

Disabled Graduates Experiences of the UK Labour Market

By

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Abstract

Disability is a common phenomenon in the UK and year on year there are more disabled graduates graduating and entering the labour market. Despite the relevance of disability to contemporary society, research that focuses on disabled graduates is notably absent in the wider equality and diversity literature. In order to address this lacuna, the research focuses on how disabled graduates manage and navigate the UK labour market. Five key stages in the graduates' journey into the labour market are addressed in the research, the process of job searching, how disabled graduates negotiate the workplace environment, which includes management relations, how reasonable adjustments are secured, and engagement with external bodies for advice and support and welfare. The wide range of topics covered in the thesis allowed the totality of the experience of disability to be addressed. The thesis used an inductive, qualitative methodology to uncover the lived experience of the disabled graduates.

Several key themes emerged from the thesis, firstly disabled graduates were active agents in managing their situation. They often had plan 'A' along with various alternative plans to allow them to achieve their desired career path. In addition the graduates were excellent at executing coping strategies to deal with the negative situations in which they found themselves; they did not allow their suffering to negatively deter them. Thirdly, the data showed it was very important to consider issues around impairment because impairment impacted many of the disabled graduates' experiences. If issues around impairment are ignored then only a partial understanding of disability is achieved. Finally, the data indicated that disabled graduates still experienced unfairness and discrimination in the workplace. This discrimination manifested itself in numerous ways from failure to be recruited to employers failing to make reasonable adjustments.

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Abbreviations

AGCAS	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Service
A2W	Access to Work
BITC	Business in the Community
CAB	Citizen's Advice Bureau
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
CSO	Civil Society Organisation(s)
CV	Curriculum Vitae
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DIG	Disability Income Group
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DLHE	Destination of Leavers of Higher Education
DRC	Disability Rights Commission
DSS	Department for Social Security
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
E&D	Equality and Diversity
EA '10	Equality Act 2010
ECU	Equality Challenge Unit
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EO	Equal Opportunities
ESA	Employment Support Allowance
EU	European Union
GRINGO	Graduate in Non-Graduate Occupation
HECSU	Higher Education Career Services Unit
HR	Human Resources
IB	Incapacity Benefit
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
JPP	Job Preparation Premium
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
ILS	Independent Living Scheme
MD	Managing Diversity
ME	Fatigue Impairment
NDDP	New Deal for Disabled People
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

ONS	Office for National Statistics
PA	Personal Assistant
RA	Reasonable Adjustment
RNIB	Royal National Institute for the Blind
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
SOC (HE)	Standard Occupational Classification (Higher Education)
SSL	Statutory Sick Leave
TU	Trade Union
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UK	United Kingdom
UPIAS	Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation
WERS	Workplace Employee Relations Survey

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Chapter One: Setting the Scene

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research project, set it within its correct context and provide a guide to the structure of the thesis. Firstly, the extent of literature on disabled people in work is considered in terms of quantity and content. After this outline is established the situation of disabled graduates is explored using statistics to convey the prevalence of disability and the position of disabled graduates in the UK labour market. Attention is paid to the central question of 'what is disability?' and how disability is conceived. This explanation is followed by a brief exploration of how discrimination is experienced, managed and legislated in the labour market. This review is used as a basis to highlight the gaps in the literature that generate the central research questions. The rationale for studying disabled graduates will be presented and finally the chapter gives an overview of the thesis structure.

Background

Prevalence of Disability in the Literature

Academic literature regarding broad equality and diversity themes is plentiful. Equality and Diversity (E&D) studies are growing in popularity; for example the 1998 Work Employment Relations Survey only contained two references to equality and diversity in comparison to the 2004 data which necessitated a whole chapter for equality and diversity (Walsh, 2007). Despite the prevalence of E&D studies, research concerning disability is scarce. A search of the journal 'Work, Employment and Society', for example, merely yielded 54 entries for disability, in comparison to 119 entries for ethnic/ethnicity and 487 on women/gender (Berthoud, 2008). Furthermore, those studies that explore disability usually present the prevalence of disability statistically and are managerial in focus (Danieli and Wheeler, 2006; Woodhams and Corby, 2007). What appears less frequently are qualitative studies that investigate the 'lived experiences' of disabled people. It is therefore the qualitative, employee focus of this thesis that makes the research valuable. The qualitative methods allow the research to focus on the subjective and lived experiences, creating nuanced, insightful research.

Prevalence of Disability in Society

Despite the paucity of disability research in mainstream management literature, disability is a common phenomenon in society. Currently in the UK, 18.3% of people report a disability that impacts their day-to-day lives (ONS, 2013a). Furthermore, evidence shows that disabled people are disadvantaged in the labour market with fewer disabled people in employment than non-disabled people (Burchardt, 2000, Burchardt, 2005, Smith and Twomey, 2002). Current statistics show that between April and June 2011 76.2% of people were in employment compared to only 45.6% of disabled people (ONS, 2013a). Additionally, disabled people are not only less likely to be in work but they are also more likely to be employed part time and earn less than their non-disabled peers (Jones et al., 2004; ONS, 2013a). Data, for example, shows that disabled people in work aged 26 earn 11% less than their equally qualified non-disabled colleagues (Burchardt, 2005). Research indicates, furthermore, that disabled people are typically employed in certain sectors of the economy and are represented more at the lower levels of skill - commonly in manual occupations - and are unlikely to work in managerial, professional and highly skilled jobs (DRC, 2006, ONS, 2013a; Smith and Twomey, 2002, Williams et al., 2008). Another common source of employment for disabled people is the public sector, where 13% of employees are disabled (Heap, 2005) and the previous growth of the public sector was mainly attributed to the increase in its employment of disabled people (Hirst and Thornton, 2005). Since the economic crisis of 2008, however, the public sector has been shrinking (ONS, 2013b). Impairment also affects a disabled person's labour market position. Individuals with mental health impairments have the lowest employment rate and those with a skin condition, diabetes or heart impairments have the highest employment rate (ONS, 2013a).

For graduates, in the academic year 2009/10, 10.7% of graduates had a disability, many of whom sought employment, while others chose further study, voluntary work, were assumed unemployed, not available for work or engaged in 'other' activities (Tunnah and Leacy, 2012). For the 2009/10 graduates, 49% of non-disabled graduates were in full time employment compared to 45.5% of disabled graduates (Tunnah and Leacy, 2012). These statistics reflect earlier research that disabled

graduates are less likely to be employed than their non-disabled counterparts (Burchardt, 2005).

What is Disability?

After establishing that disability is a common phenomenon, it is important to consider what 'disability' means. Debate centres around what constitutes disability - is it a bodily condition, or is it something that is socially constructed?

Llewellyn and Hogan (2000) state that the term 'model' in disability research represents a particular type of theory, which refers to a phenomenon, an abstract system and mechanism. These models help create explanations about how disability affects daily life (Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000). The two main models in the literature are the medical and social model. There is a plethora of academic debate surrounding these models, yet the literature does not reveal supporters of the medical model. Instead the medical model is a label that has been, retrospectively, attached to previous dominant thinking about disability.

According to Barnes and Mercer (2005), early studies into disability were dominated by the medical model of disability and were developed without the engagement of people with impairments (Barnes and Mercer, 2005, Goode, 2007, Stone and Priestley, 1996). Oliver and Barnes (1990) state that the medical view tended to focus on the individual and their functional limitations. This view made disability a medical problem. Llewellyn and Hogan (2000) support Oliver and Barnes (1990) and state that the medical model portrays disability as the result of physiological impairments which are due to damage or the disease process (see also Brisenden, 1986). While it is widely agreed disabled people do need medical intervention, Brisenden (1986) argues that problems arise when medical intervention controls a disabled person's life. Barnes and Mercer (2005) report that the impact of the medical model is that people with impairments were considered burdens, helpless victims and often viewed negatively by society.

In terms of employment, Barnes and Mercer (1996) argue that the medical model is used to legitimize disabled people's absence from the labour market. Barnes and Mercer (1996) report that disabled people are considered less productive in the workplace and employers view them negatively. Despite this claim by Barnes and Mercer (1997) the medical model was the dominant perspective for understanding disability for the majority of the 20th century.

Given the dominance of the medical model, how and why did the conceptualisation of disability change? Perceptions of disabled people changed as a result of the politicisation of disability. In the 1970s, disabled people collectivised to form a social movement which led to a general recognition that disabled people are a disadvantaged minority group (Charlton, 1998). According to Dobbin (2009) social movements arise when people whose interests are not adequately represented collectivise to influence politics. The disabled social movement arose when disabled people campaigned against their poverty, which resulted in the formation of the Disabled Income Group (DIG) (DIG, 1987). The Disabled Income Group demanded increased support from the government; however, it failed to achieve its goals. Undeterred, Pagel (1988) reports that after the unsuccessful DIG campaign, disabled people fought for full social inclusion and shifted the focus from impairments onto the limitations of society (Barnes, 2002). In America this was addressed through the development of Independent Living Centres, while in the UK the politicisation of disability led to the creation of the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) and the rise of the social barriers (model) approach (Barnes and Mercer, 2005).

The Social Model

The proponents of the social model believe disability is firmly located in the values of society, modes of production, political economy, physical environments, and the welfare system (Oliver, 1990). Oliver and Barnes (1998) expand this definition to include the disadvantage and restriction of activity caused by contemporary social organisations which ignore people who have physical impairments and learning difficulties (see also Mulvany, 2000).

According to the social model the appropriate redress for the social oppression is civil rights (Best, 2007, Goode, 2007, Pinder, 1995). Supporters argue that if society was equitably organised, many 'problems' associated with being 'different' would disappear (Brisenden, 1986; Llewellyn and Hogan, 2000). As a result Mulvany (2000) advocates social model-based research that includes an analysis of the social, political and economic conditions that restrict disabled people.

Despite the dominance of the social model in disability research, the model has received criticism. The principal criticism of the social model is that it ignores impairments because priority is given to how society is organised at the expense of bodily concerns (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001). The chapter now explores the primary criticism of the social model and then considers four less significant challenges to the social model.

The first criticism reported in the literature is that the social model excludes the body in the experience of disability; leading to a partial understanding of disability (Abberley, 1996; Crow, 1996; Hughes and Paterson, 1997; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001). Excluding the body has caused some to question how bodily effects, such as pain, can be taken into consideration (Best, 2007; Pinder, 1995; Zola, 1991). Pinder (1995) believes that solely focusing on disabling environments, to the exclusion of the body, is as oppressive as focusing on impairment alone. Further concerns arise because authors believe that if the body is excluded, disabled people will fail to identify with the social model (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001).

A second criticism of the social model is that it favours physical impairments over invisible impairments (Humphreys, 2000) Humphrey (2000) reported that her invisibly disabled respondents were scared to talk about their impairment because speaking about physical limitations was considered taboo under the social model. Humphrey (2000) believes this taboo restricts the relevance of the social model to those with physical impairments. As a result people with hidden disabilities feel

alienated by the social model because they have to speak about their impairment to identify as disabled (see also Chappell et al., 2001).

A third criticism is that disabled people who cannot work will face increased discrimination because of the assumption that with adjustments everyone can work (Abberley, 1996) This view is reflected by Gleeson (1999) who reports that disabled people who cannot work because of their impairment are significantly disadvantaged in a society which highly values a person's ability to work. The social model's focus on work has led Shakespeare and Watson (2001) to state that they cannot comprehend why society is unable to accept that some people cannot work.

The social model had its origins in the political mobilisation of disabled people. The fourth criticism is, therefore, that the political emphasis of the social model is no longer relevant because current equality legislation protects disabled people (Shakespeare, 2006). As a result, the assumption is that disabled people do not need a common ground on which to collectivise because they are already protected by legislation.

The final reproach is that the social model does not take into account people's multiple identities, indicating that the model lacks intersectionality. Multiple differences exist between people and Barton (1993) argues that the conception of disability as a monolith ignores the differences that exist between disabled people with regard to class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and age. Ignoring these crucial differences simplifies disability and takes no account of intersectionality (Shakespeare and Watson, 2001).

Supporters of the social model have been eager to address the critics. Oliver (1996) states there are fundamental reasons to exclude impairments. There is concern that focusing on impairments could lead to a renewed focus on physical limitations, which oppresses disabled people (Oliver, 1996, Shakespeare, 1996). Barnes et al., (1999)

respond that individual interventions, i.e. medical or rehabilitative, are not always counterproductive (Barnes et al., 1991). Barnes et al., (1999) believe critics of the social model side-step the contention that bodily differences are created through social and biological interaction and that perceptions of impairments are culturally specific. Furthermore, Barnes et al., (1999) claim that the social model emphasises the interconnections between all areas of life; proposing that radical changes in the area of disablement are only likely after a '*reformulation of the meaning and organisation of work*' (Barnes et al., 1999:7).

The Nuanced Social Model

Thomas (2007) has created an alternative, nuanced version of the social model that considers the body and addresses many criticisms of the original social model. Thomas (2007) believes impairment is important because it explains subjective experiences and if impairment is omitted there is a danger of assuming that impairment does not affect disabled people's lives (Thomas, 2007). To address these concerns Thomas (2007) created the concept of 'impairment effects'. Thomas (2007) uses the illustration of a person without a hand. This person cannot hold a kettle and fill a saucepan simultaneously; this inability is an impairment effect. If the person is told they are not able to have children or work because of this impairment effect then 'disablism' occurs. Thomas (2007) says that disablism is a concept of bio-power and bio-politics, where impairment and disability interact. The body is simultaneously biological, material and social – bio-social. Thomas (2007) states that bodily variations are only seen as impairments in certain cultures, defined by what a society views as 'normal', therefore the bio-material intersects with the bio-social. Dyslexia, for example, is seen as an impairment in the developed world but not considered an impairment in the developing world because the culture does not consider dyslexia as a functional limitation (Coleridge, 1993). Crow's (1996) work supports the concept of impairment effects. Crow (1996) argues that disability is associated with illness, often old age, and conditions which are usually painful and cannot be ignored. This emphasis on impairment effects will be incorporated within this research, along with an adoption of the disablism approach. A thorough explanation of how this approach informs the research is detailed in the next section.

Adopted Perspective

This thesis adopted the perspective of Thomas (2007). The thesis supports the idea that people have physical and mental impairments that affect their day to day lives and impairment is central in understanding their world. The thesis, therefore, explored the impairment effects on the participants' lives, how the impairment limited their lives, and the impact these limitations had on their labour market participation and any disablism that occurred. The focus on disablism, is apparent when the thesis explores the barriers the participants face to labour market participation.

Disabled People, Policy and Legislation

It has been established that disability is a common phenomenon, that disabled people face disadvantage in the labour market and that there are competing conceptualisations of disability. How, therefore, has the state responded to discrimination? The state has responded in various ways, two of which are to improve legislation and to restructure benefits (DWP, 2006). Benefits have been reformed and one way this reform has been achieved was through increased conditionality of benefits (Spicker, 2011). The introduction of Work Capability Assessments and complex application processes, have made benefits harder to access. Benefits have also been reformed through the introduction of tax credits, which are incentives to encourage people to work by offering them more money.

The main vehicle through which work related benefits are administered is the Jobcentre Plus (JCP). The JCP supports people looking for work and is central in assisting the transition from benefits to work (Birkin and Meehan, 2005). The Jobcentre Plus has specific advisers who help disabled people back into work called Disability Employment Advisors (DEA). They are responsible for ensuring disabled people are aware of available opportunities and helping them to secure employment. There is considerable debate about the efficacy of the JCP. The main elements of the debate centre around whether the JCP is efficient at assisting claimants back to work and whether other bodies, such as Civil Society Organisations (CSO) fulfil this role more effectively. This debate is explored in detail in chapter three.

In addition the government has various policy initiatives to integrate disabled people into the labour market. These policy initiatives have largely focused on increasing the supply of disabled people available for work. An example of the supply side policies is training programmes aimed at increasing skill levels. Demand side policy interventions also exist - as a result of legislative interventions in the form of equality duties, all public sector organisations have to take a proactive stance to mainstream equality. The Public Sector Equality Duties replace the former separate duties on race, disability and gender. This duty is an advance in the wake of research which found that, although many organisations had adapted their workplace environments, the majority had done so without the engagement of disabled people (Roberts et al., 2006).

Policy and legislation often work hand-in-hand. Legislation against disability discrimination was first introduced in the 1940s when the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 was passed to provide protection for soldiers returning to civil employment after the Second World War (Woodhams and Corby, 2003). This Act established special protection for people with impairments and set a quota level for all companies with more than 20 employees (Vanhala, 2006). Employer compliance with the Act, however, was poor and enforcement was almost non-existent (Woodhams and Corby, 2007).

Today's UK anti-discrimination legislation is proactive and has moved away from its paternalist past. The main piece of anti-discrimination legislation is The Equality Act 2010 (EA '10), which came into effect during the course of the research. The EA '10 replaces the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and improves the protection of minority groups. One example of the improvement in protection is the provision for positive discrimination where the EA '10 allows for positive discrimination in recruitment to compensate for historic disadvantage (Noon, 2010).

The Equality Act 2010 is enforced through a two pronged approach; the Employment Tribunal system and Administrative Sanctions (Dickens, 2012a). There is debate

about the effectiveness of these approaches given the large number of grievances that remain unreported (Colling, 2012). The debate surrounding the effectiveness of the enforcement approach is discussed, at length, in the literature review.

Combining policy and legislation aims to encourage people back into work by limiting discrimination, providing disabled people with skills to work and making it harder to access benefits. The objective of the government's approach is, therefore, to promote formal equality for minorities and remove discrimination, while maximising employment rights.

Disabled People in Employment

Given the proven disadvantage of disabled people, what are the experiences of disabled people in the labour market? The literature indicates two main points. Firstly, disabled people report problems at work, such as discrimination and disadvantage. Simultaneously, however, disabled people benefit from being employed.

Empirical research has shown that employers have a relatively poor knowledge of legislation (TUC, 2003b, Stacey and Short, 2000; Woodhams and Corby, 2003). Duff and Ferguson (2007) found that disability issues were side-lined compared to gender, race and social class. Hoque and Noon's (2004) research reported an 'empty shell hypothesis' where a gap was found between policy and practice. For example, only 37% of workplaces with a disability policy made adjustments to the workplace and only 21% had special recruitment procedures to encourage applications from disabled people. While these percentages are low, what is of greater concern is that 56% of workplaces with a disability policy had not adopted either adjustments or special recruitment procedures for disabled people and only 14% of workplaces with a disability policy had adopted both practices (Hoque & Noon, 2004:491).

Research has found that the largest potential barriers to employment, as viewed by disabled people themselves, are the attitudes of employers, transportation and discrimination in hiring (Crudden and McBroom, 1999). There is evidence to show that disabled people are correct to be concerned about the attitudes of employers, because Bruyere et al., (2004) report 23% of employers admitted that attitudes and stigma were a barrier to employing disabled people.

While stigma is a pertinent issue for all disabled people, the incidence of prejudice is greater for people with mental health impairments (DRC, 2006, Riddell et al., 2002, Williams et al., 2008). This finding is of particular concern given that in the academic year 2009/10 there was over a 100% increase in graduates graduating with a mental health impairment (Tunnah and Leacy, 2012). Incidentally, research has shown that people with mental health impairments, in general, need fewer accommodations than physically disabled people or, at the very most, similar accommodations (Paetzold, 2005). These findings are significant because employment is the key to combating social exclusion for people with mental health impairments (Boyce et al., 2008).

All disabled people benefit from employment, not just people with mental health impairments. Research shows that working disabled people express very positive views about working (DWP, 2007). Disabled people report that working keeps them active, gives financial independence and makes them feel as if they are contributing to society (Williams et al., 2008). These positive aspects of working are not to be undermined or undervalued.

Research Questions

Examining the literature gives rise to several research questions. The research questions that frame the research will now be presented and expanded to detail the points that will be considered.

This research focused on disabled graduates. The first area of interest was legislation and the research was interested in how disabled graduates experienced legislation. The topic areas included an exploration of the graduates' knowledge of UK equality legislation, whether they felt protected by legislation and whether they made use of legislation. The research considered external agencies that may mediate (ensure that legislation has genuine effect in the workplace (Dickens, 2012a)) legislation for disabled graduates. The data generated from this research question addressed key debates about the effectiveness of legislation and whether incidents of discrimination were unreported because of the enforcement approach.

