



The Employment of Disabled People

Data to 2019

- Annual

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United Kingdom

Official Statistics

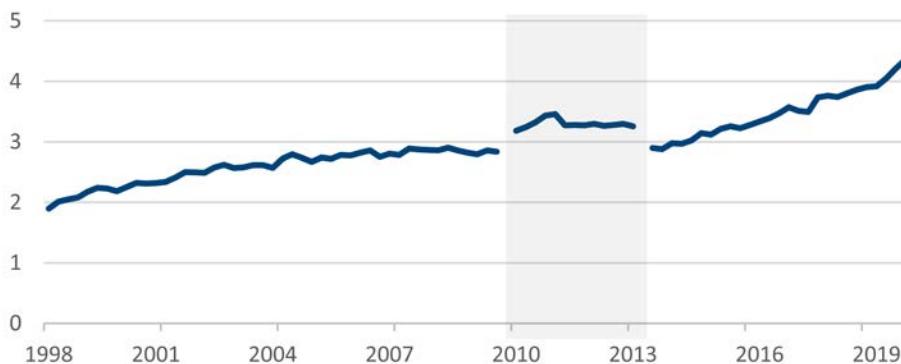
These statistics relate to the employment of working age disabled people in the UK. They provide context for the government's goal to see one million more disabled people in work between 2017 and 2027, and its commitment to reduce the employment rate gap with non-disabled people.

Main stories

- Employment is increasing for disabled people across a range of measures
- Increases in the number of disabled people in employment are linked with increases in the size of the disabled population and overall employment rates, as well as a narrowing of the disability employment gap.

More disabled people are in work

Employment level of working age disabled people (millions),
UK, Q2 1998 to Q4 2019



The number of disabled people in employment has generally increased over the last two decades, under different definitions – particularly since 2013, when the latest definition begins.

The employment rate gap is closing

Disability employment rate gap (percentage points),
UK, Q2 1998 to Q4 2019



The gap between employment rates for disabled and non-disabled people is lower than in 2013, when the latest series begins.

At a glance

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Comments? Feedback is welcome

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What you need to know

Measuring disability and employment

Estimates of disability in this release are split into three different time periods, based on how the data was collected at the time (self-reported by survey respondents). These are consistent with the definitions used in National Statistics estimates of disability employment published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as part of their Labour Market Overview release.

The most recent estimates, from April 2013 onwards, use the Government Statistical Service (GSS) Harmonised Standard definition of disability, in line with the Equality Act 2010 (EA) core definition. In summary, it includes people of working age (16-64) who have a long-term physical or mental health condition that affects their day-to-day activities.

Between January 2010 and March 2013, it was based on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) definition, which is similar, but results in a break in the series.

Prior to 2010, data was also based on the DDA definition of disability, but only collected for women aged 16-59 years and men aged 16-64 (the definition of working age at the time). Some small changes to the questionnaire wording also impacted on survey respondents' reporting behaviour at this time, contributing to a further break in the series.

All estimates for people who are "not disabled" refer to those not disabled under the definitions above, regardless of whether they may be disabled under any other definition.

Employment and other labour market concepts used in this release are defined in the same way as National Statistics published by ONS in their Labour Market Overview release, 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>

Full definitions are given in the 'Background information and methodology' note alongside this release.

Most estimates in this release are based on versions of the Labour Force Survey (LFS). To support a broader evidence base, it also compares high-level estimates with alternative data sources (the Family Resources Survey and Understanding Society). These alternative data sources are less timely than the LFS and have smaller sample sizes, so are not suitable for more detailed analyses. However, they show that the general trends are similar across different sources.

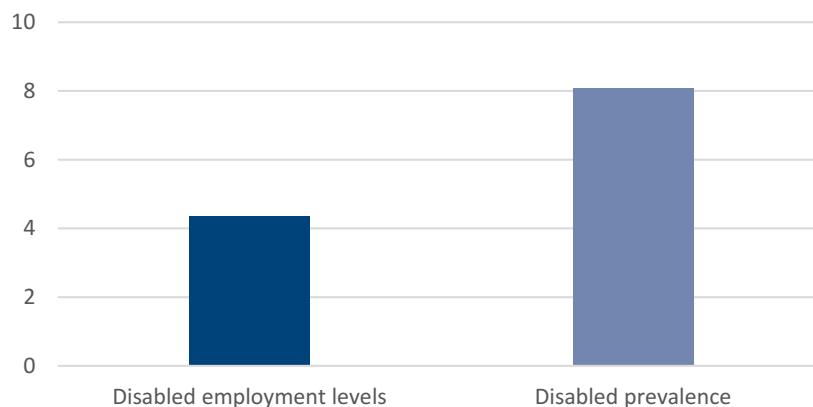
All estimates in this release are not seasonally adjusted, so comparisons over time should only use the same quarter in each year.

All results highlighted in the commentary are statistically significant, unless stated otherwise. Differences in employment of groups with given characteristics are not necessarily caused by those characteristics.

1: Measures of Employment of Disabled People

4.4 million disabled people in employment

The number of working age disabled people in employment and the number of working age disabled people in the UK (millions), October to December 2019



Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes National Statistics on the employment of disabled people, as part of its *Labour Market Overview: UK* release (Table A08). The latest estimates relate to the fourth quarter (October-December, also known as Q4) 2019.

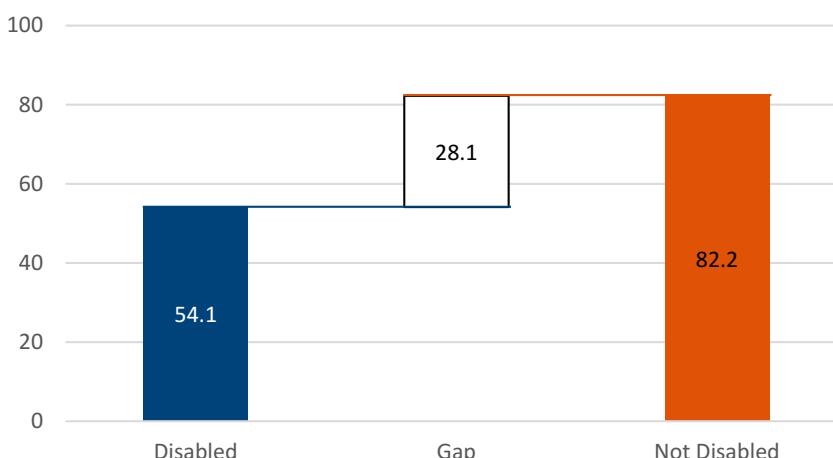
These show that there were 4.4 million disabled people aged 16-64 in work in Q4 2019 – known as the working aged **employment level** of disabled people.

In total, there were 8.1 million working age disabled people in Q4 2019.

See **Table 1.1** for full data

54.1 per cent of disabled people are in employment – 28.1 percentage points lower than for non-disabled people

Percentage of disabled and non-disabled in employment and the disability employment gap in percentage points, UK, October to December 2019



Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data

The employment level can be divided by the working age disabled population to give an **employment rate** of 54.1 per cent for disabled people in the same period.

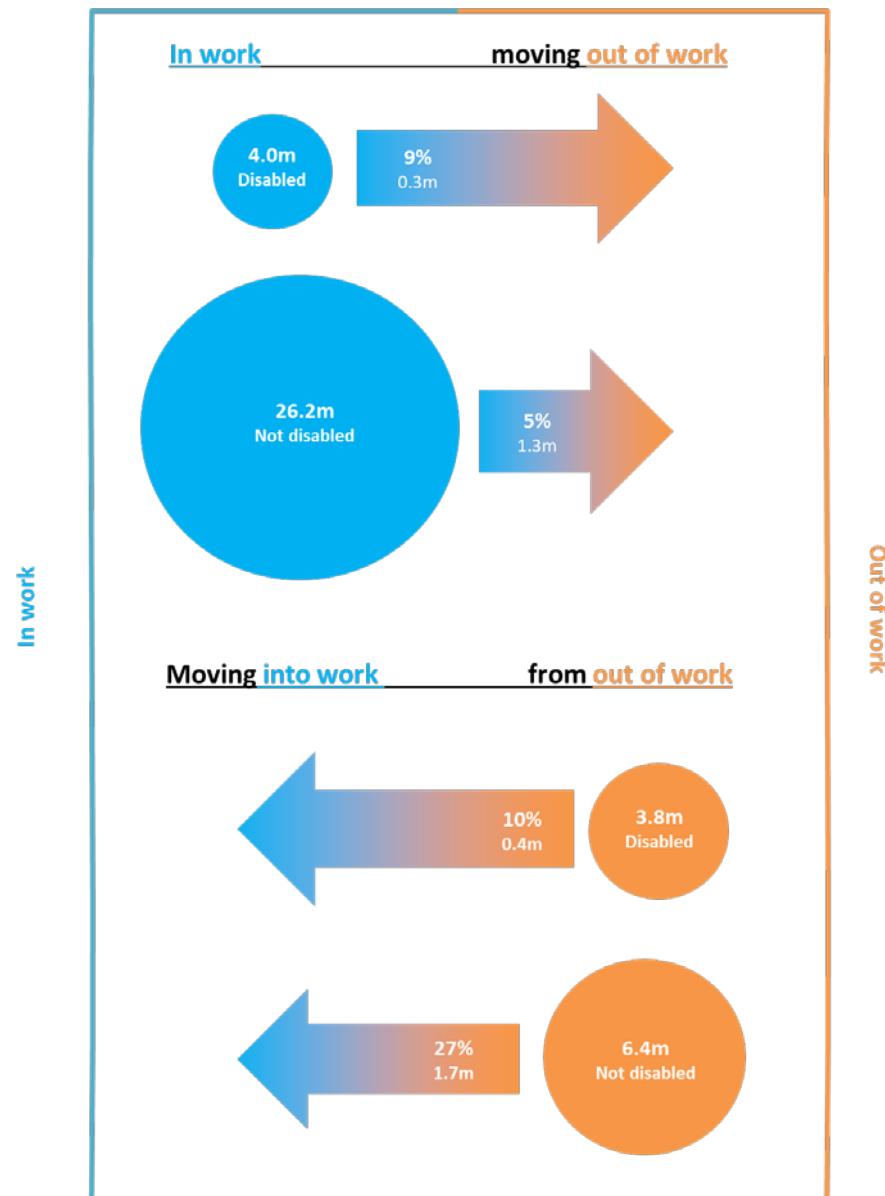
In contrast, the employment rate for people who were not disabled stood at 82.2 per cent in Q4 2019. This enables us to calculate the **disability employment rate gap** between disabled and non-disabled people as 28.1 percentage points.

Trends in each measure are affected by a different range of factors. For example, changes in the working age population, in the proportion who reported disabilities and overall labour market trends could affect all three measures, to differing degrees. Some of those components of change are explored further in Part Two. Looking at a range of measures gives a more complete picture of trends.

See **Table 1.1** for full data.

Disabled people are twice as likely to move out of work as non-disabled people

Year-on-year changes in employment status, by initial disability status, UK, 2016-2018



Source: Labour Force Survey (2-year longitudinal Annual Population Survey data, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018)

Differences in the labour market experience of disabled and non-disabled people can also be measured by their movements into and out of work.

The **rate of moving out of work** for disabled people is defined as the proportion, of all working age people who were disabled and in employment, that were no longer in employment when interviewed again twelve months later (regardless of any changes in disability status).

Likewise, the **rate of moving into work** for disabled people is defined as the proportion, of all working age people who were disabled and not in employment, that were in employment when interviewed again twelve months later.

The latest estimates suggest that disabled workers moved out of work at around twice the rate (9 per cent) of non-disabled workers (5 per cent). Workless disabled people moved into work at around one-third of the rate (10 per cent) of workless non-disabled people (27 per cent).

These estimates are based on the Longitudinal Annual Population Survey (APS), produced by ONS using a sample-boosted version of their Labour Force Survey, which returns to survey respondents one year after their initial interview and measures any changes.

