

Discrimination

Key facts from the Life Opportunities Survey - Wave one results, 2009/11(1)

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) is a large-scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain. Results from the full first wave of the survey were published on the 8th December 2011 and the information below presents some of the key findings from this report. The report and the key findings below update the interim findings that were published in December 2010 based on the first half of wave one interviews.

In addition to these results, presented in the box are some of the previously published findings from the qualitative research that was commissioned to complement the statistics provided by the LOS(2).

The information below explores the types of discrimination experienced by adults, aged 16 and over in the 12 months prior to the interview.

Discrimination occurs when a particular person or group are treated less favourably because of their personal characteristics(3).

As seen in Table 1 age discrimination was the type of discrimination most commonly reported, with four per cent of adults reporting that they had experienced this in the previous 12 months. Discrimination due to a health condition, illness or impairment was reported by three per cent of adults. Discrimination due to a disability was reported by two per cent of adults, as was discrimination due to sex or ethnicity.

Table 1: Types of discrimination experienced by adults in previous 12 months by impairment status, 2009/11

Type of discrimination	Percentage of all adults
Age	4
A health condition, illness or impairment	3
Ethnic group	2
Sex	2
Disability	2
Religion or belief	1

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave One Results, 2009/11

1 http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/los/index.php?page=los_wor

2 <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/disability-statistics-and-research/life-opportunities-survey.php>

3 Aside from disability discrimination, the Life Opportunities Survey also includes findings on discrimination in relation to age, gender, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation.

People identified as being responsible for health or disability-related discrimination

Adults who reported experience of discrimination due to a health condition, illness or impairment or due to a disability were asked to identify who treated them unfairly. Health staff were most frequently identified as being responsible for health or disability-related discrimination, reported by 29 per cent of those adults who had experienced this discrimination. Strangers in the street and employers were reported by 26 per cent and 25 per cent of these adults respectively.

Workplace discrimination experienced

The most frequently reported type of discrimination in the workplace by employed adults who reported discrimination in the workplace due to a health condition, illness or impairment or a disability in the previous 12 months was being given fewer responsibilities than they wanted (17 per cent).

The qualitative research provided examples of possible workplace discrimination. One adult with impairment explained that, because her impairment was not immediately apparent, her colleagues did not recognise it and did not believe she required the assistance she had requested. Other adults with impairment were unwilling to disclose their impairment when applying for a new job, as they feared they would not be offered the position, and then found it difficult to request assistance after they started. According to the authors of the qualitative research report, 'lingering doubts persisted over whether an employer would really hire a disabled person ahead of a non-disabled candidate.'

"I wrote on my applications that I had ..., so I think maybe employers thought, oh, he's going to have a hard time, so maybe I didn't get as many interviews as I could have if I hadn't mentioned it."