The second area of exploration was recruitment and selection. This research question concerned the type of recruitment and selection methods the participants experienced, how effective they were and the outcome of their job applications. This data addressed the question of the effectiveness of informal versus formal recruitment methods and the provision of positive discrimination in the selection process. Attention was given to who disclosed, why and the implications of their disclosure.

The penultimate research question reflected the literature about problems at work and reasonable adjustments. Graduates were questioned about their interactions with management, management's knowledge and experience of equality and diversity, workplace concerns, how these concerns were addressed and the outcome. Management interviewees were questioned about their knowledge of equality and diversity, any training received and the organisation's approach to equality and diversity. The data from this section addressed the question about the impact the type of organisation has on the disabled person's experience and whether the devolution of equality and diversity responsibility to line managers had negatively or positively impacted disabled workers. Attention was paid to what types of adjustments were requested, how they were put in place, whether the adjustments met the needs of the disabled person and the organisation's response to the need for reasonable adjustments.

The final research question explored the disabled graduates' interaction with state and benefit agencies. This part of the thesis focused on the graduates' interaction with the JCP and NGOs which supply return-to-work services. Attention was paid to what contact was made, how helpful the service was, knowledge of staff and the outcome of the disabled graduates' interaction with the JCP/NGO. Consideration was given to the benefits the disabled graduates claimed and their perceptions of the benefits. The data from this research question informed the debate about the usefulness of the JCP, which type of agency was best suited to help disabled people access work and answered the question of whether disabled people want to work or are happy to live off benefits.

Each of the above research questions aimed to explore the given area in depth and uncover variation. Likely sources of variation were the individual and their disability, the employer, the type and amount of contact with outside agencies, an individual's ability to cope with difficulty and the presence of support networks. Each of these factors were interesting but the most prominent issue was the role impairment plays and why. This particular source of variation, therefore, was given considerable attention in the thesis. In order to understand variation, variation was compared with existing literature. Where a mixed set of evidence was discovered, the pattern was reported and explained. Finally, the graduates' experiences were compared to other minority groups and other graduates to ascertain whether the disabled graduate experience is distinctive and in what way.

In summary, the research questions were as follows:

1. What were the experiences of disabled graduates who were either looking for work or who were in work, post-1995¹ with regard to:
 - a. Relevant legislation which may support/protect them
 - b. Recruitment and selection
 - c. Management Interactions and workplace adjustments

¹ 1995 is used as a cut-off date because this was the date of the introduction of Disability legislation in the UK.

- d. Benefit and government agencies
2. Why experiences varied for different disabled graduates and to account for this variation. Interesting sources of variation are:
- a. Impairment
 - b. Type of employer
 - c. An individuals' ability to cope with difficult circumstances
 - d. The nature of contact with outside agencies
 - e. The use of support networks

In order to answer the research questions a qualitative methodology was used. These research questions were answered using semi-structured interviews and a focus group. The sample was comprised of 31 disabled graduates, one Access to Work focus group, 16 Human Resource managers, one Member of Parliament, five support agency staff, four Careers Advisors and one Disability Employment Advisor.

The majority of the interviews were carried out face to face and recorded for verbatim transcription. These transcripts were subject to a thorough thematic analysis to ascertain relationships and key points. A detailed description of the methodology is presented in chapter four.

Rationale for Topic Selection

The experience of disabled graduates in the UK labour market was selected as a topic owing to the researcher's personal experience of disability. After graduating with a First Class Honours degree from a 'Russell Group University', the researcher was unable to secure graduate-level work. This situation prompted an informal investigation to ascertain whether her experience was distinct or whether other disabled graduates were facing similar problems locating work. After some informal enquires it became apparent that the researcher's experience was not distinct. It was at this stage that the researcher approached Cardiff University to find out whether

the topic would be viable for Ph.D research. This led to the securing of an ESRC award and the research commenced.

The topic was additionally attractive because of the vast policy implications of the research. Evidence detailing the situation and discrimination disabled graduates face will allow policy makers to change policy to help assimilate disabled graduates into the labour market. Furthermore, the research could challenge existing preconceptions about disabled people and allow policy to be based on evidence rather than rhetoric.

Structure of the Dissertation

The chapter now outlines the structure of the thesis. Each chapter within the thesis focuses on an area of the research, and when read as a whole, guides the reader through the research from start to finish.

Chapter 2: Key Concepts and Context

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise the work experience of disabled graduates. This is achieved by exploring the key debates in the literature in relation to the extent and reasons for discrimination, the policy and legislative environment and how different actors mediate legislation and policy. The chapter concludes by exploring the key contingencies that affect disabled graduates' experiences of work.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter three details the research methodology. Epistemology and ontology are considered and the 'onion' approach by Saunders et al., (2009) is used to discuss the research methods. The sample, research tools, analysis, confirmability, validity, credibility, ethics and future research considerations are all considered. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a clear understanding of how the research was carried out, why it developed the way it did and how the results were analysed.

Chapter Four: Entering the Labour Market

The presentation of empirical research data is split up into six chapters. This chapter presents data on entering the labour market and looking for work. Details about the job search process are provided. The chapter then explores the recruitment process, whether the graduates disclosed their disability, what motivated them to do this and the impact the type of impairment has on whether they disclosed. Next the issue of guaranteed interviews is discussed. The chapter concludes with a section on the type of work that the disabled graduates wanted.

Chapter Five: The Nature of the Jobs

The first issue that is considered in this chapter is the level of underemployment across the sample and its impact on disabled graduates. The chapter then considers how some graduates try to improve their position by growing their jobs or turning to self-employment, and the relative success of these attempts. The final section of the chapter reports how being employed benefited the participants.

Chapter Six: Experience of Being in Employment

The third empirical chapter presents evidence about the experiences of disabled graduates inside the workplace. The chapter reports graduates experience of management in the workplace, such as bullying and harassment and the perceived support of organisational members. It also considers their experiences of stigma and discrimination. Finally, the participants' knowledge of legislation is presented alongside the role of external agencies, such as trade unions and NGOs, which provide information about their rights.

Chapter Seven: Management and Workplace Adjustments

The fourth empirical chapter explores reasonable adjustments and how the graduates interact with management. Firstly, the role managers play in the graduates' experiences are recounted with attention given to training, knowledge of organisational policies, co-operation, understanding of disability issues and specific disability advisors in the workplace. Secondly, reasonable adjustments are

considered, by exploring the type of adjustment required and how they were achieved. Finally, data relating to Access to Work is presented which assesses whether it is an effective scheme to help disabled people back to work.

Chapter Eight: External Influences

The fifth empirical chapter concerns the external agencies with which the disabled graduates interacted. The chapter focuses on two types of organisations: trade unions and CSOs. Data in relation to trade unions is presented, which includes why some of the participants joined and the outcome of their membership. The interviews showed that graduates also engaged with civil society organisations, such as Disability Wales and the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) and this data is presented in the next section. Again the motives for involvement are explored alongside the outcomes. These two institutions are then compared to ascertain whether CSOs have replaced or complemented the role of trade unions in representing the needs of disabled employees.

Chapter Nine: The Welfare System

The final empirical chapter discusses the welfare system findings. Firstly, benefit trends are reported, followed by an assessment of how participants located benefit information and their perceptions of benefits. The experience of claiming benefits is then analysed. The data on the Jobcentre Plus is presented which explores the variability in treatment of graduates depending on impairment and the instrumental manner in which some graduates orientate themselves to benefits.

Chapter Ten: Discussion and Conclusion

The final chapter of the thesis provides a comprehensive discussion of the results and places them in the context of existing literature. The research findings are summarised and key themes explored. The chapter then reports the distinctiveness of disabled graduates in relation to other graduates and non-disabled people. Pen ultimately, the chapter turns to explore how the thesis informs current literature and

finally, the chapter concludes with a section on how it felt to carry out the research and the impact the research had on the researcher.

Chapter Two: Context and Debate Surrounding Disabled Graduates and the UK Labour Market

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review chapter is to map the extant literature relevant to the disabled graduates' experiences of the UK labour market. A broad base of literature is discussed that encompasses other minority group experiences, not just disability. The literature is mainly, although not exclusively, drawn from the field of business management because the thesis is interested in the experience of work. It is necessary to consider the business management literature because this literature frames and analyses all aspects of work and employment.

The chapter is split into three main sections; the first section discusses competing evidence about the existence of disadvantage among disabled people and how this disadvantage manifests itself. Secondly, the chapter establishes a policy to practice gap, in terms of law and management practice and explores the debate about which actors are best suited to bridge this gap. The final section of the chapter discusses variation in experiences of work and explores the competing contingencies that give rise to variation.

Continued Disadvantage

Chapter one discussed the disadvantage disabled people face in employment, such as higher unemployment and the preponderance of low skilled work (see Barnes and Mercer, 2005 and ONS, 2013a). What, therefore, are the key areas in which disabled people face discrimination? In order to answer this question, the chapter will explore the role of impairment and how disability impacts the experience of work, firstly by exploring underemployment and skill. Secondly, the chapter moves to consider the continued disadvantage in social security.

Underemployment

The first way disadvantage is observed in the literature is through underemployment. The term underemployment is commonly used to describe three employment situations. Firstly, 'involuntary time related unemployment', which is when a person works fewer hours than s/he desires: for example a part-time worker who wishes to work full-time (Feldman, 1996; Grint, 2005). The second definition of underemployment relates to education or skills; an employee is employed in a position below their skill level or is employed to work in a job that does not utilise their educational qualifications (Feldman, 1996; Grint, 2005). When discussing graduates, skill related underemployment is most commonly referred to. The third type of underemployment is income and poverty underemployment. A worker finds him or herself in a job that pays so little they are in poverty (Feldman, 1996). Underemployment can be seen, therefore, as being employed in a position that is in some way viewed as inferior in relation to some standard (Feldman, 1996).

Given these definitions, what is the current underemployment situation among graduates? The most recent data by Felstead et al., (2013) shows that the total number of people with degrees rose by 2.2 million in 2006-2012; yet the total number of graduate jobs only rose by 1.9 million, in the same period. This situation is not bleak, however, as 87% of graduates felt in 2012 that they had the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills, which was an increase from 82% in 2002 (Felstead et al., 2013: 4).

Within business management literature there is extensive debate on the cause of underemployment, the role of higher education and increased numbers of graduates (see: Mason, 2002 and Purcell et al., 2004). There are two main positions identified; those who believe that graduates no longer possess the necessary skills and lack employability (see: Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Hesketh, 2010; Teichler, 2000, 2007; Yorke and Harvey, 2003) and those who believe the labour market has expanded and absorbed the extra supply of graduates (Felstead et al., 2013; Purcell et al., 2004).

Within the context of the underemployment debate is the experience of underemployment for traditional and minority graduates. The literature suggests that several key factors affect the propensity to be underemployed: the type of degree course (McKnight, 1999); membership of a particular socio-economic group (Brennan et al., 2003); unemployment immediately post-graduation (Elias and McKnight, 1999; Mason, 2004) and importantly for this research, being disabled (Purcell et al., 2005).

According to Purcell et al., (2005) those who report a long term illness or disability are more than twice as likely to be underemployed, using the Standard Occupational Classification (HE). Furthermore, Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) data shows that only 49.9% of disabled graduates were in full time work compared to 55.6 % of non-disabled graduates (AGCAS, 2009). 8.2% of disabled graduates were employed part time, compared to 7.6% of their non-disabled peers. Using these statistics it would be possible to suggest that disabled graduates face time-related underemployment to a greater extent than their non-disabled colleagues. This data does not reveal whether the graduates chose to work part-time and this aspect should be considered when making comparisons about time related underemployment. In conclusion, research shows that the development of skills and employability is relatively similar for disabled and non-disabled graduates. However, disabled graduates need to be more proactive to promote their skills than their non-disabled peers (Burchardt, 2005) and levels of underemployment are higher among disabled graduates than non-disabled graduates (Tunnah and Leacy, 2012).

The thesis, therefore, needs to consider the levels of underemployment in the sample and uncover the reasons for this underemployment. Do the reasons support existing research on non-disabled graduates, or are there different explanations for disabled graduates? The empirical research in the thesis, therefore, will seek to identify underemployment among the sample and compare the experience of disabled graduates to traditional graduates.

Recruitment and Selection

The second way in which disadvantage can manifest itself, is through recruitment and selection. Organisations need to recruit the most suitable employees for many reasons, such as competitive advantage and business success. For this reason there is a vast amount of literature that examines recruitment and selection and contingent factors. The literature pays specific attention to which recruitment and selection methods are the most appropriate for minority groups. Recruitment and selection is not restricted to the business management literature; it is also considered in the equality literature, which also investigates how contemporary recruitment methods impact different minority groups (see: Kirton and Healy, 2009 and Rees and Garnsey, 2003). What is of interest to this thesis is whether formal or informal methods of recruitment and selection are most appropriate for disabled graduates. The two main positions identified in the literature are those which support formal procedures for equitable outcomes, compared to others who believe informal procedures secure the fairest decisions for applicants.

The least common position in the literature is that informal methods are more favourable for diversity (see Wilson, 2012) and more support is found for the notion that formal methods of hiring reduce the incidence of discrimination (see: Dobbin and Sutton, 1998; Moss and Tilly, 2003, Walsh, 2007 and Wanrooy et al., 2013). Formal methods, usually in the form of competency based assessments, such as graduate assessment centres, are considered as more scientific, context free and mechanistic (Garavan and McGurie, 2001 and Kandola and Fullerton, 1994). These features are said to be more favourable for equality. Kirton and Healy (2009) examined the case of the appointment of judges to ascertain whether competency based human resource practices were fair for minority workers. They noted that the dominance of competency practices could in themselves be gender biased because these types of assessments take longer to complete and therefore favour men who have fewer time commitments outside work. Nevertheless, they concluded that “*the competency approach with its emphasis on self-assessment is able to meet the organisational political objective of building diversity*” (Kirton and Healy, 2009:315). The central argument to draw from this literature is that there is debate between the merits of formal and informal approaches for minority groups of workers. Perhaps the

dominant strand in the literature emphasises formality, which is also reflected by policy advice and equal opportunity specialists (see Kandola and Fullerton, 1994). What is of interest to the thesis, is how do these methods impact disabled graduates and are formal methods the best way to account for difference in hiring and do those who use formal methods achieve more senior positions than those who rely on informal methods?

Disclosure

Closely allied to the practice of recruitment and selection is disclosure. Research shows that disclosure, or informing an employer of one's impairment, is problematic for many disabled job seekers and a source of continued disadvantage (see: Bishop and Allen, 2001; Lucas, 2008). Disclosure can be linked to a wider debate about the visibility or invisibility of one's impairment. Those who have invisible impairments have control over disclosure, known as 'information control' (Goffman, 1963). An invisible disability is similar to homosexuality, in terms of an individual being able to retain control over disclosure. Research, for example, shows that 'invisibility' of a minority status resulted in gay and lesbian workers hiding their sexual orientation, however hiding part of their identity led to stress and anxiety (Day and Schoenrade, 2000; Neely-Martinez, 1993). This phenomenon was also apparent in studies of disability and disclosure (Bishop and Allen, 2001; Jans, 2012; Lucas, 2008). It is interesting to ascertain, therefore whether the type of impairment affected disclosure among the sample of graduates and whether they reported using disclosure as a form of control.

Within the literature there is disagreement about the role of disclosure with two competing positions being identified. Firstly, disclosure should be for the main purpose of monitoring the prevalence of equality among staff and secondly disclosure is the first step in setting into place reasonable adjustments to support the worker e.g. (see: Bishop and Allen, 2001; Jans, 2012; Lucas, 2008; Williams, 2007). What factors, therefore affect whether an employee chooses to disclose? Several factors have been identified in the literature: firstly the perceived disability friendliness of organisations, secondly the nature of a person's disability (visibility

and invisibility) and the likelihood that they will need adjustments (Lucas, 2008; Vickers, 1997; Jans, 2012). It is necessary to consider, therefore, if these motives are seen in the sample of disabled graduates and whether disclosure led to negative experiences for the sample, as reported by Day and Schonera, (2000) and Neely-Martinez (1993) for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Bullying and Harassment

The fourth area of continued disadvantage is bullying and harassment. Bullying and harassment is a common experience in work, affecting many workers (Run Ren et al., 2008). It is important to consider bullying and harassment in a study of disability because being disabled increases the likelihood of being bullied (Fevre et al., 2010). Furthermore, colleagues can be a major source of support for disabled workers (Roulstone et al., 2003) and therefore it is important to investigate what happens when colleague relationships become strained.

Providing a clear definition of workplace bullying is problematic because it is interpreted differently by different groups of respondents (Fevre et al., 2010). Vega and Comer (2005) offer a definition of bullying as the pattern of destructive and deliberate undermining of co-workers or subordinates. ACAS offers a definition of three parts, the type of behaviour of the perpetrator, the exploitation of the power imbalance between the two and the impact of the behaviour on the victim (Lewis, 2006).

What factors increase the chances of being bullied? Bullying is more likely to take place in negative and stressful working environments, private organisations, large companies and male dominated organisations (Einarsen, 2000; Hansen et al, 2006). Zapf et al's (1999) study notes further personal characteristics that make a person more likely to be bullied - high levels of anxiety and depression, conflict avoidance, being shy and engaging in little social interaction. The presence of an impairment significantly increases the propensity of bullying and harassment. In a comprehensive survey of discrimination in the workplace, the EHRC discovered that

11.6% of employees with a disability experienced physical violence at work, compared with 5.5% of other employees and it was employers, line managers and supervisors who were accountable for nearly half the ill-treatment (Carvel, 2008). Being disabled therefore makes a person more likely to be bullied (see: Zapf et al., 1999;Fevre et al., 2010).

There are many negative effects associated with workplace bullying. Rayner et al., (2002) found that chronic stress and anxiety, physical ill health, lower social support from colleagues and mental distress were all the result of workplace bullying. Hansen et al., (2006) reported that bullied workers face increased somatisation, depression, anxiety and low levels of social support from co-workers. Therefore this thesis needs to consider whether the sample was bullied, if the bullying was the result of the presence of an impairment and how their employing organisations responded.

Another central debate in the literature is the manner in which organisations respond to bullying and harassment. It is commonly agreed that bullying is unacceptable and that policies and procedures are needed to eliminate it (Crawford, 2003). There are a variety of options available to organisations, with differing levels of success; some research reports the dominance of formal schemes such as a peer listening scheme, found in the Royal Mail (see Vega and Comer, 2005) while other research supports informal approaches (see: Beale and Hoel, 2011). Formal schemes usually involve set policies and procedures for management to follow, however these policies may be inappropriate for the context and inadequately applied (Crawford, 2003). Informal procedures usually involve talking with the victim and the application of reconciliatory measures and are more commonly used than formal methods (Beale and Hoel, 2011; Salin, 2009). Additionally, Pollert and Charlwood (2009) found that grievance procedures did not offer more protection to workers than those workers who did not have grievance policies. This finding could be because, according to Lewis and Rayner (2003), managers are usually the main instigators of bullying and therefore any anti-bullying policies are likely to be problematic to

implement. Therefore, do participants report policies being efficient or inefficient and what were their experiences of bullying and harassment?

Absence

There is an extensive prescriptive literature that has been developed by practitioners to guide the process of managing absence – this has continued to develop, particularly with regard to the question of absence for disabled workers. Absence is an important topic for consideration because it can be costly to an organisation (Tehrani, 2003). Additionally absence can be the result of many factors: is the absence due to illness or an adaptive response to a hostile workplace, or a lack of adjustments? Alternatively, is the absence an expression of resistance or misbehaviour against management? (see Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999).

In terms of disability, the literature on absence usually relates to work days lost due to ill health or lack of adjustments. This is particularly pertinent given that research shows that membership of a minority group can affect absence levels. Avery et al., (2007), for example, found that black employees were most likely to be absent, especially when the employer was not perceived to value diversity. Furthermore, research shows, absence is more likely to attract attention when it is judged to be 'excessive' and managers usually only tolerate a certain level of absence (Noon and Blyton, 1997). It is not known whether the level of tolerance is the same for disabled and non-disabled employees.