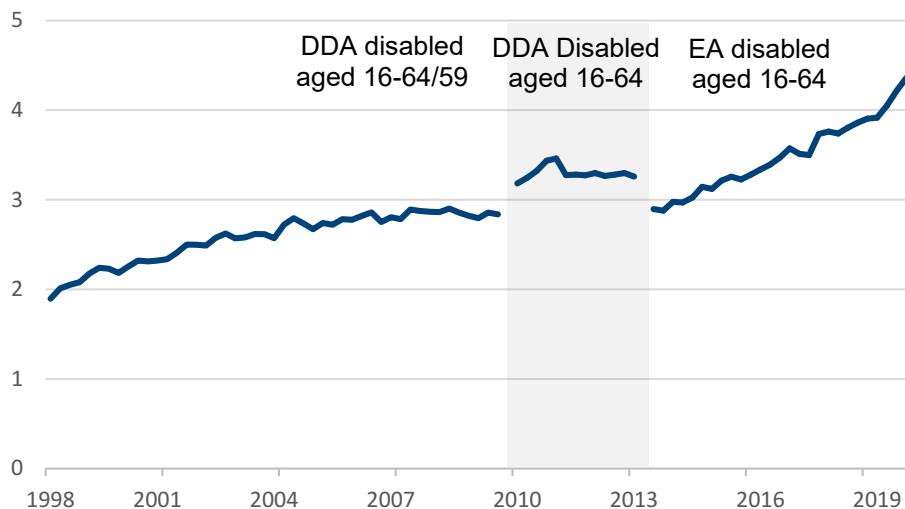
To improve the robustness of the results, these estimates are the average of two separate analyses, looking firstly at year-on-year changes between 2016 and 2017, and then year-on-year changes between 2017 and 2018. On this basis, they can give a broad picture of the movements in and out of work, but still should not be used to identify small changes in rates over time (see 'Background information and methodology' for more details).

In addition, they do not capture any intermediate employment changes that might have happened during the year (for example moving into work then out again before the end of the year). So they are not a cumulative measure of all moves into work, but rather a measure of how many people changed employment status *from one year to the next*.

See **Table 1.2** for full data.

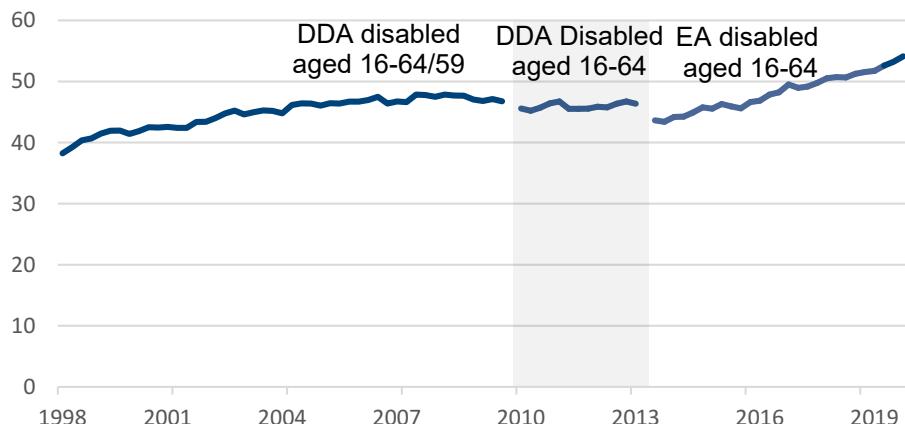
Employment is increasing for disabled people across a range of measures

Employment level of working age disabled people (millions), UK, Q2 1998 to Q4 2019



Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data

Employment rate of disabled people (per cent), UK, Q2 1998 to Q4 2019



Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data

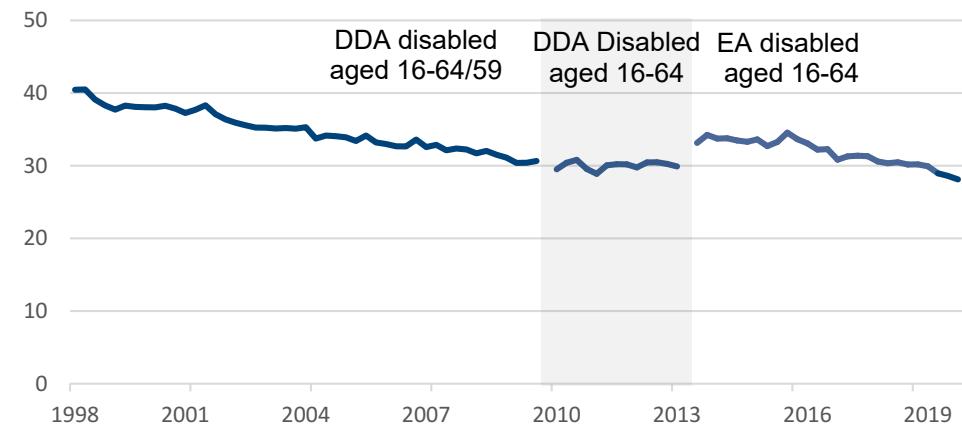
The participation of disabled people in employment has increased in the recent years and – on different definitions – over the longer term. There were some variations according to which measure is used, but the overall trends were similar between the increases in employment levels and rates, and reductions in the gap.

There are two breaks in the series due to changes in definitions in 2010 (working age changed to 16-64) and 2013 (disability changed from the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to the Equality Act (EA) definition). This meant the latest data could not be compared directly to estimates prior to 2013. However, in the last six years, between Q4 2013 and Q4 2019, the number of disabled people in work increased by 1.4 million, the employment rate increased by 9.9 percentage points, and the gap fell by 5.6 points. This included an increase of 0.4 million disabled people in employment between Q1 2017 and Q1 2019 – the first two years for the government's goal to see an increase of 1 million over ten years.

The longer-term trends were also largely positive. The employment number and rate generally increased between the late-1990s and the mid-2000s, while the gap continued reducing up to 2009, before a period of flatter trends leading up to 2013.

The time series for these three measures are subject to short-term fluctuations, due to seasonal variations and random sampling variation. The producers of the data, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), advise that a more reliable picture of change can be gained from longer-term trends (see 'Background information and methodology' for more details). See **Table 1.1** for full data.

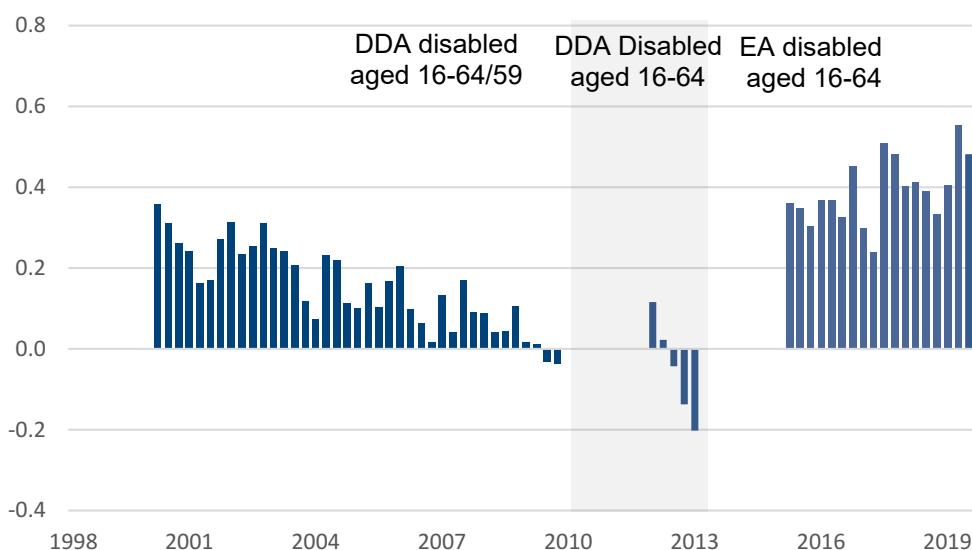
Disability employment rate gap (percentage points), UK, Q2 1998 to Q4 2019



Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data

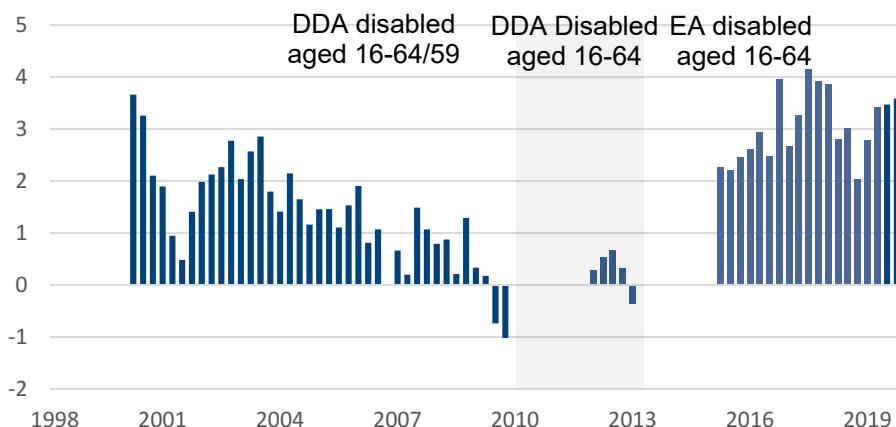
Increases in employment for disabled people appear faster since 2013 than in earlier periods

Employment level: rolling two-year change (millions), UK, Q2 1998 to Q4 2019



Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data.

Employment rate: rolling two-year change (per cent), UK, Q2 1998 to Q4 2019



Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data.

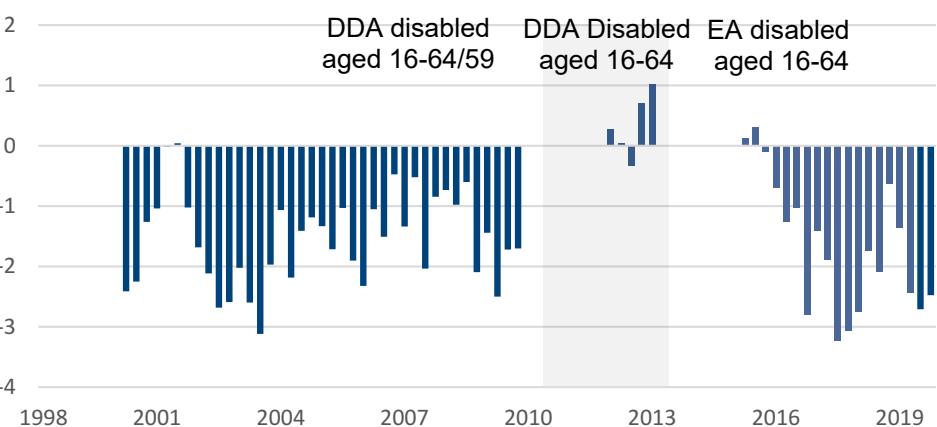
While the quarterly time series above are subject to short-term fluctuations, some more consistent patterns were shown by two-year changes across the time series. They are described as 'rolling' estimates in that, for each quarter, the chart shows the change between that quarter and the same quarter two years earlier. That period is then rolled forward one quarter to provide the next estimate. Therefore, there is some overlap between neighbouring estimates and they should not be added together to give total change.

Due to changes in definitions in 2010 and 2013, it is not possible to estimate change either side of those years, resulting in gaps in the time series.

Although comparisons across different definitions of disability should be treated with caution, employment levels for disabled people appear to have increased more quickly since 2013 (typically 300-400 thousand every two years) than in earlier periods, under different definitions. Recent increases in the employment rate (typically 2-3 percentage points every two years) are not unprecedented, but appear to be more sustained than in earlier periods. Recent reductions in the employment rate gap were also significant, but were more variable (typically 1-3 percentage points every two years), and similar to the improvements seen in the early 2000s.

See **Table 1.1** for full data, including both one-year and two-year changes.

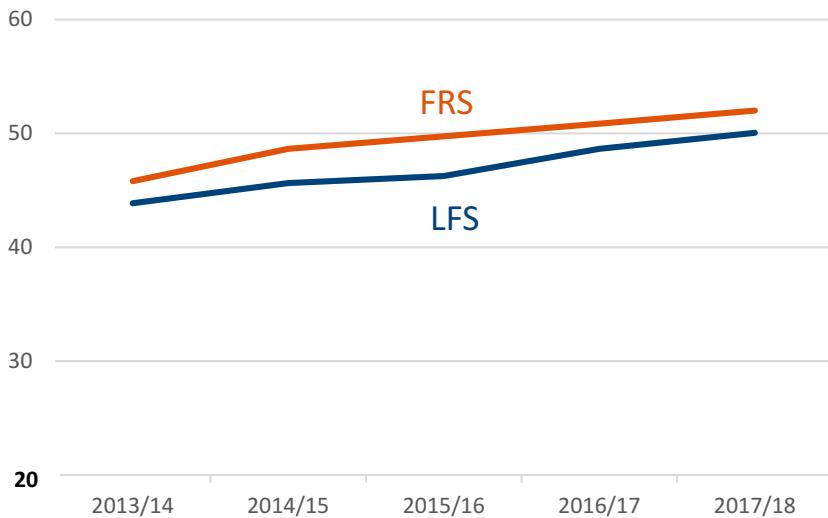
Disability employment rate gap (percentage points): rolling two-year change, UK, Q2 1998 to Q4 2019



Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data.

