (see page 1). We have used Understanding Society to compare these trends.

The total populations (shown in the circles) are specific to this analysis of movements, so will not match leading cross-sectional estimates, as presented in Table 1 and *Improving lives*. There are some differences in these populations, reflecting slight differences in survey questions, as well as differences in survey design.

However, the volumes and proportions of people moving in and out of work are similar between the two sources.

In both sources, disabled people who are in work are twice as likely to move out of work (9-10%) as non-disabled people (5%).

In both sources, disabled people who are out of work are around three times less likely than non-disabled people to move into work, although these proportions are slightly lower in Understanding Society estimates.

See **Table 9** for full data.

## About these statistics

The figures presented in this ad hoc statistical release are based on data from a number of UK household surveys:

- The Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey are produced by the Office for National Statistics (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/methodologies/labourforcesurveyuserguidance>)
- The Family Resources Survey is led by the Department for Work and Pensions (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-resources-survey--2>).
- Understanding Society is a household longitudinal survey led by a team of scientific experts based at research centres across the UK (<https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/about>).

### Definitions

The definition of disability used in this release is the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Harmonised Standard definition, in line with the Equality Act 2010 core definition. This is consistent with the definition used in National Statistics estimates of disability employment published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). In summary, it includes people who have a long-term physical or mental health condition that affects their day-to-day activities. The full definition is given in the 'Guidance' sheet alongside the Tables for this release.

Employment is defined in the same way as National Statistics published by ONS in their UK Labour Market statistics bulletin, which in turn follow internationally-agreed guidelines set out by the International Labour Organisation:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/previousReleases>

### Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics

The Code of Practice for Statistics (the Code) is built around three main concepts, or pillars: Trustworthiness, Quality and Value.

- Trustworthiness – is about having confidence in the people and organisations that publish statistics.
- Quality – is about using data and methods that produce assured statistics.
- Value – is about publishing statistics that support society's needs for information.

The following explains how we have applied the pillars of the Code in a proportionate way.

#### Trustworthiness

Labour Force Survey, Annual Population Survey and Family Resources Survey data have been produced in line with the Code and are used in highly-scrutinised National Statistics publications. Understanding Society is led by a team of scientific experts based at research centres across the UK.

#### Quality

The data sources used in this release are already used for similar analyses in National Statistics publications. The specific analyses included here have been quality-assured, including through peer-review, plausibility checks and validation against other published sources.

#### Value

This ad hoc release provides a detailed picture of disability employment in 2017, the starting point for the government's goal to see one million more disabled people in work by 2027, as set out in *Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability* in November 2017.

Making this information accessible provides Ministers and stakeholders with an overview of disability employment, while helping to reduce the administrative burden of answering Parliamentary Questions, Freedom of Information requests and ad hoc queries.

By comparing high-level estimates from different data sources, this release also provides an evidence base drawing on a number of different sources, enabling a more rounded picture of broad trends.