How can managers best manage absence? The literature shows several key ways to manage absence; for example early intervention, which reduces cost to business and reduces the risk of employees becoming detached from the labour market (Cunningham and James, 2001 and Simkiss, 2005). Another management strategy is rehabilitation to facilitate return to work. James et al., (1997) found that employers were using disability management to ensure that employees returned to work after long term illness via rehabilitation, adjusted hours, redeployment and reallocation of work. Allied to rehabilitation are modified return-to-work-programmes, which are

usually successful at getting people back to work (Krause et al., 1998). Research shows that disabled employees returned to work twice as often as employees who were not offered modified return to work programmes (Krause et al., 1998).

Management play a key role in facilitating a smooth return to work. The TUC (2000) states that managers should keep in touch with employees in a non-suspicious manner and provide access to rehabilitation services to create a successful return to work. Hogelund and Holm (2006) found case management interviews are effective in increasing the probability of a successful return to work because they allow for 'asymmetric information' between the employer and employee (Hogelund and Holm, 2006). Supportive return-to-work measures are often viewed positively, accelerating the return to work (Cunningham and James, 2001 and Krause et al., 1998).

Another newer absence management tool has been developed, disability leave. The RNIB has rolled out a new concept of disability leave in order to manage disability related absence. Disability leave is a toolkit of advice, assessment and training, along with leave to learn to adjust to new working methods and gives employers time to implement adjustments (Simkiss, 2005). Research shows that take up of disability leave policies has been low (Simkiss, 2005).

Under what circumstances are these absence management strategies more or less effective? Absence policies seemingly are more effective when line managers have adequate knowledge of how the policies work (Bond and Wise, 2003). Flexibility in the application of policies also makes them more effective (Baker-McClearn et al., 2009). Understanding of disability also ameliorates the process of dealing with absence (Cunningham and Hyman, 1995).

It is interesting to ascertain, therefore, how absence was experienced by the sample, whether the graduate's impairment impacted on the manner in which their absence

was treated, if they received any return to work support and if policies were applied flexibly.

Social Security

The chapter now turns to consider the continued disadvantage faced in relation to the social security system.

Since 1997, both New Labour and the Conservatives have considered fostering employment and skills as an effective way of dealing with social problems (DWP, 2006; Orton, 2011). A central part of welfare policy is the conditionality of benefits, which has increased in recent years. Claimants have to undergo medical examinations and be pro-active to look for work (DWP, 2004b). Disabled people are required to attend mandatory work focused interviews where specialist teams of advisors are intended to implement interventions to get the person back to work. Receipt of benefit is conditional on attending these interviews and interventions (DWP, 2004a).

Within the 'Welfare to Work' programme, according to Bambraa et al. (2005), there are five main policy interventions designed to assist the transition from benefits to paid employment for all claimants. These policy interventions are: education; training and work placements; vocational advice and support services; in-work benefits; incentives for employers; and improved physical accessibility. Many of these policy interventions have been categorised as either a carrot or a stick. The carrot is the focus on work as inclusion because work is better than reliance on benefits and the stick is the reduction in the value of benefits and increased conditionality to 'force' people into work (DWP, 2004b). This categorisation has led to a debate in society about which method is the correct and most effective method to get claimants back into work.

Some academics are critical of the carrot and stick approach; Gatti and Glyn (2006) report this approach was only introduced to protect the UK's finances from the pressures of globalisation, unemployment, an ageing population, tax competition, slow growth and low productivity. Other critics of the approach believe the change means welfare now focuses more narrowly on people with very severe impairments and the elderly disabled, which makes it harder to access benefits for everyone (Drake, 2000). This restriction results in some people not claiming the benefits to which they are entitled (Spicker, 2011). Another criticism of the approach is that increasing the number of disabled people available for work may be detrimental given research that shows employers are cautious about hiring disabled people (see: Barnes, 1992; Bacon, 2002; Thornton, 2003). Critics, therefore argue that the focus should be on policies that increase the demand, not just the supply, of disabled workers.

Another criticism of the policies is their dependence on the medical model of disability. The use of the medical model is apparent when people with the most severe functional limitations are not required to work (Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, 2006). This requirement is problematic; some people classified as having the most severe impairments want to work. One Green Paper, for example, states that people who are blind are not expected to work (DWP, 2006) yet research shows people who are blind are eager to work (Crudden and McBroom, 1999) and organisations such as the RNIB² have schemes to help people with visual impairments into employment. There is also potential for this argument to work in reverse. The focus on the medical model may judge some people as fit to work but they are unable to work because the support they need, is not in place.

Current welfare policies are also deemed inadequate because, according to Bambraa et al. (2005) they only focus on the most 'job ready' claimants and offer less support to claimants whose skills do not match the needs of the labour market.

² The RNIB runs a disabled graduate scheme for blind and partially sighted individuals. It gives them placements in the RNIB and at external organisations to help the graduates know what support they need in work and to overcome employer prejudice to blind and partially sighted individuals.

The Jobcentre Plus is most likely to find work for its clients in the elementary, sales and customer service occupations, process, plant and machine operatives and skilled trades (Bunt et al., 2005). Employment gained by disabled workers through the Jobcentre was usually low skilled (Bacon, 2002; Heenan, 2002; Loumidis et al., 2001). These criticisms lead to the question, did any of the participants experience these failings personally? Did the Jobcentre focus only on the most work-ready customers and was the carrot or the stick effective?

On the other hand, some people support this welfare approach and claim policy reflects a turn in equality and redistribution from 'equality of outcome' to 'equality of opportunity' (White, 1998). Equality of opportunity is achieved by allowing disadvantaged groups to compete on the same level as less disadvantaged groups, through policy intervention. Powell (2000) claims that it is the individual's responsibility to develop their full potential and through these policy mechanisms the individual can reach their potential. Others argue that the Jobcentre Plus has a clear positive effect on job entry outcomes for all client groups (see Karagiannaki, 2007). Further support comes from research that shows the current policy system has placed many lone parents and disabled people into work and job seekers are satisfied with the service they receive (Noakes, 2005).

The empirical research in the thesis needs to test these claims, is the carrot and stick an effective method to get disabled graduates into work, or are there underlying flaws in this approach? Given the debated efficiency and worth of the social security system, what was the experience of claimants? In order to assess the effectiveness of policy, discussed above, research has attempted to understand the experience of being a claimant. As a result much data has come to light that shows being a claimant is a negative experience. Therefore, what factors account for variation in the experience of being a claimant?

Firstly, the Jobcentre Plus personnel are a key source of variation. Research shows that Jobcentre personnel are inadequate in their treatment of claimants and judge

claimants as deserving and undeserving (see DWP, 2004a; McKay and Rowlingson, 1999; Rosenthal and Peccei, 2007). The literature also reports that Jobcentre personnel have inadequate knowledge about how to support generic claimants (DWP, 2004a; DWP, 2004b; Lewis et al., 2005). Other supporters of this view state that advisors felt specifically unsure how to assist disabled people, into work (DWP, 2004a; Noakes, 2005). As a result of negative encounters with personnel, claimants are uncertain about returning to work, how their benefits would be affected and what happens if they could not continue working (DWP, 2004b).

The complexity of the system is another contingent factor in the experience of claiming benefits. Research shows that the benefit system is complex and confusing, resulting in a negative experience for many claimants (see McKay and Rowlingson, 1999; Spicker, 2011). Given these difficulties, what motivates a person to claim? There are two competing perspectives - the first advanced by Kerr (Spicker 2011) suggests a claimant must go through several stages before deciding to claim. Firstly, they must perceive a need to claim and have enough basic knowledge to claim. Secondly the claimant must perceive that they are eligible and think the process worthwhile. Thirdly, the person must be comfortable to claim irrespective of stigma and believe their condition will last long enough to make claiming worthwhile. If all these stages are met the person will finally make their claim. A second proposal by Weisbrod (see also Spicker 2011) suggests that claimants assess the costs and benefits of claiming. They weigh the cost of shame and humiliation and the effort of claiming against the level of payment and the needs they hope to meet (Spicker, 2011). The empirical research seeks to establish which of these mechanisms is present in the experiences of disabled graduates.

The penultimate contingent factor suggested in the literature review is the alienation joblessness can cause. Reeskens and Van Oorschot (2012) report that being jobless leaves 'scars' on future career outcomes, such as lower wages. Furthermore, research shows that employers are less willing to employ people who have been made redundant or those who have been unemployed for a long time because they fear hiring a worker another employer has rejected (Akerlof, 1970; Turnbull and

Wass, 1997). This is the 'lemon effect,' whereby highly skilled and employable workers are deemed unemployable purely because of their 'redundant' status (Akerlof, 1970; Turnbull and Wass, 1997). While the research by Turnbull and Wass (1997) focused on redundant workers from the Steel, Port and Coalmining industries, it may be relevant to disabled people. Disabled people might be likely to have the lemon effect compounded because not only will employers fear hiring someone another employer does not want, but they will also be cautious about the disabled person's potential extra needs. One method the government has implemented to overcome such concerns is Access to Work³ (A2W). The literature shows that this scheme has been generally well received (Bambra et al., 2005) with one study reporting that employees in the private sector could not work without it (Thornton et al., 2001).

Finally, entanglement in the benefit work trap is a source of disadvantage for claimants. The 'benefit work trap' is a universal problem for many disadvantaged groups, such as unemployed young people, those who have been made redundant and disabled people (Anonymous, 2009; Turnbull and Wass, 1997). As a result specific policy aims have been introduced to cut benefit levels in relation to wages to provide incentives to encourage claimants to work (Dean and Taylor-Gooby, 1992). One method was the introduction of tax credits, which have only had modest effect for disabled people (Bambra et al., 2005; Blundell, 2000) yet have been positive at returning lone parents to work (Brewer et al., 2006). Increasing the financial reward for work assumes that the only reason people do not work is for financial reasons (McKay and Rowlingson, 1999; Spicker, 2011). For disabled people, however, there are a plethora of reasons that affect whether they return to work, such as their need for reasonable adjustments, fear of the unknown and the availability of suitable employment (Bacon, 2002; Barnes, 1992; Grover and Piggott, 2007).

³ Access to Work aims to help employers eliminate work barriers for disabled people. Access to Work has four main types of support for disabled people: Travel to work, on the job support, aids and equipment and alterations to premises.

Running underneath all of the debate surrounding the benefit system is the notion of welfare stigma. Traditional models characterise stigma as the cost of being on welfare and predict that stigma lowers take up rates, as people want to avoid being stigmatised (Moffit, 1983). There are two pertinent issues in relation to stigma; potentially fraudulent claims and the stigma claimants receive from claiming benefits.

There are two competing positions in the literature, firstly those who believe claimants are leeching off society, as reported in Garthwaite, (2011) and those who believe the system is overly complex to discourage claimants (see: Drake, 2000, Morris, 2011; TUC, 2011). For example, Grover and Piggott (2007) believe that the government views Incapacity Benefit claimants as little different to those who are unemployed except they have “*hoodwinked doctors into believing they have a condition that means they are unable to work or they connive with doctors to overstate their patients’ mental or physical problems*” (Grover and Piggott 2007:736). Garthwaite (2011:370) notes that disabled people are often portrayed as having a ‘culture of worklessness’, being ‘workshy’ and ‘unwilling’.

On the other hand there is a plethora of literature that reports disabled people want to work (for example: Barnes and Mercer, 2005; Foster and Fosh, 2007; Williams, 2007). This literature sees disabled people’s unemployment as a direct result of society’s inability to provide adjustments to the social and built environment (Barnes, 1999; Oliver, 1992). Data would suggest that the negative viewpoint pervades as there is large support for the government’s proposed cuts to disability benefits (Garthwaite, 2011). As a result negative feeling towards disabled people is likely to rise further (Grover and Piggott, 2007). Given, therefore that stigma is acknowledged to be one of the determinants of welfare provision (Hernanz et al., 2004), does this stigma prevent disabled people from claiming the benefits to which they are entitled?

Given the potential controversy in the motives behind the government’s plans and the complex and difficult experience of claiming benefits, reported in the literature, the thesis must uncover the experience of claiming benefits for disabled graduates.

The empirical research needs to consider whether the disabled graduates report being motivated by the carrot or the stick and whether negative experiences of other groups of minority claimants are reflected in the disabled graduate experience.

Policy to Practice Gap

The chapter has established that disabled people face continued disadvantage in the world of employment and within the social security system. The chapter will now look at the framework of policy and legislation that shapes the experience of work.

There has been a vast amount of research on equality law, equality of opportunity and diversity management, which has examined several themes. Central in much of this literature is the question of a policy/performance gap, which can be conceived of as operating at different levels – within public policy, within enterprises and within the individual workplace. The policy to practice gap between legislation and practice is where discrimination and disadvantage pervades, despite legislation. Secondly the management to practice gap is where an organisation has equality policies but they have little impact on worker experience.

Nature of Law

In order to understand the policy to practice gap, it is essential to briefly discuss key elements of the law. One element of the law is a broad shift in the conceptualization of disabled people and how their needs should be addressed. This shift can be seen by a long-term change in legislation from a paternalist past to a pro-active stance. Paternalist law offered protection to minority groups and emerged as part of a broader juridification of the employment relationship. The first piece of disability paternalist legislation was The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act in 1944. This Act specifically protected people with war injuries and set a quota level for all companies with more than 20 employees (Vanhala, 2006). However, employer compliance was poor, as was enforcement (Freedman, 2001, Woodhams and Corby, 2007). In

contrast, today, more support for disabled people has been located with a rights based agenda (Freedman, 2001; Dickens, 2012a).

The first piece of liberal disability legislation was the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. The DDA protected disabled people in employment, housing and the provision of services (HM Government, 1995). The DDA was revolutionary in its time given the Conservatives 'laissez faire' attitude to employment relations.

The DDA 1995 and its subsequent amendments have been superseded by the Equality Act, 2010 which prohibits discrimination against 9 protected characteristics⁴ and is enforced through Employment Tribunals and administrative sanctions. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination, enforces the Public Sector Equality Duty and legislates for reasonable adjustments⁵ to help disabled people work. Importantly for disabled people, the Equality Act, 2010 was the first piece of legislation to introduce positive discrimination for disabled people (Noon, 2010). The table below outlines the UK equality legislation

⁴ 9 protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

⁵ Reasonable adjustments are a form of positive discrimination which are aimed at helping disabled people overcome barriers to employment.

Table 2.1 UK Equality Legislation

Legislation	Prohibition	Coverage	Redress
Disability Discrimination Act 1995, 2003, 2006	<p>Outlaws discrimination on grounds of a person's disability. Two types of discrimination:</p> <p>less favourable treatment; when a person is treated less favourably for a reason related to their disability, which cannot be justified.</p> <p>when an employer or other responsible person fails to make reasonable adjustments for the disabled person and they cannot justify this failure.</p>	<p>Covers only those who have a recognised disability: "... A person who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities"(HM-Government, 1995)</p> <p>While the law's definition of disability may appear straight forward, it needs clarification. The legislation does not detail restrictions on the term 'physical impairment' other than it is in relation to the body; mental impairment, however, does receive clarification, it relates to learning disabilities and mental health issues, there is however a condition on the mental impairment; it must be well recognised to qualify for protection (Gooding, 2000). The law clearly outlines what it means by 'long term substantial disadvantage'. Long term means that the impairment must have lasted for 12 months or longer and substantial covers the ability to carry out day to day activities (HM Government 1995 Part 1 (1)).</p>	Positive action in the form of reasonable adjustments.
Equality Act 2010	Prohibits discrimination on the grounds of 9 protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.	Everyone in all areas of life. In terms of disability: "has a physical or mental impairment that has a long term or substantial impact on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.	Equal treatment for all other strands other than disability which allows positive action, in the form of reasonable adjustments

Purpose of law

The second theme in the literature is the purpose of the legislation – what is the legislation trying to achieve? Overall, the purpose of equality law is to advance liberal

goals of state neutrality, individualism and promote autonomy (Dickens, 2007; Freedman, 2001). Despite the overarching purpose of the law different positions can be identified in the literature. Some believe the purpose of the law is to eliminate past discrimination (see Noon, 2010), while other authors believe the law should support formal equality (see Cornelius et al, 2001). One way this debate manifests itself is through the discussion of positive discrimination. Those who support the eradication of past discrimination advocate positive discrimination while others who support formal equality object to positive discrimination.

There are a variety of implications of positive discrimination, some positive and some negative. Firstly the negative implications are discussed; research shows that minority group members are unsure about positive discrimination. Cassell (1996) observes that when an individual thought they were selected for a job on grounds other than their competence they had low self-worth. Noon (2010) reports criticisms of positive discrimination in the literature based on failure to select the best candidate. The second criticism levied at positive discrimination is that it can have a negative impact on beneficiaries and thirdly reverse discrimination can be viewed as unjust (Noon, 2010). An example of this situation would be when the white man has effectively been discriminated against because he is not in a minority group. Despite these shortcomings, positive discrimination is supported and Noon (2010) explores each of these criticisms and concludes that positive discrimination “*creates favourable conditions for transformative change to permeate organisations more rapidly and extensively*” (Noon, 2010:737).

While the positive aspects of positive discrimination are a step forward for equality, other criticisms of the legislation remain paramount. The main criticism is that the definition of disability (See table 2.1) remains located in the medical model. Goss et al., (2000) and Gooding (2000), for example, state this definition is restrictive and involves passing a ‘test’ before discrimination can be recognised. This test has the effect of creating an extra hurdle for disabled people because first they have to prove they are disabled before they can continue to establish discrimination (see also, Davies 2003).

Enforcement of Law

Given the nature and the purpose of UK legislation, how is it enforced? The current approach is two pronged; an administrative enforcement approach and an individual approach (Dickens, 2012a). The enforcement approach relies on enforcement through the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The EHRC has a duty to investigate cases and can issue enforceable non-discrimination notices. However, Deakin et al., (2011) argue this mechanism is not effective because the sanctions placed on organisations are not considered severe enough.

The second approach adjudicates complaints of individual rights violations through an employment tribunal (ET) (Dickens, 2012c). Employment tribunals were created in 1996, replacing industrial tribunals from the 1960s. ETs are responsible for the enforcement of individual employment rights and are made up of an independent chair, employer and trade union representative (Lord, 2012). Assessing the costs and benefits of the employment tribunal system is difficult (Shackelton, 2002) and therefore the literature is divergent on the efficacy and usefulness of the tribunal system.

Firstly, there is the argument that employment tribunals are ineffective. The principle problem with employment tribunals is that few who experience problems at work escalate their concerns (Dickens, 2012b). Additionally ETs are seen as ineffective because employers are only likely to be aware of grievances when confronted with a case (Dickens, 2012a). As a result, employers do not amend their practices and those who do, only make minimum alterations rather than addressing underlying problems (Dickens, 1994; Kersley et al., 2006). Of further concern is that those who are most aware of their rights - male, full time employed, professionals - are the least likely to experience problems at work (Meager et al., 2002), further reducing the efficiency of ETs.

Simultaneously, evidence exists to support the work of employment tribunals. Tribunals are reported to be effective at changing employer policies in 54% of cases

(Hayward et al., 2003). Furthermore, satisfaction with the employment tribunal system is generally quite high, with 72% of applicants happy with the service (Hayward et al., 2003). However, the effectiveness of Employment Tribunals is dependent on the employer and the type of employment, according to research by Adams et al., (2009).

Despite this debate it remains constant that employment tribunals are more problematic for disabled people than other claimants. Cunningham and James (2001) found that disabled people were falling at the first hurdle in tribunals because they were not defined as disabled by the DDA/EA '10. Furthermore, research shows that, disabled employees are less likely to take a case against their employer and be aware of their rights. Therefore, the thesis needs to use the empirical research to answer whether ETs are effective, whether any of the sample have been involved in an employment tribunal, would they take grievances to an ET and if so was the process beneficial or not?

Mediation of the Law

The literature has a wealth of information on how different groups can implement legislation, in the sense of ensuring that management practice complies with and does not contravene legal entitlements. Different authors attribute different importance to each group and debate the effectiveness of different groups mediating legislation. The three main groups identified in the literature are line managers, trade unions and civil society organisations (CSO).