Recent trend estimates are similar between the Labour Force Survey and Family Resources Survey

Employment rate for disabled people (per cent), UK, 2013/14 to 2017/18: a comparison of data sources



Sources: Labour Force Survey, 2013/14 - 2017/18 and Family Resources Survey, 2013/14 - 2017/18

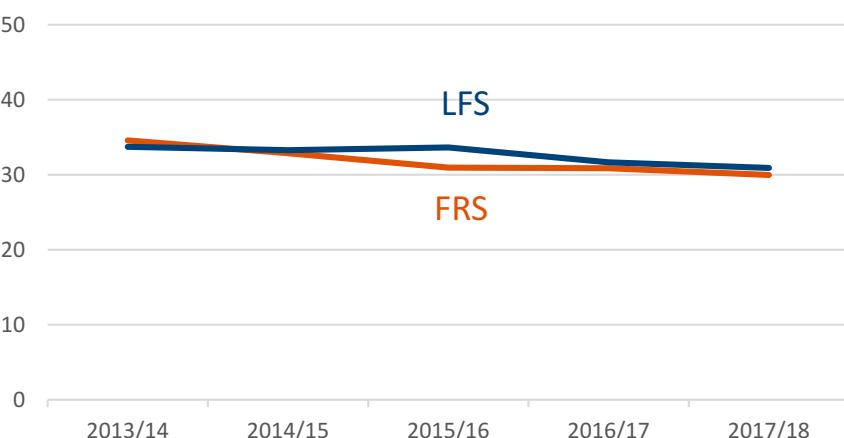
Leading estimates of disability employment, published by ONS, are based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Estimates are also available from the Family Resources Survey (FRS), using the same definition of disability (from 2013/14 onwards), but different survey methodology and a smaller sample than the LFS. FRS estimates are based on financial years (April-March), so the average of the corresponding four quarters in the LFS was used as comparison.

The estimated employment rate for disabled people was slightly higher in the FRS than the LFS. However, both surveys suggested an increase of around 6 percentage points between 2013/14 and 2017/18.

Both sources suggest that around 1 in 5 (18 per cent) of working age people in the UK reported a disability in 2017/18, having increased by around 1-2 percentage points since 2013/14.

See **Table 1.3** for full data.

Employment rate gap (percentage points), UK, 2013/14 to 2017/18: a comparison of data sources



Sources: Labour Force Survey, 2013/14 - 2017/18 and Family Resources Survey, 2013/14 - 2017/18

Both sources show that the employment rate gap has fallen between 2013/14 and 2017/18, although it was slightly larger in the LFS than the FRS at the end of that period (31 percentage points compared with 30 percentage points).

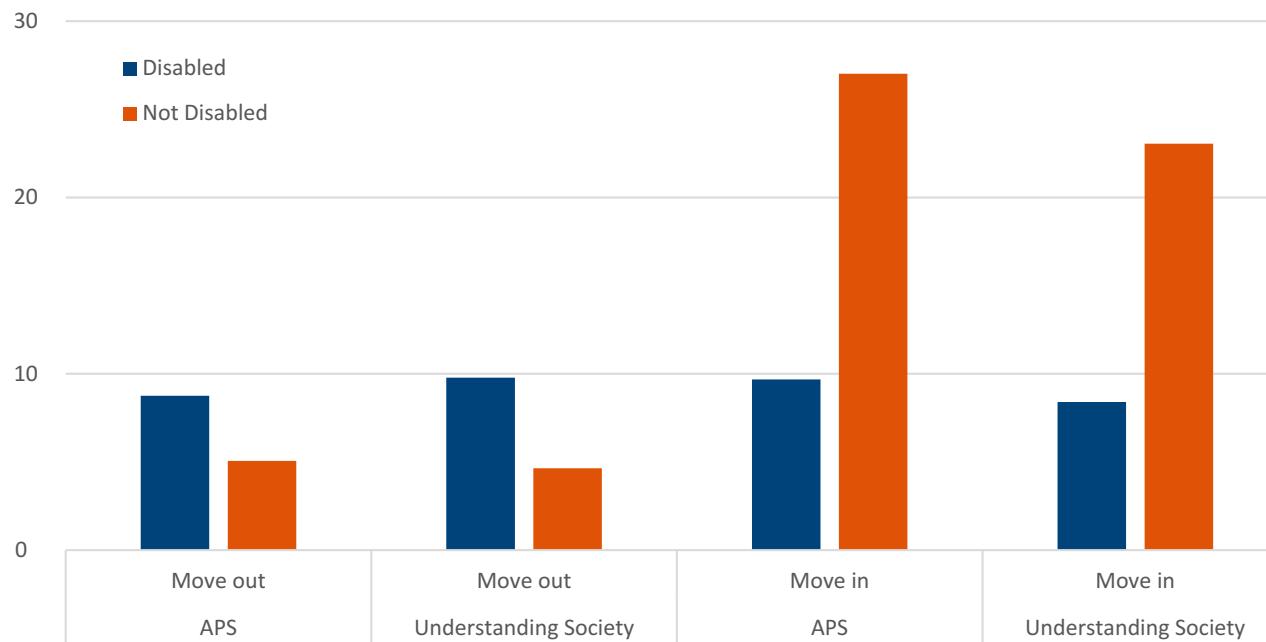
More recent estimates from the LFS can be found earlier in this section.

See **Table 1.3** for full data.

It is clear that these two data sources present a consistent picture of employment trends for disabled people in recent years, despite some small differences in estimates for specific years, caused by differences in methodology. Therefore, the FRS estimates increase our confidence in the trends observed in the LFS elsewhere in this release.

Estimates of employment flows are similar between the Annual Population Survey and Understanding Society

Moves in and out of work by disability status (per cent), UK, 2016-2018: a comparison of data sources



Sources: Labour Force Survey (2-year longitudinal Annual Population Survey data, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018); Understanding Society (waves h and i)

Leading estimates of moves in to and out of work by disability status are based on the Annual Population Survey (APS) 'longitudinal' version of the Labour Force Survey, which enables us to look at changes experienced by individuals from one year to the next. Estimates are also available from Understanding Society (the UK Household Longitudinal Study).

The volumes and proportions of people moving in and out of work were similar between the two sources.

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

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

Some differences are to be expected, given slight differences in survey questions, as well as differences in survey design (see 'Background information and methodology' for more details).

See **Table 1.2** for full data.

2. Components of change in the employment of disabled people

Using a range of measures of the employment of disabled people, like those presented in Part 1, gives a clearer picture of trends. It is also important to understand how the different measures fit together.

For example, the number of disabled people in employment can be considered as the product of the number of disabled people in the working age population and the proportion of those who are in work (their employment rate). In turn, each of these could be broken down further into another two components:

The disabled population is the product of

- (a) the total working age population (currently 16-64), and
- (b) the proportion who are disabled (the disability prevalence rate).

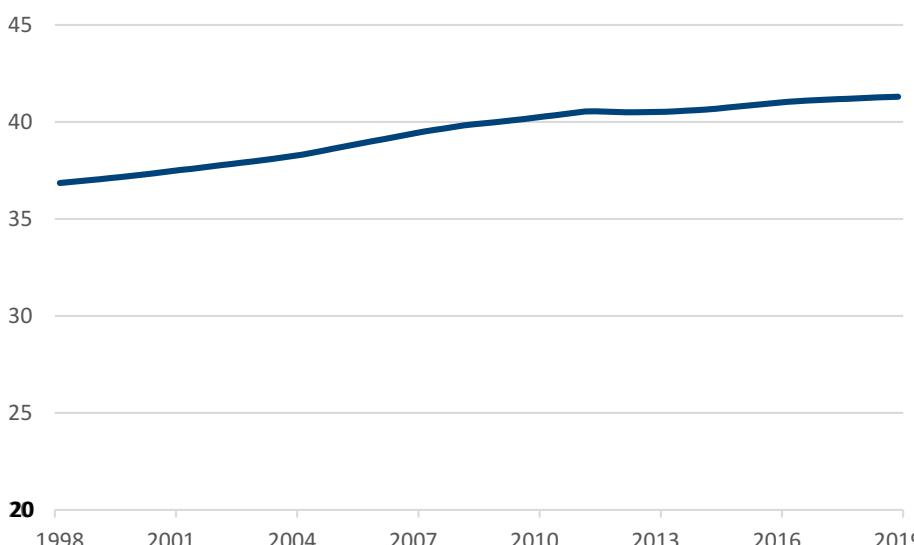
The employment rate of disabled people is influenced by both

- (c) general labour market trends – as measured by either the overall employment rate or the non-disabled employment rate – and
- (d) how labour market trends differ for disabled people – as measured by the employment rate gap between disabled people and non-disabled people.

This part of the publication considers the contributions that these four components have made to recent increases in the number of disabled people in employment. The focus is on an annual assessment up to Q1 each year; more recent quarterly estimates are available in Part One.

The working-age population has increased steadily over the last two decades

Population aged 16-64 (millions), not seasonally adjusted, UK, Q2 1998 to Q1 2019



Source: Table A02 NSA, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data.

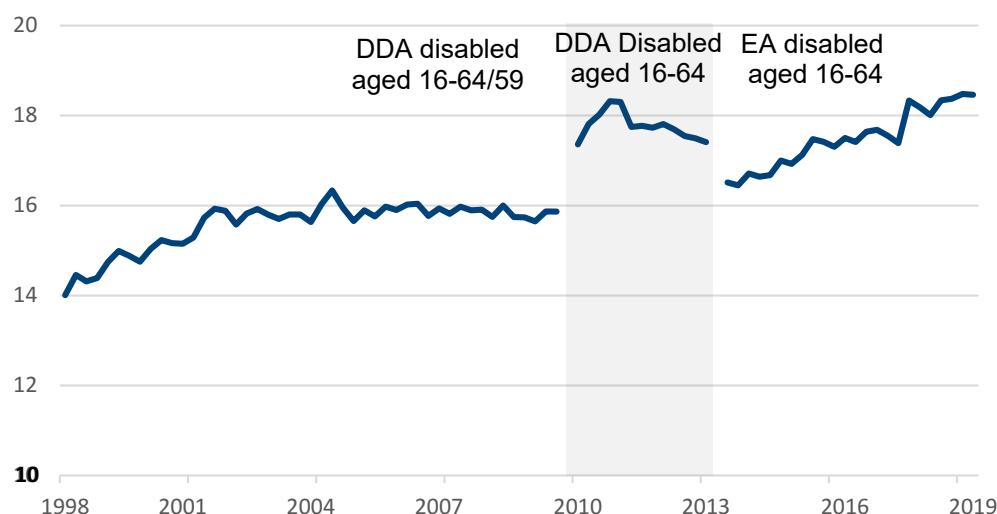
The size of the working-age population has been consistently increasing since 1998, although less quickly in recent years. The rate of increase averaged 0.7 per cent a year between 1998 and 2011, and 0.3 per cent a year since 2012. The working age population in the UK increased by around 700,000 over five years, to reach 41.3 million in Q1 2019.

Please note that this chart is based on the 16-64 age group throughout, in order to show a consistent trend across the period, whereas Labour Force Survey data on disability prior to 2010 relates to the former definition of working age: men aged 16-64 and women aged 16-59.

See **Table 2.1** for full data.

Disability prevalence at working ages has been increasing since 2013

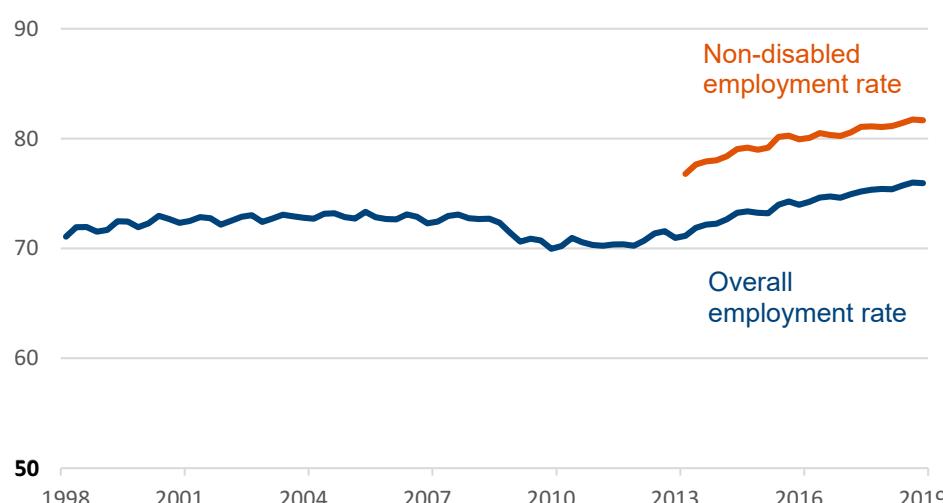
Percentage of people reporting a disability, working age, UK, Q2 1998 to Q1 2019



Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data.

The UK employment rate has increased rapidly since 2013

Employment rate (per cent), 16-64, UK, Q2 1998 to Q1 2019



The disability prevalence rate is defined as the number of people reporting a disability expressed as a percentage of the population of working age. Although the time series shown is based on different definitions of disability and working age, it suggests that disability prevalence has been characterised by periods of growth and periods of relative stability. The main periods of growth are in the late 1990s to early 2000s, and during the period since 2013. In the five years from Q1 2014, the rate increased by 1.8 percentage points, from 16.6 per cent to 18.5 per cent.

The data does not tell us why disability prevalence is increasing, but it is likely that a number of factors have had some influence, including changes in health, society, public awareness and attitudes towards disability, and health behaviours associated with diet and levels of physical activity.

See Table 1.1 for full data.

General labour market trends can be tracked over the longer-term using the overall working age employment rate. The employment rate for non-disabled people shows a similar trend since comparable data began in 2013.

The overall working-age employment rate typically follows a 'cyclical' pattern related to the economic cycle. Having increased to around 73 per cent by 2008, it then fell to 70 per cent following the 2008-2009 recession. Since 2012, the employment rate has increased significantly, to exceed pre-recession levels and reach around 76 per cent in 2019.

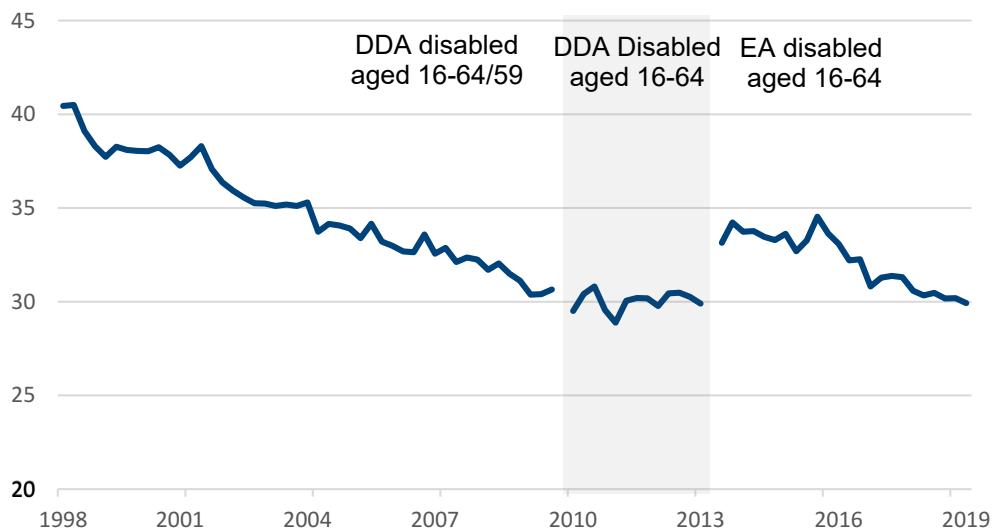
Please note that these estimates will not exactly match leading estimates of employment published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), because they have not been seasonally adjusted, for consistency with the rest of this publication.

See Table 2.1 for full data.

Sources: Tables A08 and A02 NSA, Labour Market Overview, ONS.

The employment rate gap has been closing for most of the last two decades

Disability employment rate gap in percentage points, UK, Q2 1998 to Q1 2019



The employment rate gap between disabled and non-disabled people has been falling significantly since at least the late 1990s. Although changes to definitions mean that we cannot directly compare the start and end points of this time series, the gap has seen a downward trend for most of the last two decades.

In particular, in the five years from Q1 2014, the gap decreased by 3.8 percentage points. In other words, the employment rate for disabled people has increased even faster than the trend in the overall employment rate shown above.

See **Table 1.1** for full data.

Source: Table A08, Labour Market Overview, ONS. Labour Force Survey data.

Estimating the impact of different components of change

Impacts can be estimated through modelling of hypothetical scenarios

The previous section presented four components of change in the number of disabled people in employment, which had all shown improvements since 2013/14. However, it does not show which components had the most impact. It is not possible to directly measure the impact of each component, because they interact with one another.

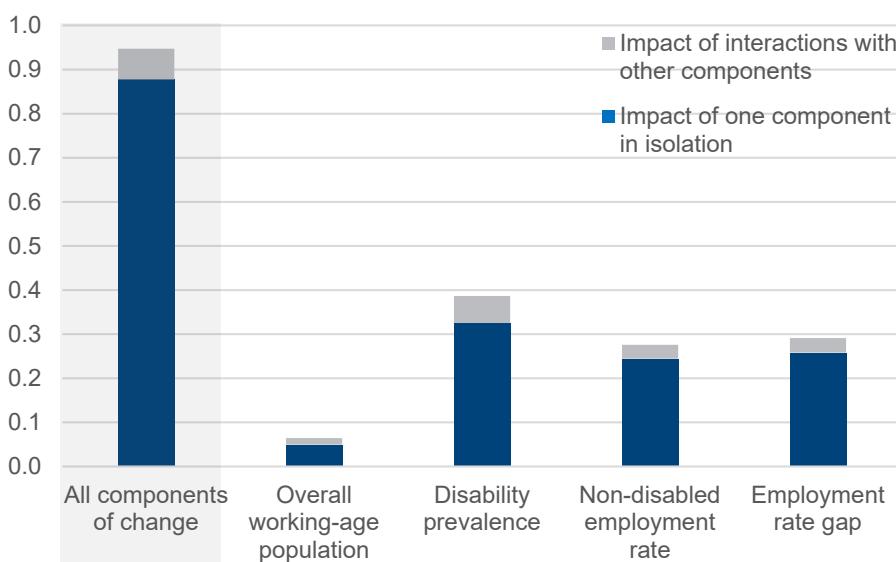
An *indirect* measure of each component can be modelled using a hypothetical scenario by assuming that, while that component followed the path observed in the data, all other components remained constant at the levels observed in Q1 2014 (the baseline for this analysis).

A similar approach can be used to estimate the interactions between components. For example, the combined impact of increases in both disability prevalence and in overall employment is greater than the sum of the impact of prevalence alone and the impact of overall employment alone. That difference gives us an estimate of the ‘interaction’ effect between these two components of change. See ‘Background information and methodology’ for more details on how these estimates were derived.

These estimates are intended to give a broad indication of the impact of the different components. They tell us about the components of change, but not the causes. Neither do they capture all interactions. For example, an increase in disability prevalence could impact on the disability employment gap, even without any changes in employment, if prevalence increased faster among those already in employment than among those out of work. See **Table 2.2** for full details of each scenario.

The increase in disability employment since 2014 is mainly linked with three key components of change

Estimated impact of key components on the change in the number of disabled people in employment (millions), UK, Q1 2014 to Q1 2019



In the five years between Q1 2014 and Q1 2019, the number of disabled people in employment increased by 947,000, from 3.0 million to 3.9 million. The chart shows how much of this increase can be attributed to the four components of change.

For each component, a range is given. The lower end of the range shows the estimated impact of that component in isolation; the upper end gives the impact including all interaction effects with the other components. Therefore, the same interaction effects can appear in the chart under more than one component, and the upper ranges of the four components add up to more than the total change. However, taken as a whole, these interactions had a relatively small impact.

The disability prevalence component contributed around a third (325,000 – 387,000) of the total increase, while the disability employment rate gap (258,000 – 291,000) and the non-disabled employment rate (245,000 – 276,000) each contributed around a quarter. Changes in the size of the working age population contributed a relatively small amount, accounting for less than 10% (50,000 – 64,000) of the total increase in disability employment.

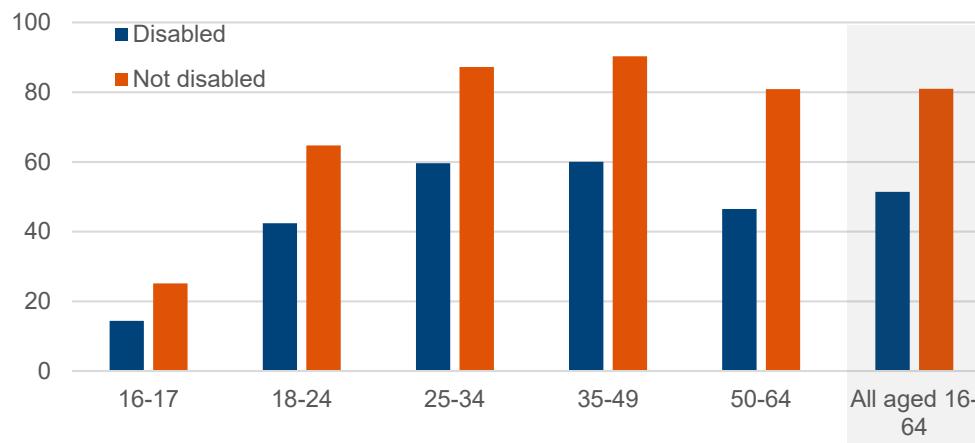
See **Table 2.3** for full data.

Source: Labour Force Survey, January - March 2014 to January - March 2019

3: Employment Characteristics

The employment rate gap between disabled and non-disabled people increases with age

Employment rates by disability status and age (per cent), working age, UK, April 2018 to March 2019



Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2018 to March 2019

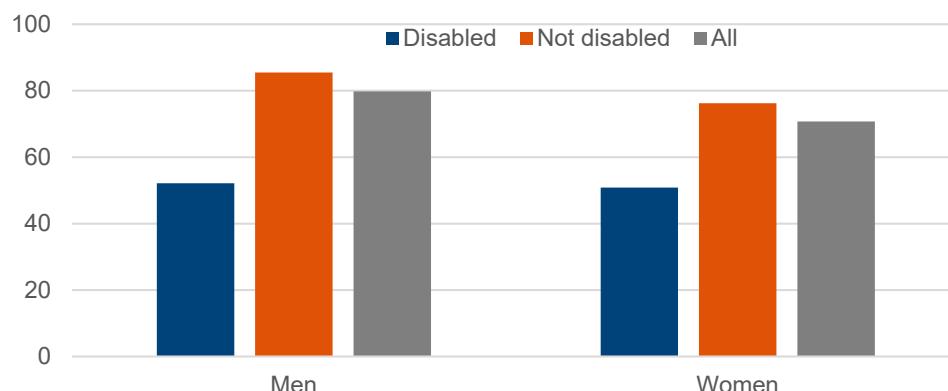
The employment rates for disabled people across all working age groups (16-64) were significantly lower than that of non-disabled people. For both groups, employment rates generally increased with age, from ages 16-17 (when significant numbers are still engaged in full-time education) to the peak working ages of 25-34 and 35-49, but declined among those aged 50-64,

Those aged 50-64 had the largest employment rate gap between disabled people (46.5 per cent in employment) and non-disabled people (80.9 per cent), and this age group accounted for over 4 in 10 of the working age disabled population.

See **Table 3.1** for full data.