Line Managers

The literature shows that line managers and HR specialists are central in implementing legislation (Colling, 2010; Dickens and Hall, 2006). Changes in legislation have led employers to improve the manner in which they address equality and diversity and have led to more formal equal opportunity policies (Dickens, 2005; Wanoory et al., 2013).

Some of the literature suggests that the ability of line managers to implement policy (all policy, not just E&D) is generally good (see: Cunningham and Hyman, 1995; Gilbert et al., 2011). Goss et al., (2000) found that the presence of an HR manager improved the experience of work for disabled employees. Hunt and Habeck (1993) also report the knowledge of line managers and access to specialist support facilitated a smoother transition back into work. Further evidence comes from Day and Schonerade (2000) who state that top management support is strongly associated with positive work attitudes for gay and lesbian workers. Conversely other research reports that line managers are inadequate at implementing equality policy (see: Colling and Dickens, 1998; Gonas, 2004; Liff and Cameron, 1997). For example, Colling and Dickens (1998) report that equality will always take second place to line managers' other concerns.

Given this division in the literature, what are the factors that affect line manager implementation of equality policies? Lack of line manager training is often reported to affect poor implementation (see: Cunningham and James, 2001; Forth and Rincon-Aznar, 2008; Watson et al, 2007) as is poor knowledge about disability (Cunningham and James, 2001). An inability to link E&D to the strategic direction of the organisation was also proven to have negative outcomes for equality (BITC, 1998; Cornelius et al., 2001 and Cunningham and James, 2001). Finally the ability of line managers to successfully co-ordinate reasonable adjustments is central to the positive experience of work for disabled people (Cunningham et al., 2004).

The provision of reasonable adjustments appears to be an important role of line managers. Foster (2007) notes that negotiations on reasonable adjustments were highly individualised and outcomes were mostly contingent upon the attitudes, knowledge and goodwill of line managers. Additionally, Hoque and Noon (2004) found that in 56% of workplaces with a disability policy managers did not make adjustments or adopt special recruitment procedures for disabled people. Foster (2007) reports that line managers responded better to requests for adjustments to physical premises than to adjustments to the 'work itself' and advocates training to respond to the devolution of the responsibility for adjustments to line managers.

Shuey and Jovic (2013) examined the accommodation needs of disabled workers in non-standard employment and part-time work and found that they were less likely to secure adjustments. This finding is of particular concern given that many disabled people are engaged in part-time work (Schur, 2003). The study also showed that workers in small firms were more likely to receive adjustments, which the authors attributed to the flatter organisational structure of small firms (Shuey and Jovic, 2013). In contrast, Hoque and Noon (2004) found large firms were more likely to have better disability policies and adjustments. These results indicate variation: formal policies are common in large organizations but flexible informal adjustments are easier in a small firm context. Does the empirical research show that implementing reasonable adjustments was difficult for the disabled graduates? What barriers did they face and can the empirical research point to a good practice model of implementing adjustments?

Closely allied to line managers are diversity champions, who can also mediate legislation. Diversity champions are usually senior management who act as a spokesperson for diversity, who give diversity legitimacy and authority because of their senior role in the organisation. However, again there are competing positions in the literature. Some research supports diversity champions as pivotal (see Healy and Oikelome, 2007), while other research finds their effects to be minimal (see: Colgan, 2012 and EAUFR, 2009). Nevertheless the use of diversity champions is on the rise (Colgan, 2012; Healy and Oikelome, 2007).

Trade Unions

The second group of actors who can implement legislation is unions (see Colling and Dickens, 1998). Unions can mediate the law directly; they take cases forward on behalf of members. In addition, unions can have an indirect effect on equality. One example gender equality. Colling and Dickens (1998) report that women who are covered by trade unions enjoy better pay and employment conditions, better security and improved access to family friendly working arrangements than those who are not covered (see also Heery, 2000).

There are two schools of thought, those who believe that trade unions are effective at influencing equality issues and representing workers and those who believe they are not. In order to understand this debate consideration is paid to internal and external modes of representation. Internal representation refers to how equitably unions treat diverse members and external relates to how well the unions represent diverse members' interests in campaigns and to employers (Heery, 2012).

Historically, trade unions are charged with potentially failing to be democratic and represent the interests of a large proportion of their members (Colgan and Ledwith, 2002, Williams and Adam-Smith, 2006). In fact, Colling and Dickens (2001) report that collective bargaining agreements often formalised and extended tacit discrimination in the trade union movement. Williams and Adam-Smith (2006) argue that the situation today has changed and since the 1980s unions have sought to represent the issues of minority groups, although the success and coverage has been uneven and patchy.

Internally, literature states that trade unions are ineffective at representing equality issues (Humphreys 1998). As a result separate trade union groups were organised to represent minorities. This type of organising is "self-organization" where there is a separate space in trade unions for union members to organise on the basis of their shared characteristics (Williams and Smith, 2006). Humphreys (1998), believes these groups have failed to thrive. Other scholars argue that these groups have been a success and allowed minority groups to bring issues of specific concern onto the union agenda, (see Colgan and Ledwith, 2000; Parker, 2002).

In the majority of the cases, literature points to a turnaround in equality in unions. Colgan and Ledwith (2002) report three causes for a turnaround in equality issues in unions. The first factor is the change of composition of union membership. They state that the presence of black, disabled and LGBT members pushing for change in UK union cultures, agendas and structures has resulted in equality being taken more seriously (Bradley et al., 2000; Colgan and Ledwith, 2002). Secondly, the presence

of equality activists has pushed forward change which has improved equality representation. Thirdly, an acknowledgement that trade unions are historically inept with regard to equality and that there is democratic deficit in trade union structures has led to an improvement in equality (Colgan and Ledwith, 2002). Heery (2000) argues that despite the decline in trade union coverage they remain a significant presence in the economy.

Civil Society Organisations

The third type of organisation that can mediate legislation is a civil society organisation. According to Williams et al., (2011a) the decline of trade unions, alongside the decline in joint regulation of the employment relationship has led to greater interest in the potential regulatory role of other bodies such as a civil society organisations⁶. Osterman (2006) found that CSOs were strong organisations that wielded power at national and state levels and have had considerable success at representing worker issues in the labour market in the United States. Williams et al., (2011b) report there is agreement that civil regulation has been proven to mitigate employment discrimination, enhance work-life balance, embed flexible working arrangements and improve the condition of vulnerable workers.

Given the new role of CSOs, the literature has addressed a debate about whether CSOs are replacing trade unions. Within the literature there are two positions; one position believes that CSOs are powerful bodies to support workers, while others support trade unions to mediate employment rights. Some authors believe voluntary organisations are best placed to represent minority workers (see Abbott, 2004a; Humphreys, 2000), while others believe trade unions still remain paramount as institutions of worker representation (Foster and Fosh, 2009). The general consensus is that CSOs are not replacing trade unions, but do have a vital role to play in regulating the employment relationship (Williams et al., 2011).

⁶The term civil society organization refers to a broad range of organisations such as charities, faith organisations, voluntary associations, advocacy bodies, social movement organisations and other non-governmental organisations (Williams et al., 2011a).

The literature also reports CSOs and trade unions working collaboratively. Abbott (2004a) found that CSOs were substituting for the presence of trade unions, not the role itself. Heery et al. (2012b) found that those CSOs who do have relationships with trade unions have a complex set of relationships with trade unions that display aspects of agreement, indifference and antagonism. In fact, Gospel and Willman (2003) hypothesise that unions will find it difficult to respond to new forms of representation. As a result, the thesis needs to consider whether trade unions or CSOs are best placed to suit minority representation and whether there is any evidence of collaboration between unions and CSO.

The Presence of a Gap

Despite the presence of equality legislation and three main actors who can implement legislation, there exists a policy to practice gap. This section of the chapter explores the presence of this gap and looks at ways in which the gap can be closed. Firstly the chapter explores the gap between law and practice.

Law and Practice

Firstly, the gap between law and practice can be observed by the ongoing discrimination faced by disabled people in society, as reported in numerous studies (see Barnes and Mercer, 2005; Foster and Fosh, 2007; Oliver, 1992; Williams, 2007). Secondly evidence for a law to practice gap can be seen in the number of ET cases (Colling, 2012). Since 2000/1 there has been a general upward trend in the total number of employment tribunal cases, from approximately 75,000 in 2001 to approximately 175,000 in 2011/12, although there has been a decrease to around 225,000 in 2010/11 (Ministry of Justice, 2012). 7700 discrimination cases were taken to an ET in 2011/12, which accounted for 2.4% of all cases (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

Closing the Law to Practice Gap

How do line managers, unions and CSOs try to close this law to practice gap? Firstly, line managers often take pre-emptive action to comply with legislation to

prevent being taken to court (Dobbin, 2009). Secondly, trade unions and CSOs respond to consultative documents produced by the Government and lobby government on specific aspects of legislation, for example disability and civil rights groups demonstrated in front of Parliament and as a result the government introduced proposals that formed the DDA in 1995 (see: Heery et al, 2004 and Woodhams and Corby, 2003).

Civil society organisations have two main methods of achieving these outcomes, usually indirectly, through influencing policy and governments (Heery et al., 2004). CSOs can use either the compliance or the deterrence approach. The compliance approach utilises education and persuasion while the deterrence approach relies on threats of sanctions to entice adherence to rules (Hood et al., 2001). Heery et al., (2004) suggest the compliance approach is most common. From their study, Williams et al., (2011) report that CSOs also assimilate information to highlight and raise awareness of the 'desirability of regulation' and also take action on behalf of individuals; for example the Citizen's Advice Bureau (Abbott, 2005; Williams et al, 2011: 52).

Management and Practice

The second gap to be explored is the management policy to practice gap. Dickens (2000) states that organisations are more willing to implement E&D policies than previously (see also: Wanrooy et al., 2013), but do these policies reduce the experience of disadvantage? According to the literature, disadvantage exists because organisational policy is poorly implemented (see: Dickens, 2012a; Hoque and Noon, 2004). There are two schools of thought in terms of whether equality policies, irrespective of the form they take, are effective in the workplace. The one side believes that policies have substance and the other side believes they are empty shells. It is expected that both viewpoints are valid, given that variation takes place in and between organisations.

Hoque and Noon (2004) established that the probability of having an empty shell policy is greater in smaller workplaces and policies are more likely to be of substance in the public sector. Organisations that have a specialist HR or personnel manager are more likely to have policies that make a positive impact on minorities and there will be a smaller gap between practice and reality (see also Earnshaw et al., 2000; Goss et al., 2000). Supporting evidence found that larger employers, the public sector and voluntary organisations are more aware of their legal equality responsibilities, in addition to organisations which have previously employed disabled workers (Roberts et al., 2004).

Conversely, there is evidence to suggest some policies are not empty shells. Recent research from WERS 2011 shows that compared to 2004, disability is the only protected characteristic to have more procedures in place to attract new employees (Wanrooy et al., 2013). Other prominent factors affecting positive experiences for disabled employees were membership of the 'Two Ticks' scheme and the use of external advisors (Goss et al., 2000). Union presence was also considered to have a positive impact on equality in some areas.

Notably variation exists, yet despite these improvements in organisational policy, evidence would suggest the majority of policies leave room for improvement and that disadvantage still exists (Dickens, 2012a). Research shows that even in organisations which have exemplary policies, employees still experience discrimination (Colgan et al., 2007; Hoque and Noon 2004; Liff, 1999). According to Liff (1999) and Jewson and Mason (1986), these instances of discrimination are not the result of misunderstandings but, in some cases, deliberate avoidance or distortion of policies by managers.

In conclusion, the evidence is mixed, but the balance of evidence suggests a management to policy practice gap does exist. The empirical chapters that follow will explore the extent and nature of the gap in the employment experience of disabled graduates.

Line Managers and the Management to Practice Gap

Similar to the law to practice gap described above, line managers, trade unions and CSOs also can mediate the management policy to practice gap.

Organisations and line managers can implement two main approaches to improving equality and diversity and closing the management to practice gap, either the Equal Opportunities or the Managing Diversity approach. The equal opportunity perspective perceives that talent and ability are equally spread through all groups in society (Cassell and Biswas, 2000). As a result, equal opportunity policies are aimed at ensuring organisations make the most of a diverse workforce, rather than lose talents through discrimination (Cassell and Biswas, 2000). Jewson and Mason (1986) critiqued the notion of a single approach by identifying liberal and radical variations and under the broad umbrella of the EO method there are a wide variety of approaches. The liberal approach views fairness in terms of equality of access; in comparison to the radical approach which measures equality of outcomes and encourages positive discrimination (Jewson and Mason, 1986)

In response to the failings of the equal opportunities approach, Kandola and Fullerton (1994) popularised the term 'managing diversity' in the UK and believe that managing diversity is radically different from the traditional approach to equal opportunities. Managing diversity is, according to numerous authors, focused on the creation of a culture where differences can find expression and add value by enhancing the way an organisation operates (Cornelius et al., 2001). Difference is viewed, for example, as an asset that may be exploited, where diverse groups are helped to perform to their potential. Equality originates by addressing the needs and potential of individuals rather than judging them on the basis of their social group

membership (Cornelius et al., 2001; Dobbin, 2009; Kandola and Fullerton, 1994⁷). Given these two competing approaches it is essential that the thesis considers which approach is found to be the most effective in the empirical research.

It is personnel managers who usually implement the equality and diversity policies. According to Dobbin (2009), it was personnel managers in America who decided what equal opportunity would mean 'on the ground' and they constructed a model of compliance with legal mandates (Sutton et al., 1994). The law in the US was vague and to avoid falling foul of the legislation, HR managers created over-rigorous policies to avoid being sued by employees (Sutton et al., 1994). Overstating the legal threat to employers had the effect of enhancing the prestige and authority of personnel specialists in the organisation. As a result HR or senior managers became 'champions' for equality.

Trade Unions and the Management to Practice Gap

Trade unions are also potentially in a position to mediate the management to policy gap. However, there is contention in the literature as to whether unions are adequately placed and have the power to effectively influence management practice.

⁷ Tangible benefits occur from using a managing diversity approach. Evidence shows that industry benefits economically when diverse employees generate new ideas and opinions (Dobbin and Sutton, 1998, Colgan, 2012, Cunningham and James, 2001). According to Dobbin (2009) the business case converted a social issue into an economic one that can be managed in the same manner as any other business problem.

Despite the business case benefits of MD there are several key criticisms. Firstly, Dickens (1994) believes that if resources and time are sparse then there is little chance investment in MD will be made- the business case addresses the needs of the employer not the employee (Dickens, 1994) and does not extend to those outside of the organisation. Further points raised by Dickens (1999) arise from concerns that equality will only be addressed in areas where it is tackled easily, addresses business need and will be narrowly defined (see also; Colgan et al., 2007 and Thomas and Hutchings, 2005).

Trade unions often engage equality representatives who mediate employment rights and can make workplaces fairer. Research by Bacon and Hoque (2009) found representatives who were able to spend longer on their equality role, had more of a positive impact in the organisation; some had plenty of time to do this but many reported having no time at all. This finding coincides with work by Foster (2007) who also reported a full time, knowledgeable equal opportunities officer had a positive effect on the outcomes for disabled employees. Bennett (2010) found that equality representatives can only fulfil their potential if their role is integrated into branch structures and equality representatives are given the same recognition enjoyed by other representatives

CSOs and the Management to Practice Gap

CSOs can also act as a source of legitimacy when handling difficult aspects of business practice (Williams et al., 2010). Williams et al., (2010) report that it is usually by illustrating the business case that employers cooperate. What types of workers usually use these organisations? It is usually non-unionised workers and especially low paid workers that use CSOs for workplace support (Tailby et al., 2011). Such workers usually experience problems with dismissal, pay, discrimination and working hours (Pollert and Charlwood, 2008).

Given the content of these debates, what are the implications for the empirical research of the thesis? Firstly the empirical research will need to determine if the disabled graduates face discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace and whether this is evidence of a management to policy practice gap, or a law to practice gap. The empirical research needs to ascertain how this gap manifests itself. The data gathered from trade union representatives, CSO workers and line managers can illuminate what type of policies are in place in organisations and whether they are effective for equality and diversity. Finally, the empirical research needs to ascertain how these groups mediate legislation to either the benefit or detriment of the disabled graduates.

Variation

Literature on the careers and experiences of graduates in the UK labour market suggests that there is variation in the experience of work. The literature provides clues as to the sources of this variation, such as who they are, what they do, where they work and their wider social context in which they are developing their careers. This section considers, therefore, what the graduate labour market, business and sociological literature can tell us about why experiences vary in the labour market.

Who they are

Naturally graduates are not a homogenous group and the literature suggests who they are impacts on their experience of work. For example, gender, disability, degree classification and higher education institution are undisputed in their ability to affect propensity of being underemployed (Elias et al., 1999; Norton, 2008; Purcell et al, 2005).

A person's motivation is a source of contingency that affects their experience of work. The literature shows that some graduates are positive about their career aspirations and future career success (Perryman, 2002) while other research found negative beliefs amongst graduates themselves about the labour market due to accent, gender, ethnicity and social class (Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Kirton 2009). Differentiation is also apparent in the type of jobs to which the graduates aspire. Older mature graduates want more socially useful work and are less likely to put high priority on financial reward (Purcell et al., 2007), suggesting age is a source of variation. Furthermore, evidence shows that the more motivated a student is to acquire employment on graduation the more successful they are at finding employment (Purcell and Elias, 2004). The question this thesis will address, therefore, is what were the career aspirations of the disabled graduates and how do they compare to more traditional graduates?

What they do

The second important contingency suggested in the literature is that a person's experience of work will vary depending on what they do. The actions the individual chooses to take can also be termed active agency.

Firstly, how geographically mobile are the graduates prepared to be? Geographical mobility relates to the flows in and out of regions to secure employment. There is a high degree of geographical mobility in the early years of a graduate's career (Purcell et al., 2005). London and the South East are the most popular locations for graduates to live and work. Employers report difficulty attracting graduates to work in companies that are based outside of London (Hesketh, 2000). It is of interest to ascertain whether disabled graduates exhibit the same levels of geographical mobility as their non-disabled counterparts. Data shows that disabled graduates who are unable to locate to London or the South East of England may find it more difficult to secure high level jobs (ECU, 2008). Health systems and benefit regulations are likely to hinder disabled graduates' movement and could potentially hinder their location choice as it is very difficult to move care packages between regions. Furthermore, research shows disabled graduates are more likely to study near home (Purcell et al., 2005), possibly because they have the additional support of family. To move away from this support would increase their reliance on social services. Research suggests, if a graduate fails to be geographically mobile, they are 5% more likely to be underemployed compared to those who are geographically mobile (Purcell et al, 2005). It could be suggested that additional factors are at work here. Those who are more geographically mobile generally come from higher socio-economic classes and therefore have a reduced propensity to be underemployed. Nevertheless, the research indicates that the level of geographical mobility will affect a graduate's labour market outcomes.

Secondly, what sorts of job methods are the graduates prepared to use; formal or informal? Research shows that graduates are more likely to use formal job search methods, usually reflecting the higher levels of skill and qualifications needed for graduate jobs (see: Try, 2005; Mau and Kopischke, 2001; Sagen et al., 1999; Saks

and Ashforth, 2000). However, some graduates use informal search methods when they are accessing lower skilled, 'filling in' type jobs (Saks and Ashforth, 2000). Furthermore, do the participants engage with work placements, as these are proven to improve employability (Purcell et al., 2005)?

Networks are another source of jobs available to some graduates. Literature indicates that those who use networks to gain access to jobs usually only locate low skilled work (Try, 2005; Saks and Ashforth, 2000). One exception to this was a quantitative study exploring academic economists' use of networks; this study found that those who relied on networks had more job offers and significantly higher salary offers (Duncan et al., 2000). Other studies have explored minority groups' use of networks. The use of networks and other informal job search methods was found to be ineffective for ethnic minorities in Australia (Mahuteau and Junankar, 2008; see also Fernandex and Fernandex-Mateo, 2006).