Disabled women have a similar employment rate to disabled men

Employment rates by disability status and gender (per cent), working age, UK, April 2018 to March 2019



Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2018 to March 2019

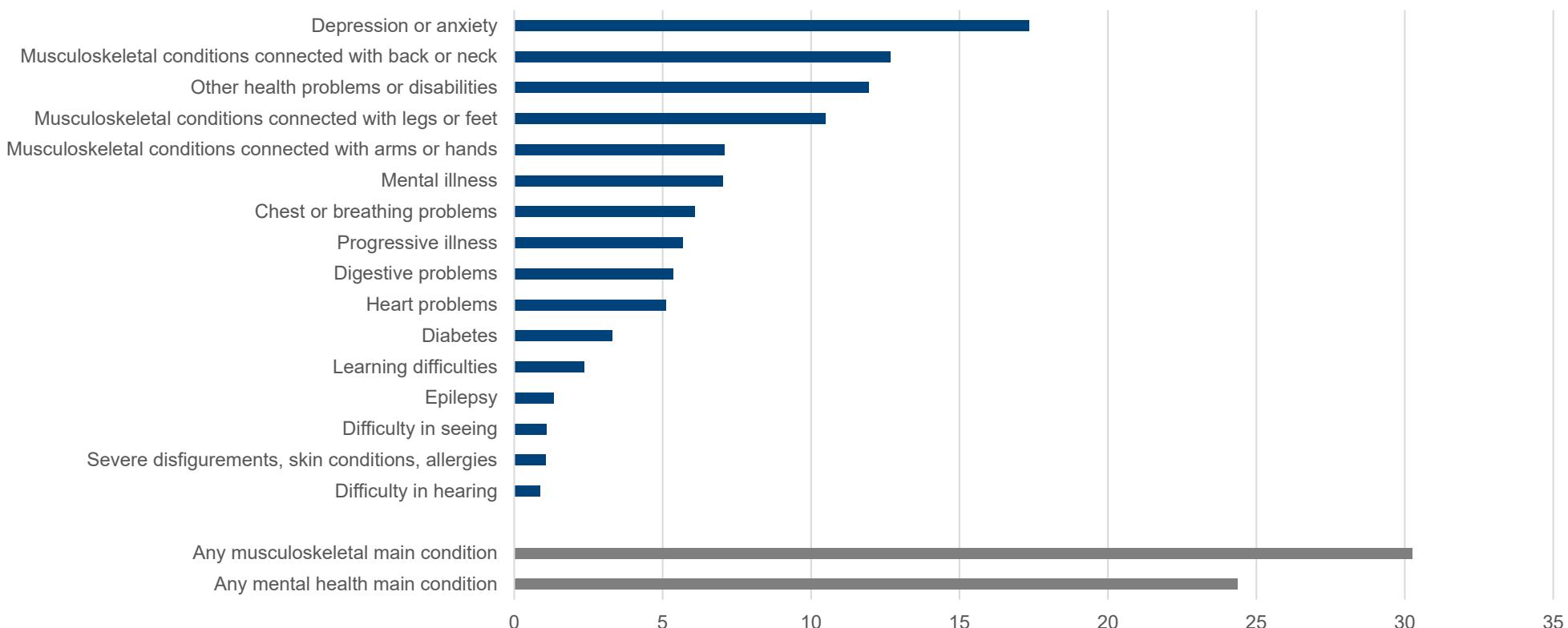
Working age disabled men and women had similar employment rates, at 52.1 per cent and 50.9 per cent respectively.

Among non-disabled people, men (85.5 per cent) were more likely than women (76.2 per cent) to be in work, so the employment rate gap between disabled and non-disabled people was larger for men.

See **Table 3.2** for full data.

The most common main health condition reported by disabled people was depression or anxiety

Composition of disabled people by main health condition (per cent), working age, UK, April 2018 to March 2019



Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2018 to March 2019

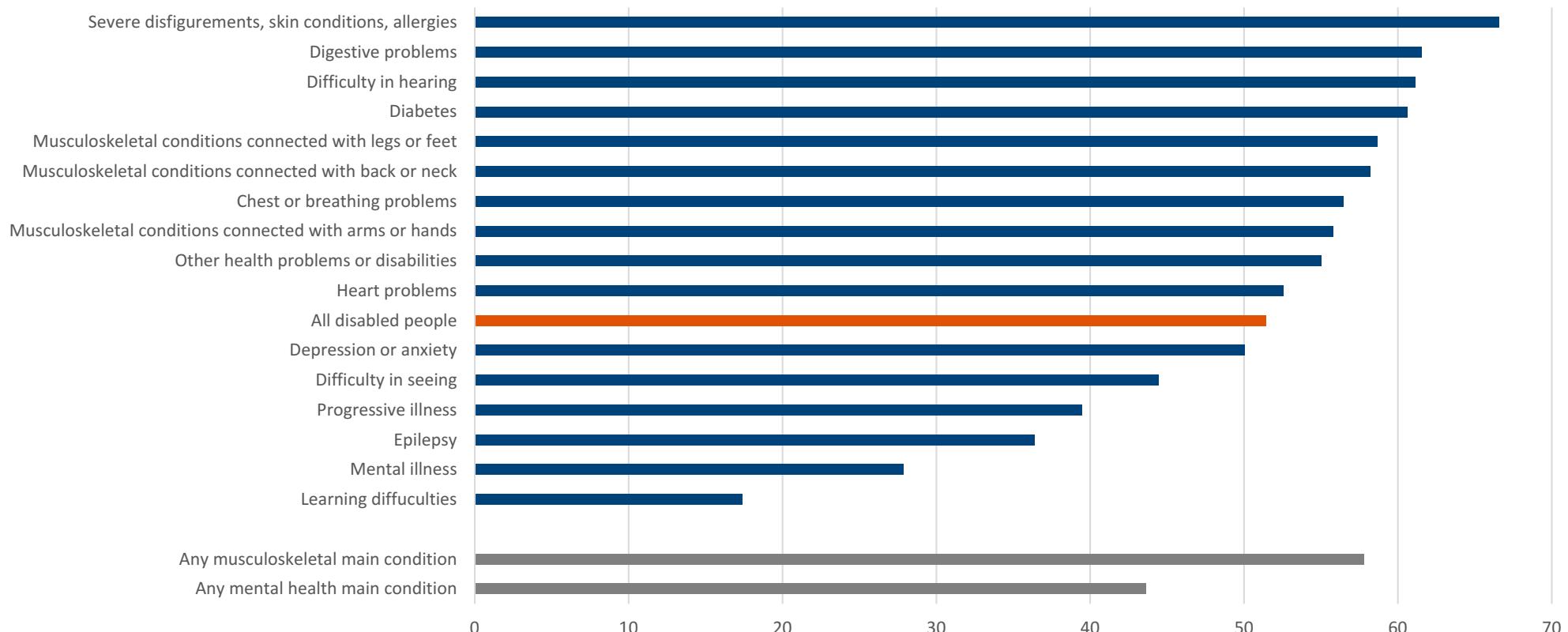
Around 30 per cent of disabled people (2.4 million) reported a musculoskeletal condition (problems, including arthritis or rheumatism, connected with arms or hands, with back or neck, or with legs or feet) as their main health condition. Overall, 24 per cent of disabled people (1.9 million) reported a mental health condition (depression or anxiety, or mental illness) as their main health condition.

The majority of disabled people with a mental health condition reported depression or anxiety as their main condition, the most commonly reported single category, at 17 per cent of all working age disabled people.

See **Table 3.3** for full data, including a full description of the health condition categories.

Disabled people with a musculoskeletal main health condition had a higher employment rate than those with a mental health condition

Employment rates of disabled people by main health condition (per cent), working age, UK, April 2018 to March 2019



Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2018 to March 2019

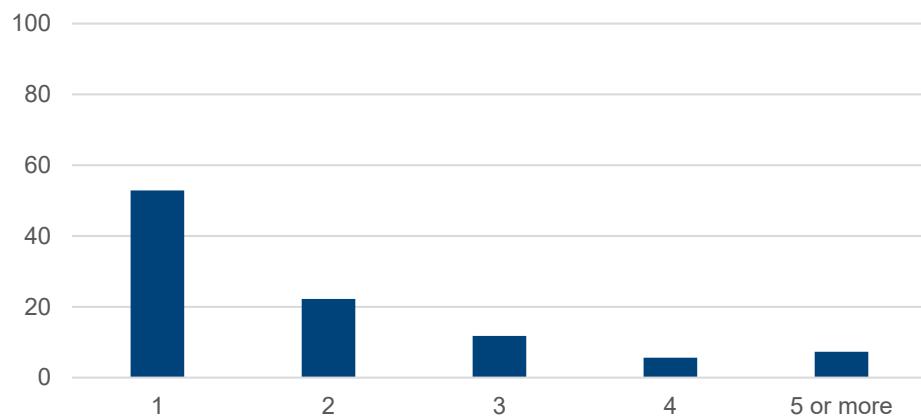
The lowest of all main health conditions employment rates were for disabled people with severe or specific learning difficulties (17.4 per cent). The employment rate for those who had skin disfigurements, skin conditions or allergies as their main health condition (66.6 per cent) was among the highest, but was not statistically different to other health conditions with high employment rates, such as digestive problems (61.6 per cent) and difficulty in hearing (61.1 per cent).

Employment rates were higher for those that had a musculoskeletal condition (57.8 per cent) than those that had a mental health condition (43.6 per cent).

See **Table 3.3** for full data, including a full description of the health condition categories.

Over half of working disabled people have only one health condition

Composition of disabled people in employment by number of health conditions (per cent), working age, UK, April 2018 to March 2019



Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2018 to March 2019

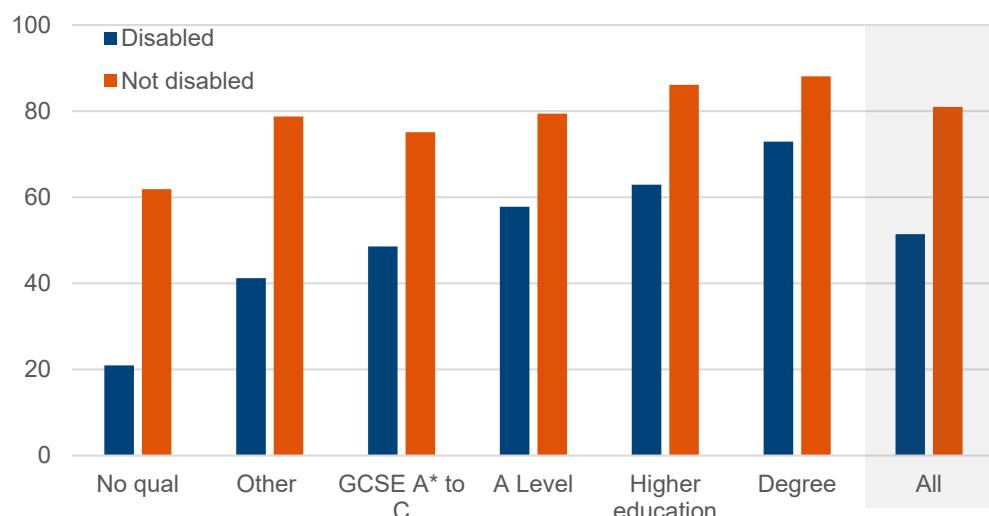
Over half (53 per cent) of disabled people in employment had one health condition, despite accounting for less than half of the total disabled population of working age (44 per cent). In contrast, only 7 per cent of working disabled people had 5 or more health conditions, although this group made up almost 15 per cent of all working age disabled people.

Employment rates declined with the number of conditions. Over 6 in 10 disabled people with one health condition were employed, compared with around a quarter of disabled people with 5 or more conditions.

See **Table 3.4** for full data.

Employment rates of disabled people increase with level of highest qualification

Employment rates by disability status and highest qualification, working age (per cent), UK, April 2018 to March 2019



Employment rates were lower for disabled people than non-disabled people at all levels of highest qualification.

For both disabled and non-disabled people, employment rates generally increased with the level of highest qualification, although the pattern was much more pronounced for disabled people.