The literature search was not able to locate any research that focused on disabled people or disabled graduates' use of networks. Therefore, what are the job related outcomes of disabled graduates' networks? It could be suggested from the literature that networks are beneficial to those with labour market power but not for those who are 'marginal' in the labour market – formal methods are more effective for this group. The research findings will, therefore, address which type of methods the participants used and the implications for equality and diversity.

The third activity the graduate engages in that can affect their labour market experience is their willingness to engage in social capital. The thesis takes the network view of social capital, that social capital is the existence of socially useful relationships (Paldham, 2000). For example, Warr (2007) states that there are two responses to being unemployed: the "constructive adaptation" and "resigned adaptation" responses. Constructive adaptation involves positive moves to engage in activities outside the labour market, such as hobbies and expanding social networks; resigned adaptation involves reduced aspirations and low emotional investment in a

person's environment. Warr (2007) does not state who is most likely to re-enter the labour market, but it could be assumed to be those who are engaged in constructive adaptation are most likely to re-enter employment. Making good use of available social capital would result in constructive adaptation, increasing the chances of re-entering the labour market.

A fourth contingency suggested in the literature is how workers deal with stressful situations. The coping strategies literature explores how workers manage, in particular, stress at work (Carver et al., 1989). Stress at work produces negative consequences for workers, for example, high health care costs and increased risk of depression and anxiety (Corpley et al., 1999; Goetzel et al., 1998). Psychologists researched the types of strategies that workers use to cope with pressure at work. Welbourne et al., (2007) report that how someone chooses to cope with a stressful situation may be influenced by one's interpretation and explanations of that event.

Current literature shows that there are three stages in coping strategies; firstly primary appraisal, where the person recognises that there is a threat; followed by secondary appraisal, where a potential response to the threat is considered. Finally coping is executed, which is executing the response to the threat (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The literature suggests that how people cope is usually measured on linear scales with problem-focused coping and emotional-focused coping at the extremities (Carver et al., 1989). Problem-focused coping involves altering the source of stress and emotion-focused coping involves managing the social distress caused by the stress. Irrespective of which method is used, the ability to successfully use coping strategies is paramount. Research has shown that if coping strategies are successful, employees are more likely to have increased job satisfaction (Welbourne et al., 2007).

Broader literature can be linked to the ability to cope with disadvantage; namely the formation of communities of coping and downsizing. According to wider literature, other workers in marginal, although not necessarily disadvantaged, roles also display

copied actions. Korczynski (2003) reported that service workers turn to each other to deal with difficult customers and form informal communities of coping. What Korczynski is saying is that people who are stressed in work form groups with other members who are also stressed in work to enable coping to take place. Is this what disabled graduates do?

Another method of coping in the literature is the choice to downshift. According to Goulding and Reed (2008) downshifting occurs when a person decides to work reduced hours in exchange for less stress and more free time. Such lifestyle choices are the result of individual aspirations, personal values and preferences and health is one of the factors which encourage individuals to make dramatic lifestyle changes (Goulding and Reed, 2008). The thesis will examine, therefore, how did the disabled graduates deal with disadvantage and did they employ the same type of communities of coping, or did they downshift?

A final action the literature suggests minorities may use to cope with disadvantage is to engage in vocational choice and/or vocational adjustment. These processes are where LGBT workers choose to work in an organisation that reflects their beliefs and identity and vocational adjustment is the processes they adopt to deal with discrimination when applying (Chung, 2007). Disabled and LGBT workers choose to work in an organisation that reflects their identity (see: Levine and Leonard 1984 and Roberts et al., 2004). Did any of the sample report vocational adjustment or vocational choice?

Where they work

The third factor affecting variation in the experience of work is where the person works. The sector in which the individual is employed is important; certain sectors have more favourable conditions for minorities. The public sector has, traditionally, been regarded as a model employer on account of its highly unionised status and good employer tradition (Roberts et al., 2004; Morgan and Allington, 2002), although this status has been questioned in recent years. The public sector was seen to have

better equality policies and is more likely to have diversity training (Hoque and Noon, 2004; Wanrooy et al., 2013) all of which potentially improve the experience of work for minorities. Hoque and Noon (2004) established that the probability of having an empty shell policy is reduced in the public sector. These findings, therefore, suggest that the sector and also the size of an organisation has a large impact on the experience of work, in terms of equality.

The literature indicates that certain types of organisations are more proactive at supporting disabled people than others. Usually organisations that have previously employed disabled people, voluntary, larger and public sector organisations are supportive of disabled people (Roberts et al., 2004). Research shows that these organisations go to greater lengths to ensure disabled staff can access the workplace and are proactive in their support of disabled workers (Branfield and Maynard, 2001; Goodley, 2005; Rita et al., 2007; Roulstone et al., 2003). Therefore if a person works in these organisations, they are more likely to have a better experience of work.

The type of Human Resource Management (HRM) is also shown to have an impact on the experience of work. The literature distinguishes between hard and soft HRM, first championed by Storey in 1989. Hard HRM is considered to focus on using workers to create competitive advantage and managing people as any other rational economic factor. In contrast, the soft model focuses on communication, motivation and leadership (Storey, 1989). Research shows that where hard HRM is commonplace, managers are less able and willing to make accommodations for disabled workers because there is an emphasis on leanness and work intensification (Cunningham et al., 2004). This point is supported by work from Florey and Harrison (2000) who found that reasonable adjustments are dependent upon resource demands, also suggesting hard HRM makes work more difficult for disabled people. These findings suggest, therefore, that soft HRM is more likely to be supportive of disabled people.

Another organisational strategy that impacts work experience is the presence of work-life balance policies. There is evidence to suggest work-life balance is significant and Abendroth and den Dulk (2011) report that employees who are unable to balance work and personal life perform less well in work. Milliken and Dunn-Jensen (2005) found that employees within higher education or those who are employed in professional and managerial occupations are most likely to suffer with work-life balance problems (Milliken and Dunn - Jensen, 2005), making graduates particularly vulnerable.

Organisations have varying responses to work-life balance. Usually the public sector and large organisations have taken the lead in work-life balance policies, pointing back to the importance of the size and sector of an organisation. Abendroth and den Dulk (2011) found that job control and supervisor support are significant factors in maintaining a work-life balance. Since, as Rigby and O'Brien (2010) found, there has been a failure to translate policies of work-life balance into practice. Take-up can be further hindered because employees are reported to be inhibited about using work-life balance policies (Rigby and O'Brien-Smith, 2010).

As a result of this literature the empirical research need to consider what policies the participants experienced and how they were affected by these policies.

The Wider Social Climate/Discrimination

Finally, the wider social climate affects the experience of work and is a source of contingency. The value society places on work will affect the experience of employment. Grosou (1997) reported that gender inequality and discrimination were the result, for example, of poor socialisation in family, school and culture. With regards to disability, Barnes (1999) argues that unless society re-configures the meaning of work then disabled people will always be valued less when they cannot work. Furthermore, work is central in shaping how a person defines, identifies and makes sense of themselves (Bain, 2005) and this is no different for disabled people (Barnes and Mercer, 2005). These pressures, aligned with the government's focus

on work as a remedy to social problems (DWP, 2004b), means that workers are always likely to value employment.

Bacon (2002) found that many disabled people would like to work but they lack confidence and felt they would not find a job because they perceived employers to be intolerant of their needs. People who are unemployed are deemed to be lazy and idle (Garthwaite, 2011) and many people hold incorrect beliefs based on the medicalization of disability (see Barnes et al., 2005 and Swain et al., 2004). These types of attitudes can give rise to stigma and discrimination.

Stigma is a negative *attitude* towards an individual with a minority status. Prejudice or stigma is a negative attitude toward a person without the back-up of sufficient knowledge and is based on non-personal characteristics, such as impairment (Antonak and Livneh, 1988). Attitudes help us define how we think and perceive other people. Mackelprang and Salsgiver (1999) state that stigma, or a negative attitude has been related to the lack of knowledge about a situation facing a person with an impairment. In comparison, discrimination is viewed as negative *action* against an individual because of their impairment. Employment discrimination occurs because social group characteristics, such as disability, take precedence over individual characteristics (Liff, 1999). For example, Crudden and McBroom (1999) found that blind employees perceived the largest barrier to employment was employer attitudes and discrimination in hiring. Simultaneously, a survey of employers found that 23% reported attitudes and stereotypes were significant barriers to them employing disabled people (Bruyere et al., 2004).

The literature is replete with five different types of discrimination and the Equality Act, 2010 reflects this and differentiates between institutional, direct, indirect, victimisation and harassment (Government Equalities Office, 2010). Therefore it is important to establish what type of discrimination is experienced by the disabled graduates and why.

As a result of this section, the empirical research needs to consider whether there is variation in the experience of work. After this variation has been established it is important to understand why the contingencies exist. Does the data support the idea that social capital is important in determining the outcome of disabled graduates' work experiences? Is age a considering factor? How do the actions of the graduates impact their experiences? The literature suggests that the most important contingency is the actions taken by the graduates (what they do), is this supported by the empirical research? All of these issues will be explored and answered in the empirical research.

Conclusion

This literature review chapter has focused on the continued disadvantage of disabled people in the labour market and has provided evidence of such disadvantage. The first section of the chapter considered key areas of disadvantage such as employment outcomes, recruitment and selection, absence and bullying and harassment and found competing positions in the literature. The empirical research will test these positions to see which viewpoint finds the most support. The chapter then moved on to consider the continued disadvantage faced in social security. The rationale behind social security was critiqued along with key features of the experience of claiming benefits.

This second section has shown that there is a marked policy to practice gap in terms of how legislation is enforced and how organisational policies are implemented. In order to understand the gap, the nature, purpose and enforcement of legislation was discussed. In order to address the poor implementation of legislation, the section identified three main actors that can potentially bridge the policy to practice gap; trade unions, CSO, and line managers. What is central to the thesis is to test the competing positions within these debates to see which agent provides the most support for improved equality outcomes and to ascertain why the policy to practice gap exists.

The third and final section of the thesis explored potential reasons for variation in the experience of work. Key areas were found to be career aspirations, the sector of employment, size of employing organisation, whether soft or hard HRM was in use, the ability of the graduate to utilise their social capital and the ability of the graduate to employ coping strategies. These contingencies could be grouped into four key areas; who the graduate was, what they did, where they worked and the wider social climate.

The next chapter details the epistemological and ontological considerations of the research and explores the methodology employed in the study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter explores the project's methodology. Firstly, the research questions will be presented because these are the basis of the research. The chapter then presents a tool called 'the onion' which outlines the research and its mechanisms. Using this tool the chapter considers the epistemological and ontological approach to the research. The chapter progresses to consider the sample for the research and details are given about how the sample was created and why specific actors were chosen. The research tools of a semi structured interviews, focus group and the use of official statistics are then justified. This section is closely followed by a detailed account of how the analysis was conducted with attention given to the validity of the findings and the ethical issues that arose from the research.

The key research questions of the thesis are to explore the experience of disabled graduates who are either looking for work or who are in work, post 1995. Attention is given to how they experience legislation, recruitment and selection, workplace adjustments, management relations and benefit and government agencies. Variation in the experiences of the sample of disabled graduates is then accounted for and explained.

The production of a comprehensive and defensible research design involves understanding the fundamental principles of a research design.

...the research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data. The choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process.

(Bryman and Bell, 2007:32)

The research design follows guidelines by Saunders et al., (2009). Saunders et al., advocate the 'onion' approach, which initially takes a broad perspective of the research, then channels down to the specific research tools. The onion is depicted graphically in figure 4.1, specified to the thesis. The first layer of the onion addresses the chosen research philosophy and the second layer considers the adopted research approach stemming from the research philosophy. The research strategies represented by the third layer of the onion consider the choice between action research, ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, surveys and experiments. The fourth layer of the onion address questions about the time scale of the research. Finally the core of the onion reflects decisions about the methods through which data was collected.

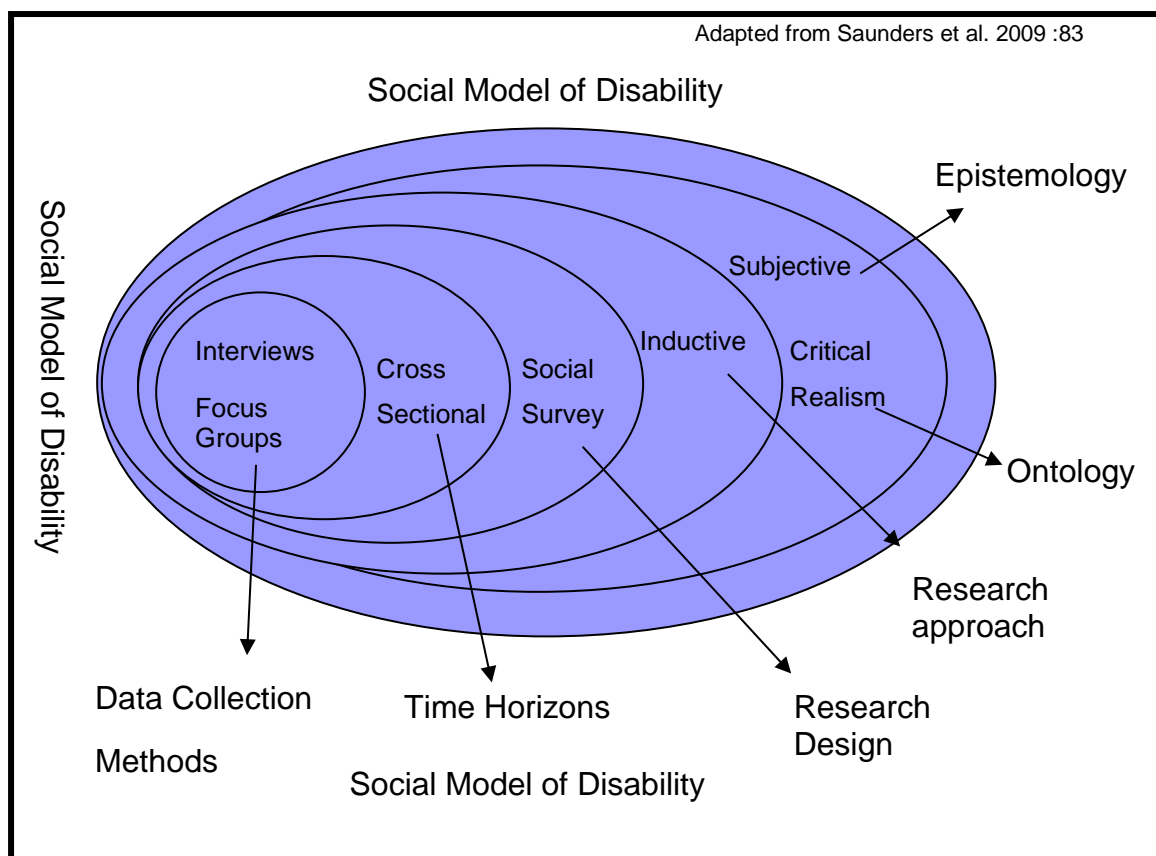


Figure 4-1 The Onion Saunders et al., (2009)

Ontology and Epistemology

The two main building blocks of the research design are the epistemological and ontological paradigms. Ontology deals with 'what is'. The ontological basis for this research rests upon an anti-positivist stance. However, to accurately understand anti-positivism it is necessary to briefly explore positivism.

Johnson and Duberley (2005) reported that positivism could be traced to the eighteenth century and was the quest for absolute truth. It sought to rationalise behaviour and apply universal models to observable relationships (Thomas, 2004). Positivism was originally used to study the natural sciences and has been copied in the social sciences (Behling, 1980). Nodoushani (1999) reports that positivist research often analyses these relationships using inferential statistics, mathematical analysis, hypothesis and correlation testing. One advantage of positivism is its detachment from the research subject, meaning that it advocates 'value neutral research' (Johnson and Duberley, 2005). Carrying out value neutral research indicates that researchers enter the research process without their own biases or judgements; assuming total objectivity. This objectivity is achievable because phenomena are viewed as being functionally necessary and objectively neutral (Johnson and Duberley, 2005).

Turning now to explore the opposite of positivism, interpretivism or anti-positivism, the ontology adopted in the thesis. Interpretivism states that people and institutions are fundamentally different to the objects studied in the natural sciences and therefore require a different approach (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Using a different approach allows interpretivism to address the positivist problem of how to deal with unobservable phenomena or how to resolve conflicts which cannot be tested empirically. Within interpretivism there are a plethora of paradigms to which research can subscribe, known as subjective epistemologies. Subjective epistemologies state that research cannot be value free because what is deemed to be knowledge is the result of particular values and contexts (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996).

One impact of using a subjective epistemology is the obligation to understand the motives behind the actions of the participants, which legitimises and explains respondents' actions (Johnson and Duberley, 2005). The natural outworking of such epistemological and ontological claims is that the research should be conducted in a manner that allocates expert status to the participant and does not claim to produce universal truths but presents observable patterns that appear in the data.

Epistemology

The chapter now examines the epistemological options that are commonly found in disability research. Feminism is frequently referenced in disability research and advocates emancipation and transformative change (Thomas and Davies, 2005). Feminist researchers have challenged the idea that there is a unitary set of truths, instead believing situations are mediated by their social surroundings (Shakespeare, 1996). Feminism is, furthermore, directly opposed to objective research; it does not believe that the research process can be conducted 'value free' (Lewis, 2005). The values held by the researcher encourage the researcher to be reciprocal in activities (Leggard et al., 2005). Feminism is 'borrowed' in disability research because of the need to study a minority group and to be aware of the power balances therein. This research, therefore, borrowed the idea of emancipation from feminist research and the desire to study a minority group.

This thesis allows the participant to voice their experiences; allowing their truths and realities to be uncovered. This sits alongside the interviews with HR managers and support agencies in the employment relationship, who are also encouraged to give their viewpoint on issues (Mason, 2002). While this approach is advantageous for uncovering the truths of those who are being researched, problems regarding validity can arise. It is therefore necessary to be continually reflexive about the impact of being highly engaged in the research process⁸. Issues surrounding validity and reliability are considered later in this chapter.

⁸ Reflexivity could be conducted by asking oneself questions such as: does my writing and speaking reproduce a system of oppression? Have I shown respect to my subjects? (Hurst, 1996).

The second influence on the research was critical realism. Critical realism was developed in response to the failings of positivism and its opposite, hermeneutics, and has grown in popularity in recent years (Archer, 2003; Reed, 2005). Critical realist research accepts that there are some things that exist without our knowing; however through observation they are fundamentally knowable.

Fleetwood (2005) reports that critical realism perceives something is 'real' if it has causal efficacy; an effect on behaviour that makes a difference (Fleetwood, 2005). This reality exists on two levels, the transitive level, which is what we know and the intransitive level, which is about what exists (Archer, 2003). There are also different modes of reality and an entity can move between modes of reality.

Each mode of reality refers to structures and systems that become increasingly deep and less observable. The first mode of reality, for example, is 'materially real'. This mode is a situation where an entity exists regardless of what is said about it. The ocean, for example, is materially real because it exists independently of human cognition. The second form of reality is ideally real - a conceptual issue and is seen to be real, because it affects people's actions. An example of this mode could be the medical model of disability and how it informs legislation. The third layer of reality is socially real; entities which are dependent on human activity but exist independently of our identification with them. The welfare system, for example, does not have a physical presence but does affect how people live their lives through the provision of benefits. The final mode of reality is artefactual reality - how people perceive the materially real entity and how they perceive it affects reality. Benefits, for example, will be used by some claimants to access support equipment, while others use them to afford luxury goods. These ideas are summarised in the table below.

Table 3-1: Fleetwood (2005)

Mode	Definition	Example Pertaining to The Research
Materially Real	Entities that exist independently of what individuals say about them or human action.	The environment
Ideally Real	Conceptual entities such as discourse, language, theories; these are real because they affect what we do.	The social model of disability. The social model is ideally real because it is a theory that is drawn upon to explain and make sense of people's experiences in society; therefore it affects what people do and believe about themselves and society.
Socially Real	Practices, states of affairs and social structures that refer to causal mechanisms. We cannot touch these socially real entities, but they are dependent on human activity and exist independently of our identification of them.	Becoming unemployed or disabled. Some graduates failed to face up to the socially real fact that they had become disabled. This state existed independently of their identification of it.
Artefactually Real	Materially real entities that are concept mediated.	For example computer aided equipment, how do we understand its correct use?