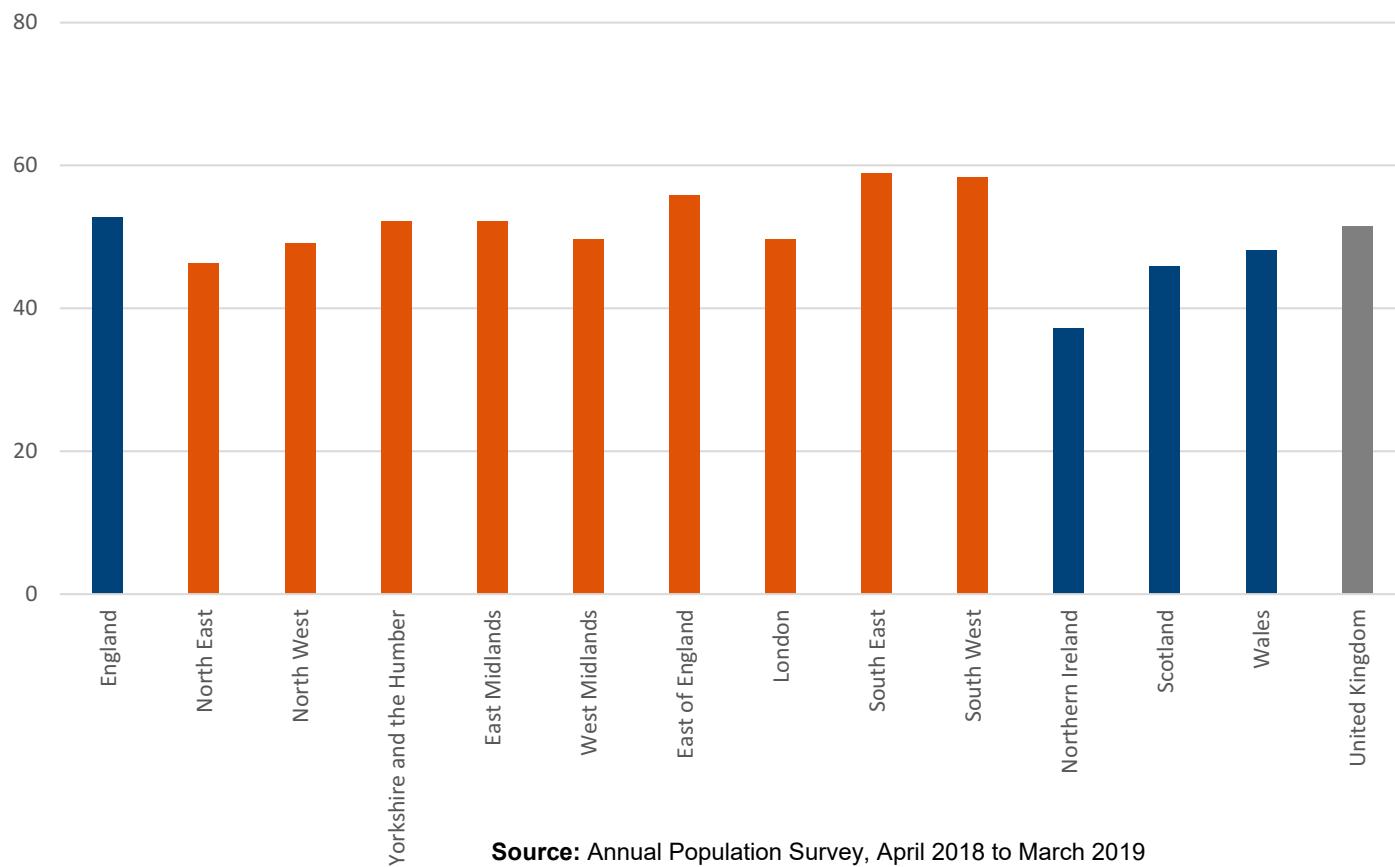
As a result, the employment rate gap between disabled and non-disabled people was largest for those with no qualifications (with employment rates of 20.9 per cent for disabled people and 61.9 per cent for non-disabled people), and smallest for those with a degree (employment rates of 72.9 per cent and 88.1 per cent respectively).

See **Table 3.5** for full data, including a full description of the qualifications categories.

Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2018 to March 2019

Employment rates for disabled people vary across the regions and countries of the UK

Employment rate of disabled people by region (per cent), working age, UK, April 2018 to March 2019



The highest employment rates among disabled people were found in the South East, South West and East of England (broadly between 55 and 60 per cent), whilst the lowest was in Northern Ireland (37.1 per cent). Rates in Scotland and Wales were also below the overall UK disability employment rate.

The South East, South West and East of England were also among the regions with the highest employment rates for non-disabled people.

See **Table 3.6** for full data.

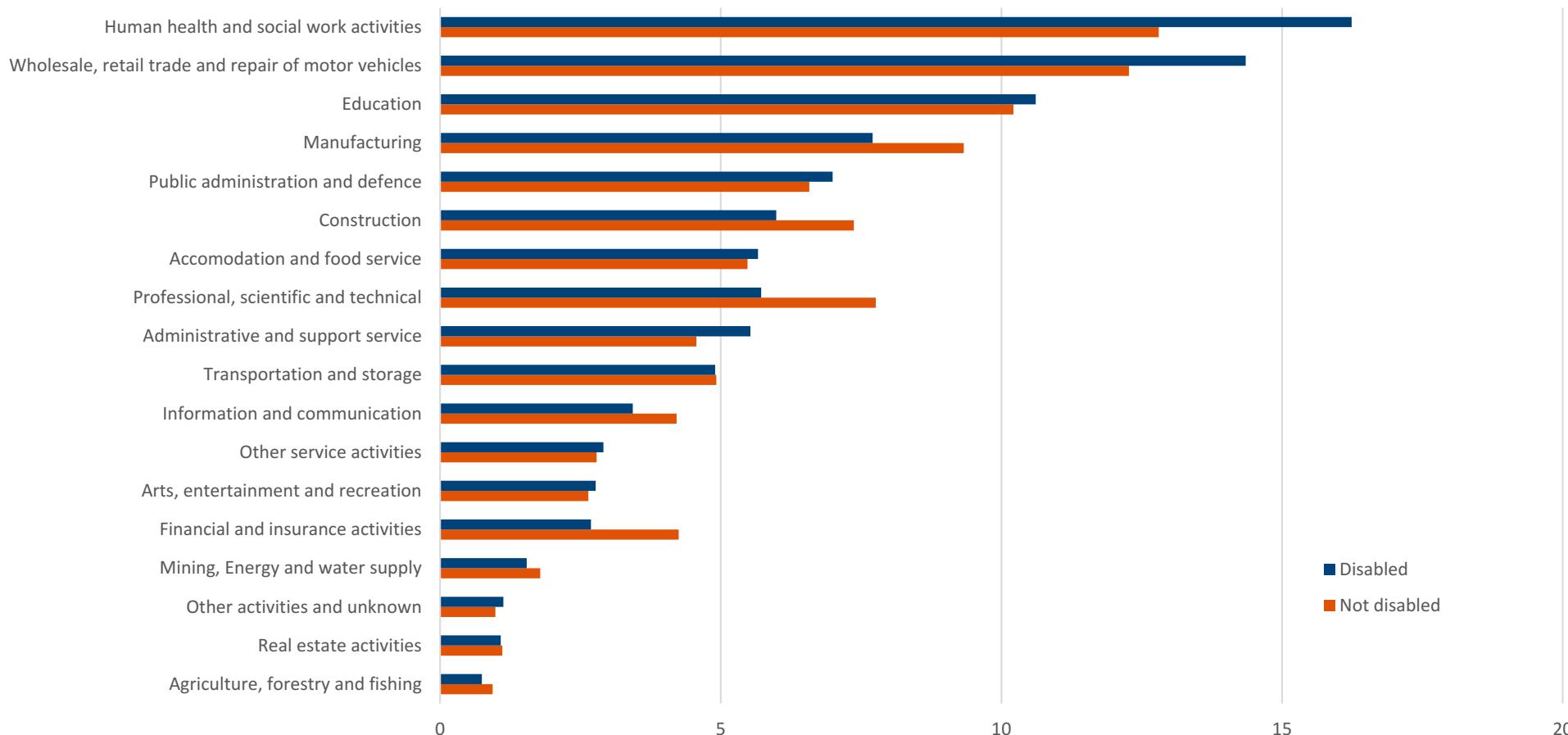
Disabled people are more likely to be in part time work compared with non-disabled people

Around two-thirds of disabled people were in full-time employment (66 per cent) rather than part-time work, but they were still more likely to be in part-time work compared with non-disabled workers. Around a quarter (23 per cent) of non-disabled people worked part-time, compared with around a third (34 per cent) of disabled people.

See **Table 3.7** for full data.

The distribution of disabled and non-disabled workers across industries is broadly similar, with the three most common industries being the same for both groups

Industry composition of disabled and non-disabled workers (per cent), working age, UK, April 2018 to March 2019



Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2018 to March 2019

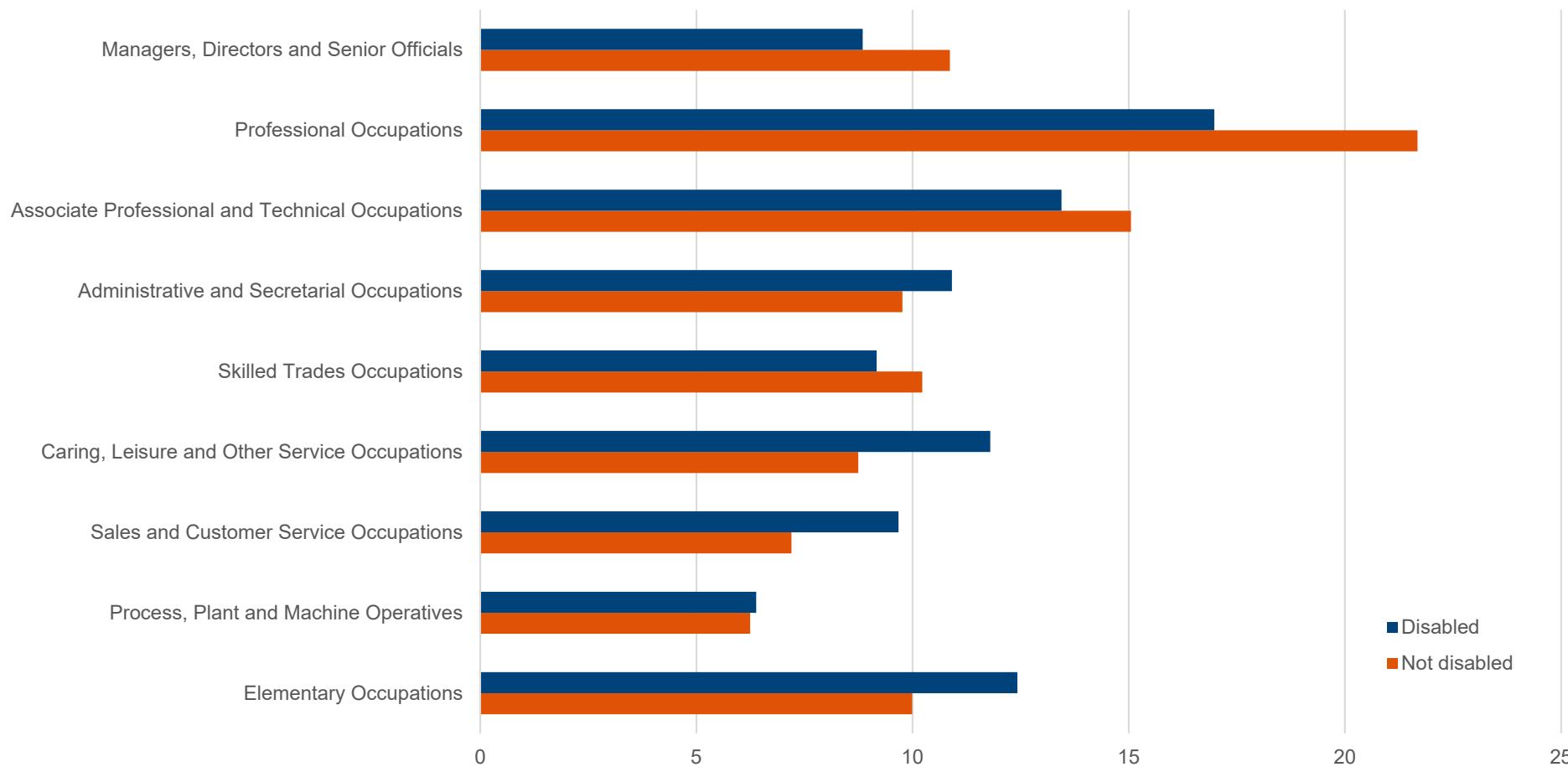
Both disabled people and non-disabled people were most likely to work in human health and social work activities, wholesale and retail trade (including repair of motor vehicles), or the education sector. These three industries accounted for 41.2 per cent of disabled and 35.3 per cent of non-disabled workers.

Disabled workers were least likely to be employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing, as were non-disabled workers (each less than 1 per cent).

See **Table 3.8** for full data including a full description of the industry categories.

Disabled people are less likely to work in higher-skilled occupations

Composition by occupation of disabled and non-disabled workers (per cent), working age, UK, April 2018 to March 2019



Source: Annual Population Survey, April 2018 to March 2019

Both disabled and non-disabled workers were most likely to be employed in professional occupations (17 per cent of disabled people, 22 per cent of non-disabled people). The least common occupation for both groups of workers was process, plant and machine operatives (around 6 per cent for each group).

Disabled workers (12.4 per cent) were more likely than their non-disabled counterparts (10.0 per cent) to be employed in elementary occupations, and were less likely to work in the three highest-skilled occupations (managers, directors and senior officials; professional; and associate professional and technical occupations).

See **Table 3.9** for full data, including a full description of the occupation categories.

4: Characteristics of people moving in and out of work

Part One of this release introduced measures of the proportion of workless people who moved into work, or working people who moved out of work, from one year to the next. It suggests that disabled people moved out of work at around twice the rate, and moved into work at around one-third of the rate, of their non-disabled counterparts. These estimates can also be seen in the figures for 'All' disabled people and non-disabled people in the charts below. This section looks at how these rates vary by individual characteristics. The estimates are subject to a degree of uncertainty, so should be treated as a broad indication of the differences between groups rather than precise estimates. In order to increase confidence, they have been averaged across two datasets, covering year-on-year changes between 2016-2017 and 2017-2018.

Disabled women were more likely to have moved out of work than disabled men

Percentage who moved out of work from one year to the next, by disability status and gender, working age, 2016-2018



Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2016 to December 2018

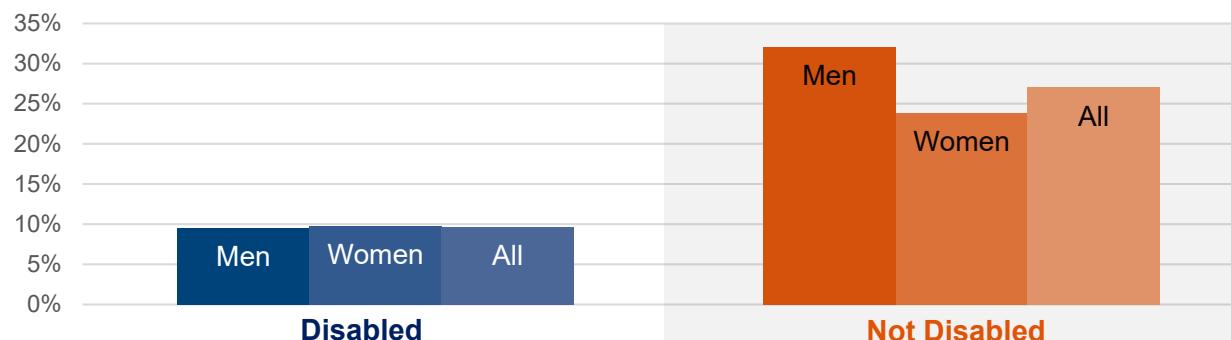
Disabled men and women were more likely to have moved out of work from one year to the next than non-disabled men and women.

In general, women moved out of work at a faster rate than men for both disabled and non-disabled people. The gender difference in the rate of leaving work, was similar for disabled and non-disabled people.

See **Table 4.1** for full data.

Disabled men were just as likely to have moved into work as disabled women

Percentage who moved into work from one year to the next, by disability status and gender, working age, 2016-2018



Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2016 to December 2018

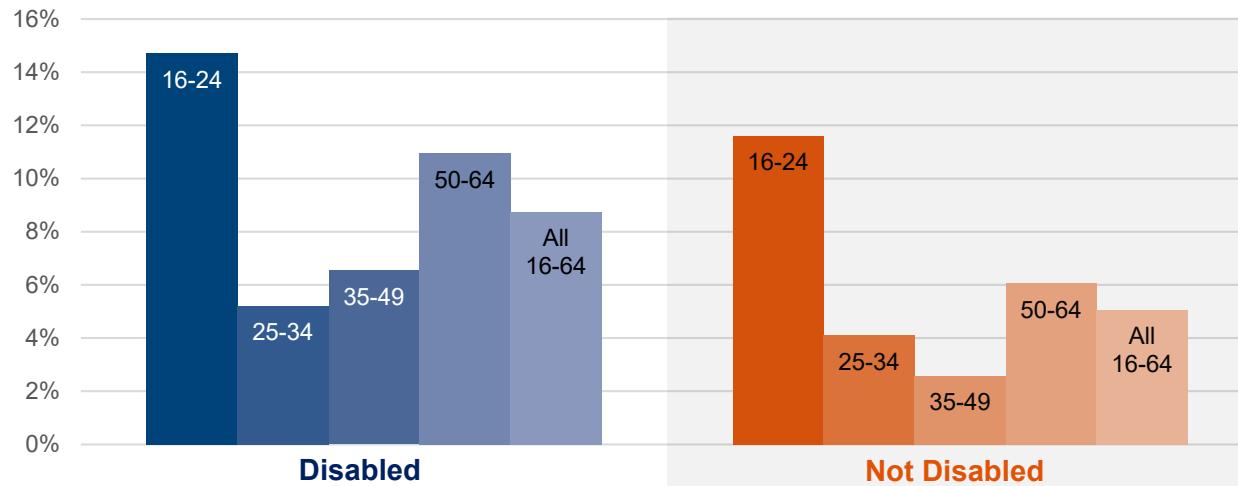
Among disabled people, there was no difference in rates of movement into work between men and women. However, among non-disabled men moved into work at a significantly faster rate than non-disabled women.

Therefore, while non-disabled men were three times as likely to have moved into work as disabled men, non-disabled women were twice as likely to have moved into work as disabled women.

See **Table 4.1** for full data.

People aged 16-24 years were more likely to have moved out of work than older people

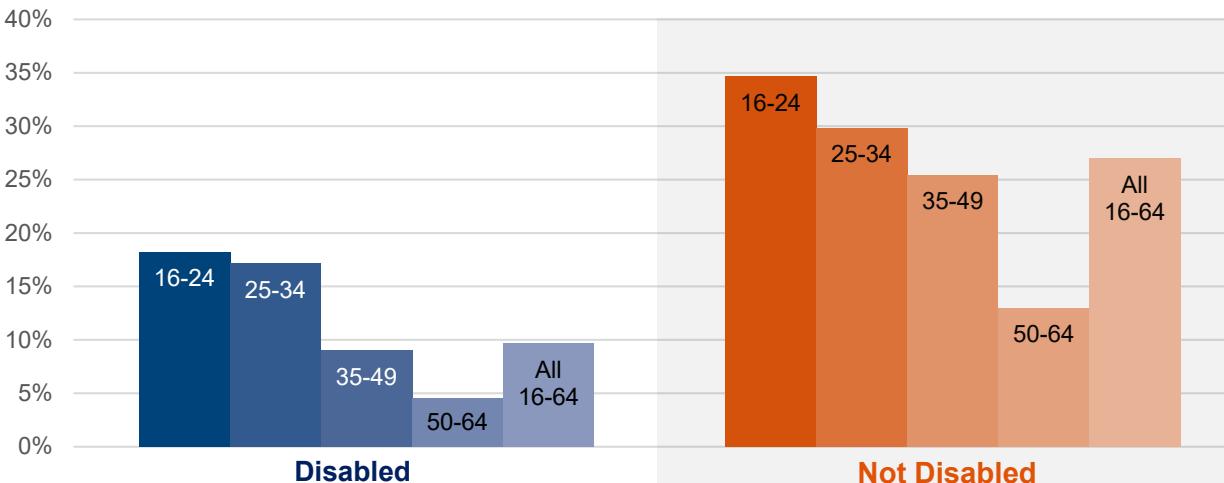
Percentage who moved out of work from one year to the next, by disability status and age, working age, 2016-2018



Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2016 to December 2018

The rate at which people moved into work decreased with age

Percentage who moved into work from one year to the next, by disability status and age, working age, 2016-2018



Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2016 to December 2018

There was a similar pattern when looking at the age breakdown of disabled and non-disabled people moving out of work. Younger people (aged 16-24 years) moved out of work at a faster rate than older people. The older age bracket of the working age population (50-64) were more likely to move out of work than those aged 25-34 or 35-49.

Disabled people aged 50-64 were almost twice as likely to have moved out of work as non-disabled people in the same age bracket.

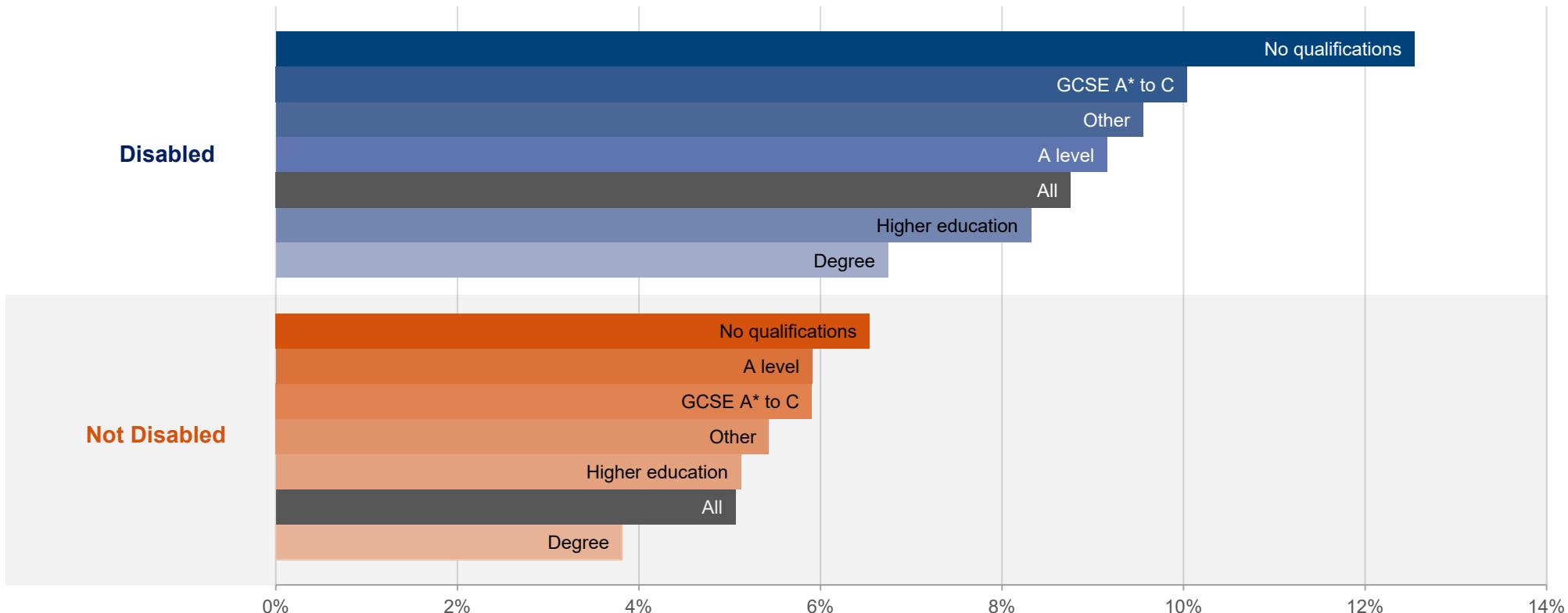
See **Table 4.2** for full data.

The rate at which non-disabled people moved into work decreased gradually with age, up to the age bracket 50-64, where there was a significant drop. The rate of moving into work also declined with age for disabled people, but with rates having dropped off significantly at earlier ages (from 35-49) compared with non-disabled people (from 50-64).

See **Table 4.2** for full data.