Now that reality has been established, it is necessary to discuss how reality can be accessed. In order to obtain knowledge about reality, events occur at three different strata, which all need to be considered. The three different strata are as follows:

- a. The empirical - these form the basis of common sense observations, for example this thesis is printed on white paper.
- b. The actual – events, which shape meaning and understanding. For example this thesis has been produced in order to meet the requirements of a Ph.D degree.

- c. The transcendental – deep structures and mechanisms and their associated powers. For example, this thesis is the product of power relations between supervisor and student in terms of what topic has been chosen and the content of the thesis, which has been subject to debate and scrutiny by supervisors.

There is no direct access to the transcendental realm (Archer, 2003), therefore how can a researcher justify the existence of a transcendental realm? The answer to this question lies in the correct observation of structure and agency and their analysis, so that the interaction between them is exposed and explained. The point where structure and agency interact is where morphogenesis (changing) or morphostasis (staying the same) occurs. These different strata of reality provide the platform on which the interactions between structure and agency take place, the interaction of which is often the main focus of research, in addition to considering how the deep structures are experienced by actors and why do actors often act differently in similar contexts (Delbridge and Edwards, 2009). The process of retrodution (assuming a relationship) is achieved through three stages: collection of evidence about patterns of observable phenomena, questioning what underlying mechanisms would explain the observed pattern, finally, carrying out further research on the basis of the assumption of what is causing an observable pattern (Lawson, 1997).

From a critical realist perspective, causality does not occur as the result of dependent and independent variables; instead it is the result of unobservable generative mechanisms that underlie regular events, which occur at the transcendental strata. Critical realist research should therefore examine the transcendental level because the causes of events are not merely the preceding events. Events are the result of a conflux of interacting causal phenomena (Fleetwood and Hesketh, 2006). In practice this phenomenon means that attention should be paid to context.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the research is following an inductive research approach and borrowing from feminist and critical realist principles to inform that approach. Feminism underlines the need to study a minority group and the need to affect change. What is drawn from critical realism is the need to pay attention to causal factors that influence events and the need to be aware of how different groups interpret different versions of reality.

Mechanics of the Research

The next section explores the remaining four layers of the onion. Firstly, the reasons for an inductive approach are explored. Secondly, the design of the research is discussed and defended. This section is followed by a brief consideration and justification of the time scale. The final layer of the onion is the data collection methods. This section will explore and justify the sample, how it was created, why it was created and any weaknesses in the sample. The research tools are then discussed; why the research chose to use semi structured interviews and focus groups and how this choice affected the collected data. This section is followed by an overview of the topics that were discussed in the interviews, but for more detailed information the interview schedule is included in Appendix I. The method for analysing the data is then discussed, including a detailed report of the stages of the analysis and the ways different data was analysed. Naturally, as a result of any research process attention needs to be paid to validity and therefore this is the next consideration to be explored. Penultimately, attention is given to the ethics of the research and finally the reciprocity of the research (which pays attention to how the research has affected the researcher personally) and future considerations finalise the chapter.

Layer Two: Inductive Approach

Returning to the tool used by Saunders et al., (2009); the second layer of the 'onion' addresses the nature of the research. This research was broadly inductive. In exploratory research, inductive research is advocated to obtain realistic results about a person's actions and experiences. The thesis sought to capture the subjective

experiences of disabled graduates and their responses to their situations. Inductive research lends itself to qualitative methods. Further reasons for selecting an inductive approach arise because disabled graduates are under-researched. There is a lot of literature detailing the graduate labour market and work on discrimination in general. There is, however, an extremely limited body of work that explores discrimination among disabled graduates, as discussed in the introduction. This exploratory approach is appropriate because an exploratory, inductive research project allows greater flexibility as new truths are discovered during the research. As a result, the research could change emphasis as it progressed, if needed. In fact, this is what happened in the research. At the beginning of the research it was not anticipated that managers would have a substantial impact on the experience of disabled graduates, therefore they were not originally included in the research. After a substantial number of graduates had been interviewed the importance of managers became evident. Due to the inductive, flexible nature of the research it was, therefore, possible to arrange interviews with managers.

Despite the inductive nature of the research it must be noted that the social model of disability has been a framing device in guiding the exploration of issues such as employer practices, the role of legislation and the Jobcentre, because the social model states that the way society is organised can be oppressive for disabled people. Nevertheless, the research has still been conducted in an exploratory manner.

Layer Three: Research Strategies.

The third layer of the onion is the research strategy. The research strategy shows how the research answers the research questions, specifies sources from which data can be collected and the constraints on these methods.

The research strategy used was data collection through semi-structured interviews and a focus group. This study was interested in extracting the unique features of the reality of the participants, thus creating idiographic research. Broadly, idiographic

research means that consideration was given to the context of the individual cases. Focus was on extracting the unique features of the participants' reality, allowing the participants' stories to be told, while identifying patterns and offering explanations. For example, why do some people successfully obtain reasonable adjustments when others are unsuccessful? Is this because of who they are, where they work, or because of the nature of their relations with managers?

The research used data collected from disabled graduates. While initially the thesis was only going to involve graduates, it soon became obvious, through retrodution, that more interviewees were needed from different areas such as HR managers and support agencies. These additional sources were therefore incorporated into the data collection and analysis. It should be noted that it was very difficult to arrange access to the Jobcentre Plus. It took 18 months to arrange for one Disability Employment Advisor to be interviewed. Even during this interview a lot of what was discussed could not be included in the research because it was 'off the record'.

Another constraint on the semi structured interview method is that it is time consuming. A large number of people needed to be interviewed and this was laborious but did allow for a great range and depth of data to be collected. Further advantages and disadvantages of the semi structured interview approach are found in the data collection methods.

The Fourth Layer: Time Horizon

The time horizon of the research is represented by layer four of the onion. The time scale of the research was initially cross-sectional, the interviewees were only to be interviewed once. A cross-sectional approach pinpoints the participant's experiences at one point in time and limits any consideration of differences that occur as time passes (Saunders et al., 2009). Despite the initial plans for a cross-sectional design, due to unforeseen circumstances there was a year's delay in the middle of the data collection. Prior to this delay 16 participants had been interviewed. After the pause in the data collection, it was deemed appropriate to re-interview the original 16

graduates, to explore their current situation and overcome any problems caused by the delay. Re-interviewing was especially important given the changing economic climate. While all 16 were contacted, only 11 returned contact and were available for re-interview. After the 11 who returned contact had been re-interviewed a further 15 participants were located to make the sample 31. It is hoped that this approach will address any concerns about consistency in the data collection. The remainder of the disabled graduates and all other categories of participants were only interviewed once.

Fifth Layer: Data Collection Methods

The final area from the 'onion' is the data collection methods.

Sample

Qualitative studies do not require representative samples, but do include participants who display particular characteristics of interest, i.e. having an impairment and being a graduate. Below is a breakdown of the participants.

Table 3-2: Sample Composition

	No	Tool
Graduates	31	Semi Structured Interview
Disability Employment Advisors (these are Jobcentre Plus employees specifically trained to help disabled people into work.	1	Semi Structured Interview
Access to Work Employees. (These are employees employed by Access to Work who administer and monitor the Government's scheme to help employers meet the cost of providing disabled employees with reasonable adjustments.)	8	Focus group
	1	Semi-Structured Interview
Support Organisations	5	Semi-Structured Interview
Careers Staff from universities, either generalists or disability specialist careers advisors.	4	Semi-Structured Interviews
MP	1	Semi-Structured Interview
Public Sector HR Managers	8	Semi-Structured Interviews
Private Sector HR Manager	8	Semi-Structured Interviews

In total 67 participants were involved in the research. The support organisations which were interviewed were the TUC, RNIB, Business Disability Forum, Scope and the Innovate Trust. These support agencies were interviewed because it became apparent that they played a large role in the disabled graduates' lives. More information was needed about the role they played and the best method of collecting this data was by interviewing representatives of these organisations. The careers advisors were interviewed in order to understand the support disabled graduates would receive at university. Due to the length of the thesis it was decided to remove this material. The Member of Parliament was interviewed to gather data about the situation surrounding the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It was appropriate to interview the MP because he was heavily involved in processing the Act through Parliament and it was hoped that the MP would provide information which was not available in the public domain. The Disability Employment Advisor was interviewed to ascertain the type of support disabled people receive from the Jobcentre Plus and to uncover key issues the DEA faced in supporting disabled people. The Access to Work employees were also interviewed because they were significant in the disabled graduates' working lives. Therefore, it was important to speak to them directly to see how they supported disabled people and the issues they faced.

Various methods were used to locate the sample participants. Each separate group proved very difficult to engage. Initially, the disabled graduates were located; the criterion being any graduate who had graduated or experienced university since 1995 and considered themselves to be disabled. The year 1995 was used as a cut-off to engage with people who had looked for work, or been working, since the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act.

To identify research participants the research was advertised in university career departments, work places, and disability associations such as 'Disability Wales' (see Appendix II for poster). The poster deliberately did not include any overt images of disability to avoid furthering stereotypes. In retrospect, it appears that none of the graduates were located through the posters. The second and more successful

strategy was to write about the research on email lists, relating to graduates and disability. This method produced some participants and also allowed for snowballing. A blanket email was sent to the 'Jisclist', and many, pro-active, disability advisors forwarded my email to former disabled students. Additionally impairment specific websites were approached and asked to display an advert about the research and this approach, together with advertising in general disability media, was the most successful.

The hardest sample to locate was employees of Jobcentre Plus; this is why there is only one Disability Employment Advisor interviewee. It took 18 months of repeated requests to the JCP to get in contact with a DEA for an interview. After the initial DEA interview I tried to access further DEAs through snowballing. This was an unsuccessful, protracted process and I had to decide to move on in order to complete the thesis.

For the sample of HR managers, it was felt that due to massive differences between sectors, an equal sample of private and public sector organisations should be interviewed. The public sector organisations were, unsurprisingly, easier to access. The criteria which were applied to the organisations were ones within a 3 hour geographical reach (due to my personal disability), a graduate employer and over 1000 employees, thereby excluding the SME category.

In terms of contacting HR managers, a very different approach was utilised. Social media has grown in its importance in recent years and '*Linked In*' proved very useful in sourcing contacts. Contact was achieved by joining various disability groups on the website and mailing members about the research. Again, only a few replied compared to the number of emails sent. Additionally the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development was approached to help advertise the research digitally, however, this method did not generate any participants. The third strategy that was used to gain interviewees was to use contacts of Cardiff University's Career Service, which proved to be quite useful. Furthermore, the Business Disability Forum

produces a Gold List of members. Originally all the members on this list were telephoned and contact with the HR manager for equality and diversity was requested. In numerous cases it was not possible to get past the receptionist because a named contact was not available (this is hardly ever listed on a corporate website). Despite this hurdle, the method was relatively successful and produced some very enlightening interviews. I was struck, however, by the number of those who did not want to be interviewed, despite being on the Gold List for disability.

There are some implications of the sampling process that need to be considered. In terms of the disabled graduates the sample is biased towards those who are more IT literate and users of the internet. Research has shown that those who use the internet are more socially aware and have greater access to educational capital and citizenship activities (Mossberger et al., 2008). This could mean that the sample contained participants who were more likely to be aware of their rights. The impact on the research is that these participants are more likely to be activists. Secondly, there are a greater proportion of disabled graduates in the sample who work in the disability sector. This bias was not anticipated at the start of the research but could indicate that those who work to improve the situation of disabled graduates are more likely to become involved in research than those who are in the private and public sector. The higher proportion of graduates working in the disability sector impacts the results because any organisation's specific results will be more related to the third sector and less relevant to the larger public and private sectors. Furthermore, those working in the disability sector are more likely to be aware of their rights and therefore also portray 'activist' characteristics. Another sample bias is that there are a lot of graduates with higher degrees in the sample. Again, this was not anticipated but would seem to reflect that those who are unable to access the labour market want to do something productive and therefore continue to study. It would appear this is could be a feature of the population because the sampling process did not favour those with higher degrees. For example, poster advertising which was distributed through universities and alumni communications did not yield any participants. If the prevalence of higher degrees was due to sampling processes, it would have been the poster that would have generated responses from those with higher degrees.

The main research method used was semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured in-depth interviews are an essential method to understand the interaction of elements, comprising the experiences of those with impairments, and are suited to dealing with socially sensitive data (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2002). These interviews were about subjective phenomenon and the reporting of social facts, such as whether the participants felt protected by legislation and biographical data. The interviews needed to be semi-structured to allow the participants to speak for themselves and although they followed a broad structure, the participants were allowed to guide the conversation. This was achieved using some of Rapley's facilitative and self-disclosing patterns (Rapley, 2004) which encourage the researcher to share some biographical data with the participant. The reciprocal nature of these interviews is facilitated by the researcher's ability to share narrative, biographical data with the respondent to build up rapport (Rapley, 2004); for example, Joanna, an academic working in a similar field, and I spoke about changes to the higher education system in general, prior to the interview starting. This interaction, built up rapport and a shared understanding.

The interviews also used elements of a life history approach. This approach stems from the belief that the researcher can aid the participants through the production of their oral history (Harding, 2006). Such biographical methods are useful for contextualising historical actions and uncovering social meanings and potential causes attributed to actions (Chamerlayne et al., 2000). When interviewing the disabled graduates, for example, the interview started off with the earliest point in their life of interest; which university they attended and their degree subject. Then the interview progressed to discuss how they looked for work and their experiences in work. Following this historical sequence felt a natural method in which to conduct the interviews and helped the participants sense the direction in which the interview was going.

In a semi-structured interview flexibility is integral to successful data collection. The flexibility inherent in semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to use content-mining probes when an unexpected area of interest is raised or the participant

wanders in their answers (Mason, 2002). When wandering occurs it is important that the researcher continually probes until the researcher's understanding of the participant's views has reached saturation (Lewis, 2005). This process can often feel unnatural as it moves the interview out of the realms of 'natural' conversation (Leggard et al., 2005) into a more interrogative event. While the rationale behind continual probing is to ensure that contextual and historical information are obtained, concerns can be raised about the impact of continuous probing on the data. As the semi-structured interview moves to a more interrogative event, the interview can lose the informality that allowed the researcher to uncover rich data and potentially the researcher's understanding can be eroded. The appropriate action necessary in this instance is left to the researcher's experience and understanding. This pitfall could be avoided by ensuring the researcher and researched understand meaning in same way. This shared understanding would remove the need to probe continuously and therefore make the interviews more natural. An example from the research was when an interviewee talked about wanting to be a pilot at a young age. I could not see the link between the need to abandon aviation career aspirations because of dyslexia. I asked the participant to clarify why exactly he abandoned his goals, was it because rules and regulations prevented him pursuing his dream or did he feel, on a personal level, that he would be hindered from achieving his goal? After the participant answered my questions, I was able to understand his perspective and this resulted in a shared understanding.

The flexibility discussed above is essential to create a rich study. This richness enables deeper analysis of the meanings behind phrases and pauses, in their native context. The language of the participants, furthermore, can be used as a vehicle to illuminate the meanings associated with the phenomena they discuss (Leggard et al., 2005). With this flexibility in mind, it is essential to determine, before the interview, general areas for discussion. From reading literature, the relevant areas were determined for the disabled graduate, HR and Support Agency interviews. Despite the broad guidance of the literature, plenty of time in the interviews was given for the interviewees to discuss topics they wanted. In addition, pertinent areas that arose from the disabled graduate interviews were used to add to the schedule for the HR interviews. Table 4.3, below illustrates the main areas that were covered

for the disabled graduate, HR and support agency interviews; for a more detailed version please view the interview schedule in Appendix I.

Prior to the interview each participant was sent a consent form detailing what they were to expect and their rights under the Data Protection Act (Appendix III). At the start of each interview the candidate was asked if they objected to the interview being recorded. Each interview lasted approximately one to two hours and was recorded using a digital voice recorder. The research followed the interview schedule and only deviated when the participant detailed relevant, interesting and unanticipated data. It is for this purpose that the above questions have been ordered chronologically because this is how data is best recalled (Ritchie, 1995).

The format of the interview needed to be given careful consideration. While some participants might have mobility impairments, others may have hearing problems, for example. This variation meant that the initial desire to conduct all interviews face to face was not possible; nevertheless, only 10% of interviews were conducted over the telephone. To ensure that conducting interviews over the telephone did not negatively affect the data which was collected, a few minutes were spent, unrecorded, talking to the interviewees, to put them at ease. The process of interviewing the participants did not leave me unaffected. There was one participant who was particularly challenging to interview, because the interview challenged my own subconscious preconceptions. Joe was both deaf and blind and it was with some trepidation that I interviewed him, as I was unsure how it would be possible. Despite my original uncertainties, the interview went well and all that was needed was to wear a device around my neck, while I was speaking. I did find it unnerving, however, when the swivel chair he was sitting on turned to face in the opposite direction and he did not notice.

Table 3-3: Interview Areas

Disabled Graduate Interviews	HR Interviews	Support Agencies
<u>Biographical Details</u> – to ascertain background information on the participant.	<u>Job Role:</u> duties, scope of role, management structure. This gave me an overview of main duties.	<u>Job Role:</u> duties, scope of role, management structure. This gave me an overview of main duties.
<u>Educational Background</u> – to determine the participants' educational, skill and experience levels.	<u>Recruitment:</u> Involvement in recruitment? Type of involvement? This enabled me to assess the scope of their role.	<u>Organisation's Remit:</u> How do they support disabled people? Why is it done this way etc. This gives an overview of the organisation's purpose.
<u>Careers Advice:</u> type of advice and impact of advice. This will help ascertain their experience of career support.	<u>Disclosure Policy:</u> how long in place? Data handling. This gave me an insight into the company's approach to disabled employees.	<u>Current Issues:</u> What issues do disabled people come to them with? This helps understanding of actual problems disabled people face.
<u>Job Seeking:</u> Type of job, method of job search, type of job desired etc. This builds up a picture of what they want and how they will pursue it.	<u>Reasonable Adjustment Process:</u> asked for details. This was needed as Reasonable Adjustments were found to be key from the disabled graduate interviews.	<u>Legislation:</u> How has this impacted what they do and the position for the people they represent. This showed the impact of legislation in real life.
<u>Current Employment:</u> length of time with employer, main duties of the role, disability policies of the employer. This helps me to understand their current work situation.	<u>Staff Attitudes/Training:</u> Type of training, by whom and how often .which enabled insight into how well trained general staff were at dealing with disability and the importance the company attributed to disability. Again, training was key in the participants' experiences, so it was necessary to ask the managers.	<u>Impact:</u> How successful is the organisation at representing disabled people and achieving their goals? This enabled assessment of the role and function of support agencies.
<u>Reasonable Adjustments:</u> what adjustments they needed, how they were achieved. Allows me to assess the policies that frame their experiences.	<u>Policies:</u> what policies are in place, how are the created and reviewed? Provided overview of approach to disability and equality in general.	<u>Future:</u> What changes would they like to see and why? Indicated future directions and weaknesses.
<u>Legislation:</u> Are they aware of legislation and have they used it? This gives me a picture of their understanding of the law and how the law impacts people in practice.	<u>Legislative Compliance:</u> How do they keep up to date with the law? Has the law changed the way they do business? This enabled assessment of the impact of legislation.	
<u>Job Centre:</u> What benefits do they claim, what advice did they receive? Was it helpful? This shows how the Jobcentre is viewed by disabled people.	<u>Surveys:</u> How often are these carried out? Does E&D feature in the surveys? etc. This produced overview of company approach and commitment to equality.	
<u>Future Aspirations:</u> What are their goals for the future? This shows me the type of person they are and whether they hope to overcome social barriers to their development.	<u>Use of External Agencies:</u> external agencies support? Which ones? Why?. Showed the areas the company needed specialist advice and showed if the advice was beneficial to the company.	

The Member of Parliament interview was conducted face to face and lasted one hour. The interview was very formal and it was difficult to extract information from the participant. It was intended that the following areas would be discussed (please note the interview was carried out in 2008 and this is reflected in the questions): What was the rationale behind the DDA? What was included in the 1990 bill? What was the response of Parliament to these proposed pieces of legislation? Why was the initial bill rejected? What other MPs showed interest? What was Labour's current position on equality and was he personally in favour of the Single Equality Bill? Does he think the 1998 Human Rights Act and DDA 1995 are adequate protection for disabled people? Despite these questions the MP could only be drawn on factual information that was readily available in the public domain and therefore the interview was of little use.

After the interviews were completed the data was transcribed and anonymised. The transcriptions were emailed to the participants to give their consent for the data to be used in the research. At the conclusion of the research, to aid the process of reciprocity, a summary of the research findings was produced for participants. Various organisations have shown interest in the results of the research, they also received a copy of the report.

Focus Group

A focus group of Access to Work advisors was also used to collect data. This method was used because research shows that through discussion an individual's ideas are formed, changed and refined (Lewis, 2005). Research also shows that the most successful focus groups function with limited input from the co-ordinator (Krueger and Casey, 2000). The issues/prompts used were designed to spark debate and were worded to evoke the participant's opinions, rather than factual data. These prompts were worded using the language of the participants, essential to extracting their meaning (Krueger and Casey, 2000). The focus group should consist of socially proximate group members, which enables sensitive issues to be broached in a less intense atmosphere. The more sensitive areas need to be left until nearer the

end of the focus group so that the group is not discomforted (Bryman, 2004). Discussion then freely took place among participants.

Caution, however, was needed because socially proximate members can prefer to give responses that are socially desirable (Bryman, 2004). This situation is more likely to occur in focus groups because of group dynamics. In this research this situation was overcome, by allowing those who were more reluctant the opportunity to express themselves through direct questions.

The research involved one focus group, comprising individuals from Access to Work. Access to Work employees were chosen because they would have similar stories because they were all operating within the same government rules and context. What was more interesting, was how the participants responded to scenarios presented to them. An example of a scenario used to spark discussion was the case of a disabled graduate who was finding delays in her Access to Work provision and was thus hindered from performing to the best of her ability. All of the scenarios presented to the Access to Work personnel came from situations which the graduates had faced. After I presented the scenario, I asked the personnel what they would do in that situation and why. The discussion that ensued related to the different approaches different advisors used and why and which they deemed most successful in dealing with that particular issue.

Documentary Evidence

In order to gather information about the general situation for disabled people and graduates secondary data was used. The main type of data examined was statistics, either produced by the Office for National Statistics or by the Association of Graduate Careers Advice Service (AGCAS). These statistics were collected from official publications such as the report by AGCAS "What do disabled graduates do?" They allowed a comparison to be made between disabled and non-disabled graduates. Furthermore, they allowed evidence based statements to be made such as "disabled people have poorer employment rates than their non-disabled peers".

Another documentary source used was training material from Remploy. This material was read and examined to ascertain the type of training offered by organisations which support disabled people looking for work. The material was examined by categorising the type of training into one of three categories:

- a. general skill training e.g. time management
- b. work specific training – e.g. how to compile a CV
- c. higher skill training – such as project management.

Analysis

Now that the onion has been fully explored it is necessary to set out how the data collected were analysed. I call this the knife which cuts the onion.

The process for analysing the data was non-linear and lengthy. For all interviews, irrespective of participant group, the analysis method remained constant. The first stage was to transcribe the interviews verbatim. The decision was made to transcribe verbatim in order to give the participants voice and to ensure a more thorough and accurate analysis of the data was achieved. It would be presumptuous to pre-judge what areas of the interview were important, without fully transcribing the details. Selecting important points can only be done after listening to all of the recordings and analysing findings. While this was an arduous and lengthy process, it did allow me to develop intense familiarity with the data.

After the interviews were transcribed all identifying data was removed. The names of the participants were changed and in some instances, participants requested a particular pseudonym. The degree subject and grade are shown to have an impact on labour market success, therefore, these were included. It was felt that this information would not identify particular participants and they were happy that these details would not be changed.

When the transcriptions had been completed, I was in a position to decide whether to utilise a computer package to aid analysis. Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software became popular in the 1980s and carries out functions such as coding, searching, reporting, memo-ing, cross referencing and modelling (Barry, 1998). NVIVO is a popular package and I attended a training course on its functionality. After reviewing what the package had to offer and the time it would take to become familiar with the programme, the decision was made to do the analysis 'by hand'. NVIVO was not used because I wanted to retain control of my data. Furthermore, it was felt that using NVIVO would remove context from the analysis and potentially miss causation, which impacted on the graduates' decisions and actions.

The coding process started with a thorough read-through of all interviews to ensure familiarity with the data. After this process rough thoughts were noted about key reoccurring themes and interesting points. After the initial stage was completed each interview was coded. The process of coding was non-linear. First of all four categories from the research questions were used to analyse the first 10 interviews;

- a. Legislation e.g. knowledge of legislation, did they feel protected by the legislation?
- b. Recruitment and selection: e.g. what jobs had they held in the past? What level were the jobs? Why had they left any jobs? What methods of recruitment had they experienced?
- c. Workplace issues: e.g. how did they interact with colleagues? Did they like their job? What was the size of their workplace? What management structure was in place?
- d. Benefit and government agencies: e.g. Had they been to the Jobcentre Plus? Did they have negative or positive experiences? What benefits did they claim? Was this a difficult process?

After completion of 10 interviews these categories were reviewed and additional categories added. The additional categories that were added are listed below:

- a. Biographical Data (name, age, location)
- b. Context of the situation which the graduate found themselves in (employed, unemployed, retired, childcare responsibilities, married etc). This category was necessary to look for causation in line with the research's critical realist approach.
- c. Incidence or instances of Discrimination (What happened, was it work related, what action was taken? etc)
- d. Impairment issues (what does their impairment mean they cannot do? What impact does their impairment have on their life?)
- e. Involvement with outside organisations (e.g. for advice or support about employment or non-work issues.)
- f. Social issues, for example the benefit derived from working
- g. Interaction with HR (how did they interact with HR? How often? Key members of staff available? etc.).
- h. Reasonable adjustments (what adjustments did they have? How did they achieve them? Did they meet their needs?)
- i. Recession issues (did they lose their job because of the economic downturn? Have they been negatively or positively affected by the recession? etc)
- j. Skills (are they underemployed or overemployed? Do they feel they use their skills in work? What skills does their employer require? etc.).
- k. Miscellaneous but interesting (any factors not covered by the above categories but would appear to have an impact on the disabled graduates' situation, e.g. family support).

The purpose of adding these extra categories was to ensure that data was not missed and clarity improved. Furthermore, this approach enhanced data familiarity, which is essential for accurate analysis. As a result, the first ten interviews were re-coded using the new categories. After this was completed the remaining interviews were coded using the 15 categories and again, after all had been coded, they were

reviewed to ascertain whether new categories were needed. At this stage new categories were deemed unnecessary.

After the coding process was completed, it was felt that it was important not to go straight in and 'chop up' the data and that the context of each person's story needed to be understood. To achieve this, a summary of each of the participants' story was produced to give an overview of their situation and character (see Appendix IV).

Using the interview transcripts, a chart of key participant data was developed (see Appendix V), which included pseudonym, age, gender, disability type, employment status, further qualifications, degree subject, classification and employment sector. This chart was then used to display the biographical data, graphically facilitating easy pictorial representations of the data disaggregated into gender, age and type of impairment. It should be noted why it was decided to include a person's type of disability. It is common to use the 'visible/invisible' dichotomy when describing disability (Foster, 2007). It was felt, however, that because previous research showed that the type of disability affects outcomes (Williams, 2007), the visible/invisible dichotomy misses nuances in the participants' experiences. Missing these nuances could therefore lead to inaccurate analysis. Additionally, drawing on the impairment effects model by Thomas (2007) more information about impairments was needed. Instead of providing the exact name of the disability, as this would allow potentially objectification of a person by their disability, the following categories were used:

- a. Learning: e.g. dyslexia or Asperger's Syndrome
- b. Physical: e.g. paralysis or cerebral palsy
- c. Sensory: e.g. deafness or blindness
- d. Mental: e.g. bi-polar disorder or depression
- e. Multiple: more than one of the above, e.g. MS and depression.

These categories give the reader a greater sense of the issues that the participant was facing and allows analysis to ascertain if the type of impairment has an impact on labour market outcomes. For example, it is already well established that those who have mental health difficulties have poorer labour market outcomes (Dickens, 1994).

The final stage of analysis sought interconnecting variables, to give weight and meaning to trends. Research suggests that compiling a broad matrix enables the data to be capsulated into interconnecting variables (Huberman and Miles, 2002). This strategy showed the generative mechanisms which were at work in the interviewees' lives.

The HR and support agency interview analysis took the same approach as the disabled graduate interview analysis. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and familiarity with the data was ensured. Naturally, different categories were formulated, see below.

- a. External Organisations: e.g. what organisations did they interact with? Why did they interact with them? What support did they receive?
- b. Employment Legislation: e.g. how much did they know about legislation? Did they have a specific legal department to advise them on equality law?
- c. Recruitment and Job Training: e.g. what recruitment methods do they use and why? Do they allow positive action and/or positive discrimination in their recruitment processes? What equality and diversity training do they provide and to whom?
- d. Disclosure: e.g. what processes do they have in place for disclosure? How do they support employees who disclose?
- e. Reasonable Adjustments: e.g. who is responsible for the RA process? What processes do they have in place? Do they monitor the effectiveness of these processes and how effective they are?

- f. Surveys: e.g. do they run equality and diversity surveys? How is disability included in the surveys? What is the response rate?
- g. Line Managers: e.g. what is the role of line manager with regard to equality and diversity? How are they supported to carry out this role?
- h. Networks: e.g. are there any networks for minority groups in the organisation? What role do they take and how are they supported?
- i. Financial Climate: e.g. does the financial climate affect equality and diversity provision, how and why?
- j. Benchmarking: e.g. how do you monitor your equality and diversity standards? Do you involve any external bodies to help?
- k. Business Case: Why is equality and diversity supported in the organisation? Why this rationale? Is it an effective rationale?

It was easier to form the categories for the HR interviews as the interviews were more structured and therefore responses tended to be in discrete segments.

The focus group material had a slightly different form of analysis. The data generated from the focus groups was transcribed and collated into similar areas, allowing familiarity with the material. Patterns in the participants' responses were sought because focus groups do not generate one definite answer (Krueger and Casey, 2000). Comparisons were then made with the results of the disabled graduates' experiences of Access to Work. Returning to the example given earlier regarding the delay in Access to Work support, the disabled participants felt that it was A2W fault for tardiness in delivering equipment. The general feeling from the focus group was that graduates did not complete forms correctly or were slow to send off paper work. This contradiction proved to be an interesting finding.

Validity

After outlining the validity, the chapter moves to explore the validity and credibility of qualitative research and assess whether this thesis can claim to be valid and credible.

While the ‘onion’ approach, used above, has enabled the research to be outlined; issues surrounding validity and credibility have been omitted. According to Onwuegebuji and Leech (2006) there is no one criterion of validity for qualitative work. Despite this claim, all qualitative research should be systematically and rigorously conducted so that it is accountable for its quality and claims (Seale, 1999). Producing a research design that addresses credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability greatly improves the contribution that the research makes to knowledge.

Many authors have tried to identify criteria for assessing the validity of qualitative work, the main proponents of such attempts are Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Dingwall (1992). In order to achieve a balance this research project will be critiqued using the criteria of both Dingwall (1992) and Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Table 3-4: Validity Constructs

Lincoln and Guba 1985	Dingwall (1992)
Transferability – do the findings apply to other contexts?	Has the author distinguished clearly between data and analysis?
Credibility – how believable are the findings?	Has the author looked for contradictory evidence and set out to test statements made in other papers?
Dependability – are the findings likely to apply at different times?	Does the study reflect the interactive character of social life and deal fairly with participants?
Confirmability – have researcher values intruded to a high degree?	

The rich contextual data created in qualitative work can rarely be re-created. This fact does not invalidate qualitative work; instead it enhances its contribution. The data cannot be exactly replicated because, for example, another research project is highly unlikely to have the same graduates respond as were represented in this thesis. The unique features of the cases enhance the contribution of qualitative research because it allows understanding to be derived from context and creates deep insights. The great depth of the data allows a deep understanding of a situation to be formed. This deep understanding means it is more likely that the findings will be transferable to other contexts because a thorough analysis of causal factors will have been completed. The research therefore can be considered transferable and dependable.

It is proposed that the credibility of this research could be significant because of the nature of the research. The research focused on disabled graduates' lived experiences. Therefore, the findings emanate directly from the graduates themselves; enhancing the believability of the findings. Furthermore, other interest groups were interviewed, such as the JCP personnel and HR managers to explore the implications and validity of the findings. Returning to the example above, the disabled graduates reported that A2W were slow in providing equipment but the A2W personnel placed the blame on the disabled graduates. It was then possible to return to the data from the graduates to ascertain if there were elements of slow response from the graduates that would validate what A2W reported. This situation shows that people in relationships tend to blame the other side for problems. It is not possible to say which group, Access to Work or the disabled graduates, more accurately represented what happened. This point, however, illustrates how the nature of the research has encompassed numerous viewpoints. These numerous viewpoints ensure a greater understanding of a situation which produces more credible, accurate results. It could be suggested this method is a form of triangulation.

In order to enhance the confirmability of the research, it is of paramount importance that I am explicit about the impact of being a disabled researcher. I explored the

methodological implications of this fact on the research. It has been suggested that disabled people are the best to undertake disability research (Barnes and Mercer, 2005, Charlton, 1998, Morris, 1992, Oliver, 1992, Shakespeare, 1996). Shakespeare (1996) talks about the negative impact of non-disabled researchers and his preference for disabled researchers. Others argue that only disabled researchers should engage in disability research (Stone and Priestley, 1996). This viewpoint has received criticism from some that research will be biased and the validity of the research questionable (Behling, 1980). One could therefore argue that my disability and closeness to the research topic will hinder the validity of the results. I must point out; however, that while I have experienced disability and its challenges, my experiences in no way accounts for the wide range of experiences disabled graduates currently face. The vast nature of the term disability affords no-one the ability to claim they have experienced every facet. I believe, however, my experiences have enabled me to develop a strong rapport with interviewees, produce research that is relevant and increase the reciprocity in my research process. I have been reflexive and part of the research process involved reflecting on how the research affected me, see chapter 11.

I am guided, ultimately, by Albrecht (1992), who states that it is the people who live with impairments who are the experts on the impacts of disability, not doctors, social workers or researchers. Therefore being disabled myself, I am able to draw on both experiences; as a researcher and a disabled person to produce research that provides much needed literature and helps shape debates in wider society (Albrecht, 1992).

The research has shown a clear distinction between how the data was gathered and analysed. Clear evidence was provided for both the collection and analysis phase. This chapter has produced clear descriptions of how the data was generated and analysed and provided a rationale as to why each category was used. This method enables the reader to attribute the data directly to its sources. The overt stance taken regarding the impact of the researcher's disability has given the reader the ability to see the biases and judgements made.

Dingwall (1992) advocates treating the participants fairly and highlights the interactive character of social life. This research has an ethical stance which attributed participants many rights in addition to their rights under the Data Protection Act. Secondly, the interactive character of social life is clearly seen throughout the research because of the provision for participants to speak for themselves and the involvement of HR managers and support agencies to provide their own evidence. Furthermore, there was an opportunity for the participants to highlight any additional areas that concerned them and to illustrate areas of significance in their lives that might not have been initially obvious during the interview.

Dingwall (1992) recommends that the researcher tests statements made in other papers and looks for contradictory evidence. The literature review for this research clearly set up the areas where studies contributed to relevant debates in the research. The empirical chapters systematically outlined the key themes in the literature, then presented the research findings to make an assessment as to whether they confirm, question or expand existing knowledge.

Using both Dingwall's (1992) and Lincoln and Guba's (1985) approaches, it can be concluded that this research is credible and valid. It is felt, however, that the research meets more of Dingwall's (1992) criteria than those of Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Ethical Approach

This penultimate section of the chapter addresses the ethical concerns associated with research and how they were overcome.

When conducting disability research it is essential that ethics and the sensitive nature of the experiences being recounted are closely considered. This research overcame these issues through sensitive questioning and a personal, sympathetic stance. In order to conduct the research it was necessary to produce a clear consent

form, (see Appendix III). Copies of this form were retained by myself and one was given to the participants. In addition, an ethics form was filed with the Ethics Committee at Cardiff University.

The diagram below illustrates the ethical procedures that took place to protect the participants.

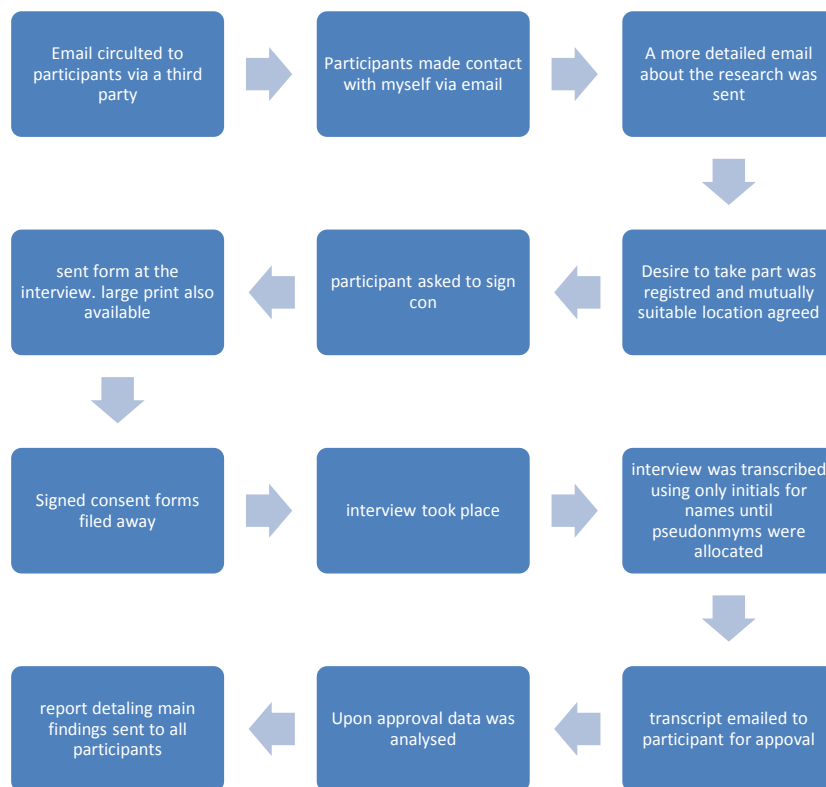


Figure 3-2: Ethical Process

A written report was sent to the participants after the data was analysed and notification of any publications arising from the thesis was passed to participants.

In terms of the ethical concerns from the participants, the graduates did not report any. I was granted permission to record all of the interviews. The matter was quite different, however, when interviewing HR managers and support organisations. Three HR managers declined permission to record the interview, because they were concerned about being quoted. In these instances copious handwritten notes were taken. In many cases, largely by the private sector organisations, I was required to sign their consent form, detailing what I would do with the interview information.

Furthermore, despite all the ethical assurances and clearance granted to my research, numerous HR managers still spoke “off the record” at the end of the interview. Naturally, this information has not been included in the thesis. I am aware of my legal obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 about how long I can preserve data and will take all necessary precautions.

Reciprocity and Future Considerations

This final brief section will describe what it felt like to do the research. I found the research enjoyable but at the same time challenging. I found that my own prejudices, of which I was unaware, were challenged. For example, when interviewing one male participant with mental health issues, alone in my office, I felt vulnerable. Yet I did not feel vulnerable when interviewing other male participants alone in my office, who did not have mental health issues. This emotion surprised me as I did not expect to feel this way; and I felt ashamed. I learnt a lot about other people’s impairments and how they affected their day-to-day lives and I was also inspired by some of my participants who have fought against the odds to overcome prejudice and challenges which are way beyond what my experience as a disabled person.