The higher the qualification a disabled person has, the less likely they were to have moved out of work

Percentage who moved out of work from one year to the next, by disability status and qualification, working age, 2016-2018



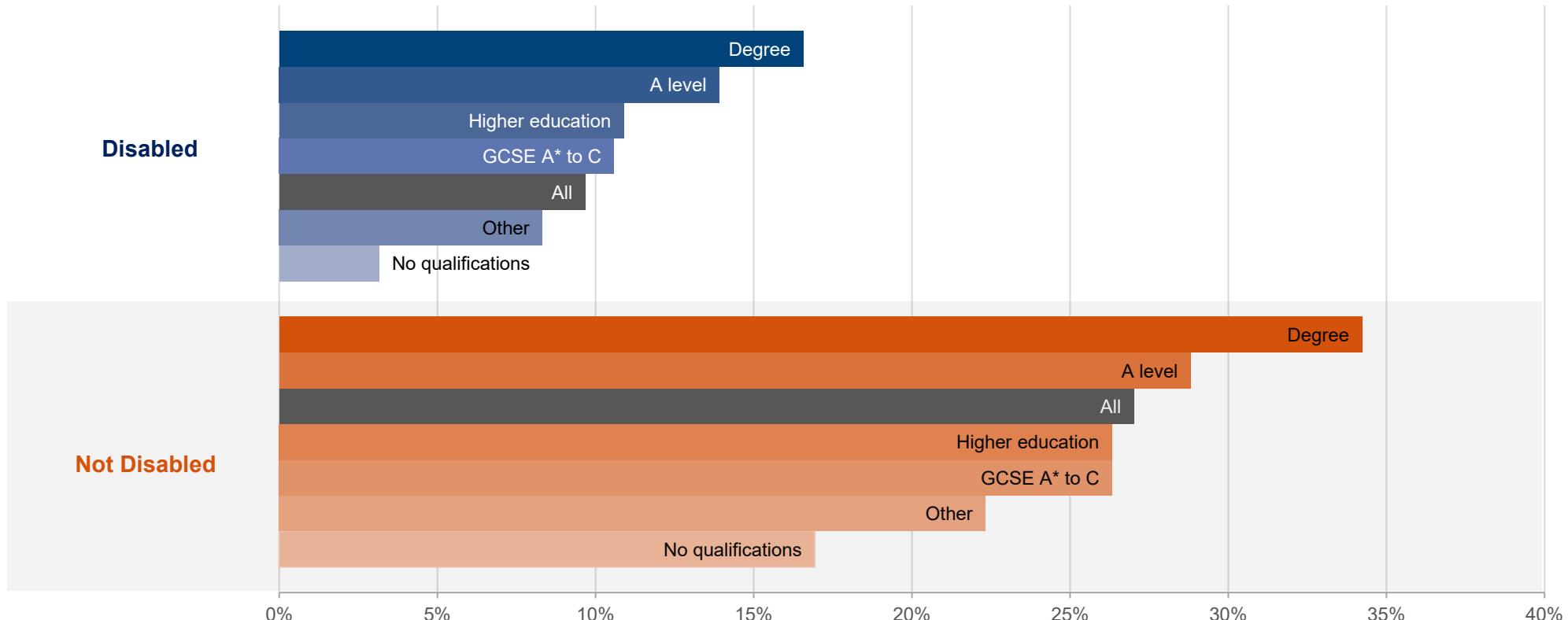
Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2016 to December 2018

The higher the qualification somebody has, then the less likely they were to have moved out of work from one year to the next, and this pattern was more prominent for those with a disability (from 13 per cent of those with no qualifications to 7 per cent of those with a degree) than with non-disabled people (from 7 per cent with no qualification to 4 per cent with a degree). Generally, disabled people moved out of work at a faster rate than non-disabled people with the same level of qualifications. Indeed, disabled people with a degree moved out of work at a similar rate to non-disabled people with no qualifications.

See **Table 4.3** for full data, including a full description of the qualifications categories.

The higher the qualification a disabled person has, the more likely they were to have moved into work

Percentage who moved into work from one year to the next, by disability status and qualification, working age, 2016-2018



Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2016 to December 2018

Movements into and out of work varied by qualifications held. Non-disabled people with some form of qualification typically moved into work at around twice the rate of disabled people. However, among those with no qualifications, non-disabled people moved into work at around five times the rate of their disabled counterparts.

The higher the qualification somebody has, the more likely they were to have moved into work. There was a similar range for those with a disability (from 3 per cent of those with no qualifications to 17 per cent of those with a degree) compared with non-disabled people (from 17 per cent with no qualification to 34 per cent with a degree). Generally, non-disabled people moved into work at a faster rate than disabled people with the same level of qualifications. Indeed, disabled people with a degree moved into work at a similar rate to non-disabled people with no qualifications.

See **Table 4.3** for full data

Disabled people in part-time employment were twice as likely to move out of work as disabled people in full-time employment

Percentage who moved out of work from one year to the next, by disability status and full- or part-time work, working age, 2016-2018



Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2016 to December 2018

Part 3: Employment Characteristics showed that there were about twice as many disabled people in full-time work (2.6 million) than part-time work (1.4 million), Table 3.7. However, those working part-time moved out of work at a significantly faster rate than those working full-time.

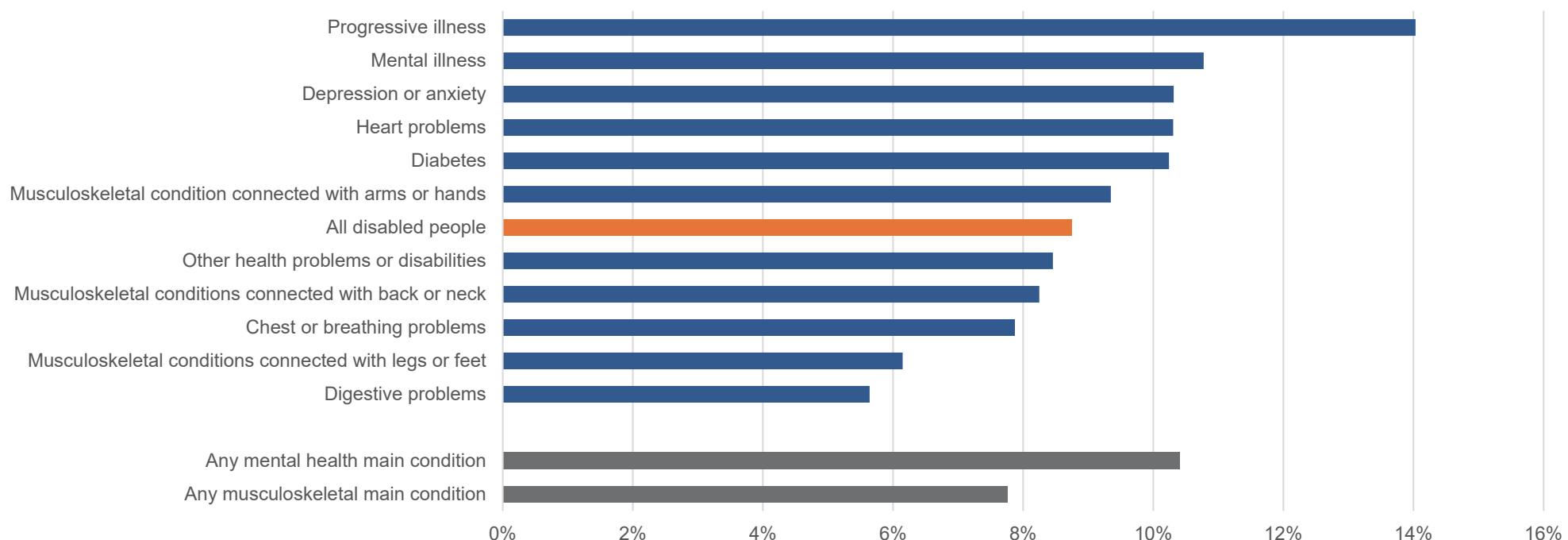
Disabled people in part-time employment were twice as likely to have moved out of work as disabled full-time workers, whereas non-disabled people in part-time work were three times as likely to have moved out of work as non-disabled full-time workers.

Among those working full-time, disabled people moved out of work at twice the rate of non-disabled people.

See **Table 4.4** for full data

Disabled people moved out of work at a faster rate if their main health condition was a progressive illness

Percentage who moved out of work from one year to the next, by disability status and main health condition, working age, 2016-2018



Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2016 to December 2018

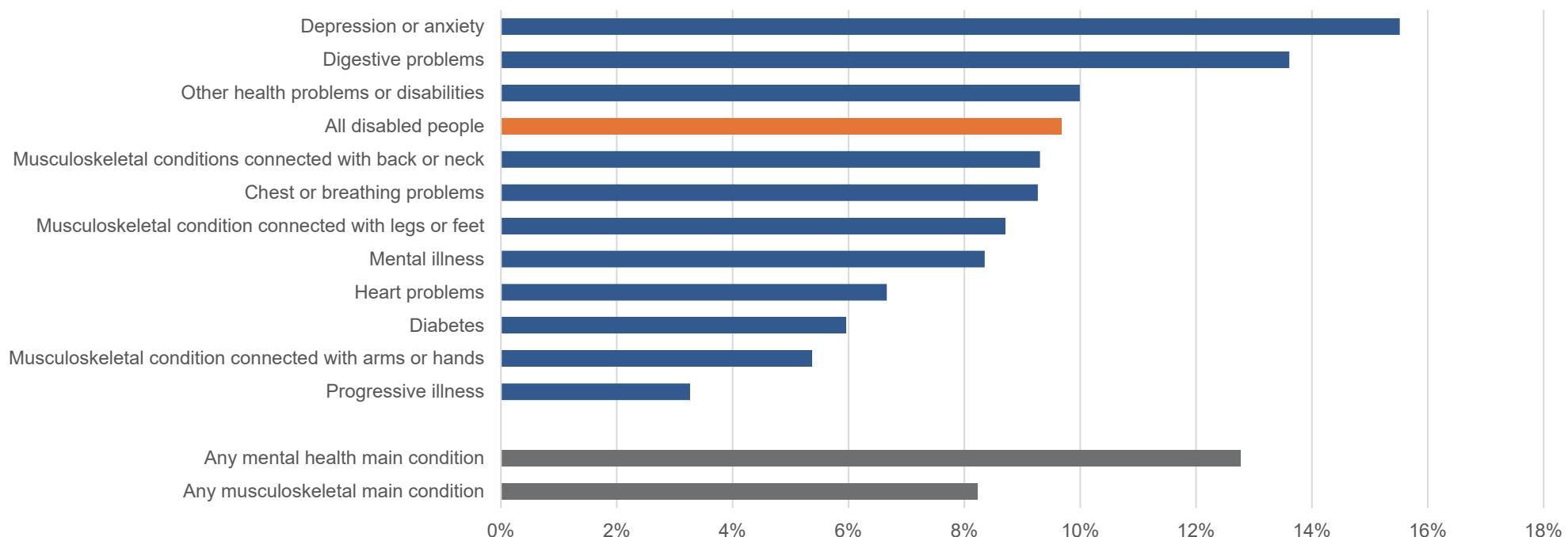
Looking at the breakdown of health conditions of disabled people, it appears that the fastest rate of moving out of work was among those with a progressive illness (such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, symptomatic HIV, Parkinson's disease or Muscular Dystrophy). However, this was not statistically significantly faster than those who are disabled with other main health conditions such as mental illness, depression or anxiety, heart problems or diabetes. For all of these conditions over 10 per cent moved out of work from one year to the next.

Combining the most common groupings of main health conditions, around 10 per cent of disabled people with any type of mental health condition (depression or anxiety, or mental illness) moved out of work. This compared with around 8 per cent of people with any type of musculoskeletal condition (problems, including arthritis or rheumatism, connected with arms or hands, with back or neck, or with legs or feet) as their main health condition.

See **Table 4.5** for full data, including a full description of each health condition category. Estimates for *all* people with a given health condition (regardless of whether or not it is their *main* health condition) are available in **Table 4.6**.

Disabled people moved into work at a faster rate if their main health condition was depression or anxiety

Percentage who moved into work from one year to the next, by disability status and main health condition, working age, 2016-2018



Source: Annual Population Survey, January 2016 to December 2018

Although disabled people with depression or anxiety as their main health condition were amongst the groups most likely to have moved out of work, they were also amongst those most likely to have moved into work (16 per cent). This rate was statistically significantly higher than all other main health conditions, apart from those with digestive problems.

Whilst disabled people with any type of mental health as their main condition were more likely to have moved out of work than disabled people with any musculoskeletal main condition, they were also the more likely to have moved into work (13 per cent compared with 8 per cent).

This shows that there was more movement in and out of work among disabled people with a mental health condition as their main health condition than among disabled people with a musculoskeletal condition.

See **Table 4.5** for full data, including a full description of each health condition category. Estimates for *all* people with a given health condition (regardless of whether or not it is their *main* health condition) are available in **Table 4.6**.

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>).

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

Several of the key series have been taken directly from a National Statistics publication (Labour Market Overview, UK), produced by the Office for National Statistics. The data sources used for new analysis 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 up to 2019. It provides important context on the government's commitment to reduce the disability employment rate gap, its goal to see one million more disabled people in work between 2017 and 2027, and the strategy 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.

Where to find out more

A note on 'Background information and methodology' used in this release can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-employment-of-disabled-people-background-information-and-methodology>.