Future considerations that should be made if the research was conducted again, would be to conduct a pilot study. The pilot study would better prepare for expected findings. I would also have given myself a longer period of time to locate my sample, as I did not envisage that it would be so difficult, especially with the Jobcentre. It would have been useful, in addition to the interviews, to have conducted some focus groups with the disabled graduates; however I can see this would be logistically very difficult. A further useful study tool would have been to arrange for the graduates to meet up with the HR managers and support agencies, to have a mini ‘conference style’ session, where they could have brainstormed ideas to improve the position for disabled graduates and also how businesses could have benefited from greater diversity integration.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored issues surrounding the philosophy of social science research. After exploring the two ontologies, a case was made for the interpretivist ontology to be used. The key epistemologies of feminism and critical realism were explored and the case for borrowing the ethos of emancipation from feminism was defended. The case for creating rich contextual research was also put forward, by using elements of a critical realist approach.

The chapter then turned to explore the nature of the research. This was achieved using a tool by Saunders et al., (2009) 'the onion'. This depicts the research setting, the tools, time scale and unit of analysis for the research. Following on from these issues, attention was paid to the sample and how it was collected. The sample was broken down into its main components and details were provided about how each sample was collected and any relevant difficulties therein.

Penultimately, the chapter examined how the data was analysed. This section involved producing a detailed plan of the steps taken. This approach improves the validity of the research as it allows the research to be repeated, should others wish. The chapter then considered validity and ethics. The validity of the research was tested against two theories, that of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Dingwall (1992). In both instances the research was shown to be valid. The ethical approach was then outlined, which included the concerns that some groups of participants had about the data usage. The chapter concluded with a brief reflexive statement from myself about how the research affected me and how I would change aspects of the research, if I were to conduct the research again.

The next chapter is the first empirical chapter and explores the experiences of disabled graduates as they search for work - do they experience discrimination in the search for work and is the guaranteed interview scheme all it's 'cracked up' to be?

Chapter Four: Entering the Labour Market

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the experiences of disabled graduates as they look for work. In order to present the data in a concise and meaningful way, the chapter is based around three key themes that have emerged from the empirical inquiry: job search, recruitment/selection processes and disclosure. These themes follow the chronological order in which the graduate progresses into employment.

The findings are presented against literature drawn from numerous disciplines including, psychology, sociology, business, economics and geography. In order to provide context for the research, current knowledge is reviewed to highlight central debates. The chapter then turns to present the data which will test a number of arguments developed in the literature. This process will allow an assessment to be made as to whether my research questions or extends existing scholarship.

The Job Search

The first area to be discussed is the process of looking for work. After identifying a career track, graduates have to embark on the process of job search. This section examines current literature on the job search process and then explores the extent to which my data confirms, rejects or expands existing knowledge.

The literature review established that a vast body of academic research is concerned with methods of job searching and the effectiveness of formal versus informal recruitment and selection. According to Sagen et al., (1999) formal methods are generally considered to be job adverts and CV applications, while informal methods are word of mouth, networking and direct employer contact. Formal methods are usually supported by written procedures and are bureaucratic, standardizing the treatment of applicants. Various strands of the literature assess different tenets of

formal and informal job searching. Some research indicated that formal methods were better for job search (Try, 2005) while others indicated that formal methods would hinder diversity (Wilson, 2012). The questions the empirical research addresses are what job search methods did disabled graduates use, why and what are the outcomes?

Sources of Information

Firstly, what sources of information were used by graduates to find work? The graph below shows the distribution of methods used, with the majority of participants using more than one method.

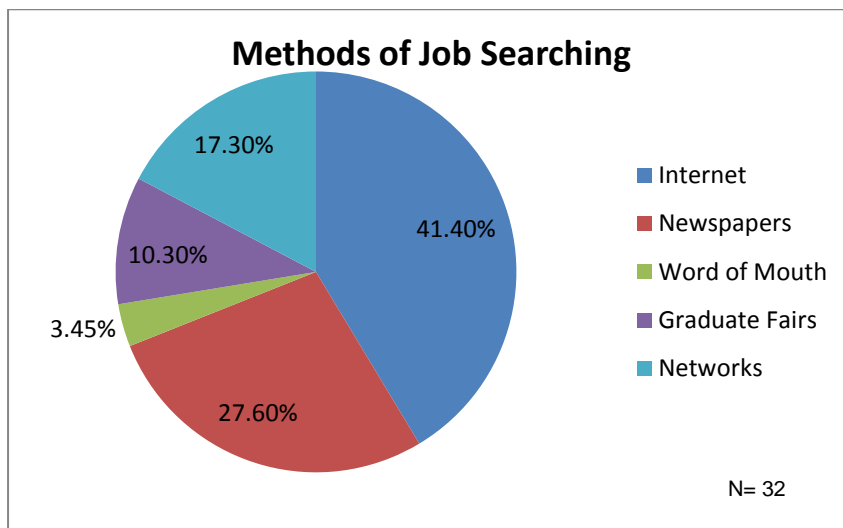


Figure 4-1: Methods of Job Searching

It is clear that the internet is most popular, highlighting the need for websites to be accessible; for example by incorporating adjustable font sizes and audio options (Prougestaporn and Channonman, 2010). The decline in the use of newspapers shows that the nature of information gathering has changed, with the internet considered superior to other methods for all job seekers (Feldman and Klaas, 2002; McKeown and Lindorff, 2011). Therefore, the pattern for sources of information about jobs would appear not distinctive for disabled graduates; they are using the same sources as non-disabled graduates.

Duration of Job Search

This next subsection explores the length of time it took participants to secure jobs, either of graduate-level or otherwise. Academic research shows that it can take between three and five years to secure graduate level work (Purcell et al., 2005, Purcell et al., 2004) and most graduates are unaware of the length of time it will take to secure work (McKeown and Lindorff, 2011). Research shows that graduates are often optimistic about their labour market opportunities (Elias and Purcell, 2004a; McKeown and Lindorff, 2011, Purcell, 1999) and graduates expect to gain meaningful employment, on graduation. Is this the same situation for disabled graduates?

After graduation all of the participants engaged in job searching. However, they were not all successful in securing a job and those that did had differing lengths of search. Many reported long searches, lasting years; this was not just to find graduate level employment, but any employment at all:

I spent the first year rather fruitlessly job searching... graduate jobs are hard to come by if you have a disability.

JOE

I had been trying to get a job after I graduated with my degree for about two years, without any luck. I had always managed to get interviews because I had quite a good CV, but whenever I got to the interviews and the graduate training centres I would always do well on the group activities and tasks but when it came to tests or interviews that was when my disability really started to show and I spent two years not getting any luck with anything.

KEITH

Joe, who was blind and deaf received a lot of stigma while looking for work. He joked at one point during the interview that he would be relegated to being a piano tuner or stocking shelves, which showed Joe's positive and light-hearted attitude to his predicament. Keith had a slightly longer search period than Joe and received more rejections. These rejections negatively impacted him and he felt disheartened as a result.

It is not possible, nor useful, to put a figure on the average length of job search. What was more pertinent to the participants was the experience of looking for work. Many reported feeling disheartened by the repeated rejections and many felt that their rejections were a result of discrimination in the selection process.

Participants report being desperate to get any work that they can and this meant applying for hundreds of jobs, and in some cases, jobs of any level and any occupation.

I didn't get very many at all. I started thinking to myself every morning not: 'I'll check my email' but 'I'll check my rejections' because that was more often than not what I got. So I didn't have any focus, I applied for just about anything.

DUNCAN

"I spent about 3 months looking and trying to get relevant jobs to my degree, which was incredibly difficult... I then had a year out of work altogether, I applied for lots of different jobs. I probably applied for about 200 and didn't get any of them for various reasons.

EMMA

Sally talks about how she felt unemployable and that no one would want to take her on.

I honest to God thought I was unemployable; I couldn't see anybody giving me work... I was surrounded by my mates who were already in careers by that point and I thought that my vision impairment made me useless and I just could not see how I would cope getting to work, being at work, doing a job and I thought I was unemployable. Fear of failure I guess.

SALLY

The protracted job search period had negative impacts on the participants. The data shows that the majority of participants were anxious when applying for jobs, as they were not confident that they would be able to secure work. They were anxious because repeated rejections had reduced their confidence.

Summary

Notably a departure with current literature emerges in relation to disabled graduates' expectations of the labour market. Literature shows that graduates are, initially, confident in the labour market (Purcell et al. 2004); in contrast the evidence shows

the disabled graduates are not confident. The reason behind the participants' caution was the fear of discrimination and lack of self-confidence. It is reasonable to assume that those graduates who do not have impairments would therefore not be exposed to these self-doubts related to impairment but are likely to also be both anxious and cautious about the transition to work for other reasons. Therefore, it can be said that entering the world of work is difficult for many people but graduates with an impairment may have extra difficulties and the manner in which they cope with these difficulties is somewhat dependant on their outlook.

Desired Job Characteristics

The next subsection explores the type of work, not the skill level, the participants were seeking. Anybody looking for a job will have a set of characteristics that will have attracted them to a job advert. In terms of current research, research shows that career development opportunities are very important for graduates (Perryman, 2002). The majority of graduates want a job that provides good career progression (Perryman, 2002). The principal concern for graduates is that they secure work that is exactly what they want – graduate level (Purcell et al., 2005, Graduate Prospects, 2010). One caveat is that mature graduates are more likely to want to engage in socially useful work (Purcell et al., 2007).

Current evidence for disabled people shows that they are very realistic about the types of jobs they would apply for. One piece of research linked this behaviour to disabled people becoming experts at avoiding situations where they would be disadvantaged (Newton et al., 2007). For example if a disabled person perceived they would be discriminated against in a particular industry or it would be harder to make adjustments in that industry, they would avoid applying. What therefore do disabled graduates look for in a job? Does this coincide with what non-disabled graduates look for and why?

During the research the participants were questioned about what was important to them in a job and what they looked for when they were evaluating if they wanted to

apply for a job. The concerns that arose were work hours, location, interesting work and career progression.

Nine participants wanted flexible working hours: this was one of the first things they would look for when evaluating whether to apply for a job. Flexible work hours come in different forms, there is flexitime, whereby employees have to be present for core hours only, and the remainder of the hours can be carried out at their discretion (Noon and Blyton, 1997). Another type is zero hour contracts or reduced hours; these are most useful when the employer needs to vary staffing to customer demand but can also be useful for employees (Noon and Blyton, 1997). The sample reflected these two dimensions, some wanted flexible work hours (Paul, Sandra, David, Vincent) while others wanted reduced hours (Dot, Nancy, Amelia, Jessica and Sophie).

Sandra is an example of the participants who wanted flexitime. Sandra applied to the Civil Service because it offered flexible working as standard, a scheme she has found difficult to locate elsewhere:

The Civil Service's attitude to part time and flexible working basically gave me a chance, when no one else would, and allows me to use the abilities I have... with flexible working, I can do a really long day with travel when needed and have the next day off to recover. Over the month I will work my contracted hours. This works for me, and it works for them. I have been in post now for over four years and have never taken a day off sick.

SANDRA

Sandra's experience shows how working flexibly allows the employer to get the best out of their employees and benefits both parties. Vincent also wants to work flexibly, where he can choose his start and end time and have time off for appointments while working full time:

...if I could find a job that was suitable and an employer that was flexible enough I would be more than happy to work fulltime.

VINCENT

Sandra was able to secure her flexible hours and has increased her hours as her impairment has improved. Vincent was talking hypothetically about working hours as he is currently unemployed. David did have flexible working hours, but only because of the nature of his researcher position. He was not required to be in work at any particular time and could work from home. This point shows that two out of the three who wanted flexible working received their requirements but by different means – homeworking and flexitime.

The second dimension of work hours was reduced hours. Dot wanted reduced hours so that she could manage her impairment and continue working. This is the same for Amelia, who was able to schedule her music students around when she was well in the day and only take as many students as she felt able. Naturally this ability was facilitated by her self-employment. Sophie also wanted reduced hours to negotiate her impairment and work and was in a battle with her employer over work hours and reallocation of work. Nancy, on the other hand only wanted to work part time.

A second pertinent issue for disabled graduates when evaluating prospective jobs was geographical mobility. In the initial stages of a graduates' career there is a high degree of geographical mobility (Purcell et al., 2005). London and the South East are the most popular destinations for graduates to work (Elias and Purcell, 2004a, Hesketh, 2010). In terms of disabled graduates, disabled graduates who are unable to relocate to London or the South East are at a disadvantage in the labour market (Equality Challenge Unit, 2008). Did the participants show a preference for a particular region and was geographical mobility an issue for participants and why?

The empirical research indicates that job location was very important to participants. This was mainly due to the huge upheaval required to move support packages of care or medical treatment to locate to a new area. Jessica, who has failed to gain

employment, which she believes is partly due to her inability to move to London, is unable to move due to her large care package:

I am restricted by distances. I did think of London but I am not sure whether I would be able to cope with both the daily five-hour commute and the work. I am very geographically limited.

JESSICA

Joanna is in a similar situation, she is unable to move to an area where her support needs are unmet. She feels that in the academic sector this is a particular hindrance:

We [disabled academics] are not as mobile as other academics; for example I can only get a job in X or Y because that is where my access needs are met; support setup with regard to medicine and that. Anyone else can go anywhere, they can get up early and get the train and that. That is where I'm going to struggle and I'm just going to have to deal with it.

JOANNA

During interviews with disability organisations and a Disability Employment Advisor the issue of geographical immobility arose. Sarah, a representative from a disability organisation stated that employers need to realise that although disabled graduates may not have attended Oxbridge they may still be of high calibre and could not attend Oxbridge because of its location. The Disability Employment Advisor reported that his clients cannot travel far to work and this severely limits their job prospects.

Now that it has been shown that geographical location is important to some graduates, it is important to understand why. Those graduates for whom it is important are those who have high level care needs, or the most severe impairments. The only two of the graduates who said they would move to any location to work are Tom and Rose. Both Tom and Rose have dyslexia which is relatively easily catered for. Furthermore, Rose and Tom were not sure that their dyslexia actually impaired them in employment. This finding suggests that the more severe is an impairment, the more likely it is to impact on a person's ability to relocate for work.

The third most important area for the participants was that their work was interesting, work which made them feel they were contributing to society. What constituted 'interesting' work differed among the sample but mainly focused on using past experiences of discrimination/difficulties to help others in similar situations. As a consequence many of those who were employed were working in the disability sector.

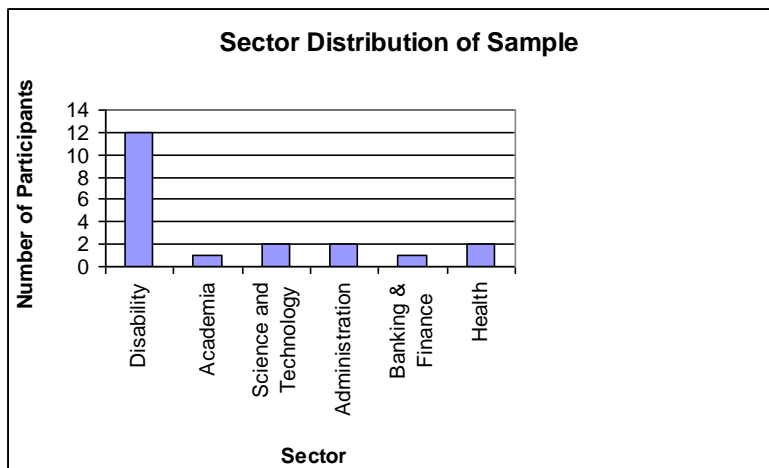


Figure 4-2 Sector Distribution of the Sample

Some were involved in user-led organisations, others in charities and some as equality advisors. As discussed in chapter four this could be a sample bias but is nevertheless an insight. The bias (12 from disability roles versus eight from non-disability roles) exists because more people from disability organisations responded to the request for interviewees. The bias does give insight into the experience in a disability organisation however the results are less likely to be generalisable to wider organisations.

Nancy wanted work that was purposeful and Rose wanted to combine this with 'giving back' to society.

I like to have a job that is interesting and purposeful and meaningful.

NANCY

I would look for the feeling that I am contributing to society...

ROSE

Neither Rose nor Nancy were in positions they felt met their desired criteria. While Rose was actively likely to change jobs in the future, Nancy has resigned herself to staying where she is. Nancy was at the end of her career, in comparison to Rose who was at the start of her career.

When the participants were asked why they worked in their sector, many responded that the disability sector was more open, offered a chance to help improve the situation for others and they felt better about asking for adjustments.

I felt that students... it's difficult to put into words... I felt that they were more prepared to open up about things they might need. They felt I might have a better understanding of the problems they were having. I mean, rightly or wrongly, very occasionally, if I had a student who had similar difficulties to my own I would say to them 'well obviously some of those difficulties are things I am experiencing as well and I found that X, Y and Z work so why don't we try that'..... I just felt sometimes in those instances they were more willing to listen to my suggestions and advice about what they might be able to do.

PAM

One additional benefit of working in a disability organisation is that it is ok to ask for things you need. You don't have to worry that people will think you can't do your job or you are weak.

LISA

Is it possible to explain why some people wanted to work in the disability sector and engage in work that gave back to society and others were not motivated by this factor? All of the participants who worked in the disability sector had experienced some form of discrimination themselves, either in work or in personal life. They were motivated to pass on what they had learnt from this experience. Those participants with mental health conditions also found it easier to work in the disability sector because they perceived mental health was better understood in that field.

Summary

It would appear that the evidence suggests that flexible working is easier for the participants to achieve than reduced hours. In terms of desired job characteristics, working time was not cited as an important characteristic for generic graduates (Perryman, 2002). In comparison this data suggests that working time is a central concern to disabled graduates either in terms of flexible working or reduced hours. This finding reflects previous research that states there are connections between individual attitudes and behaviour and organisational level outcomes and flexible working is likely to improve organisational performance (Curral et al., 2005). The reasons for this finding are to either allow the participants to balance their impairment alongside work or because they only want to work part-time.

The data suggests that geographical mobility is very important to disabled graduates, but this is not an issue that is found to be pertinent in the general graduate literature. Non-disabled graduates are highly mobile early in their careers (Purcell et al 2005) yet disabled graduates appear to be less mobile. The reason they are not mobile points to a distinct feature of their experience. Their impairment means they cannot relocate easily. The literature shows that those who are not geographically mobile will be hindered in the labour market (ECU, 2008). This point could go some way to explain why disabled graduates have a higher unemployment rate than their non-disabled counterparts.

While some studies showed that generic graduates want to work in meaningful jobs, it was mainly the older graduates who wanted a job where they gave something back (Purcell et al., 2007). My research, therefore, adds another minority group experience to this literature. Disabled graduates, like mature graduates could therefore be more likely to seek work that is socially beneficial and gives back to society.

Recruitment and Selection

There is no one unified approach to recruitment and selection. Recruitment involves encouraging people to apply for a vacancy and selection concerns choosing the most suitable candidate from those who have applied. For selection purposes employers can use multiple methods, ranging from a simple interview to a battery of tests in an assessment centre. The most popular method is, however, an interview, either as a stand-alone tool or as part of an assessment centre (Keenan, 1995).

A number of factors affect the methods of recruitment and selection used by employers. There is now a move towards more cost effective and formal measures of recruitment (Branine, 2008, Lievens et al., 2002), which is particularly pertinent because of the rise in the number of graduate level applications. Organisational size also affects recruitment methods; larger firms usually have more established methods of selection (Stewart and Knowles, 2000). These forms of selection, based upon an assessment centre are often regarded as more rigorous and cost effective (Branine, 2008; Garavan and Morley, 1997). No research on the effect of assessment centres upon disabled graduates has been located.

Some research has evaluated the differences in the fairness of different recruitment and selection methods. One study shows that work sample tests were considered to be the most fair (Bertolino and Steiner, 2007). Questions can be asked, therefore, about the type of selection procedures experienced by the participants, which were considered most fair and why.

What type of application procedures, therefore, did the participants experience, formal or informal? Table 4.1 depicts the type of application process and the outcome experienced by participants. Only the two most recent employments are considered. Additionally disability disclosure is included in the table, an issue which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Table 4-1 Recruitment and Selection Patterns in the Sample

Participant	Position	Disclose ?	Formal	Informal	Mixture	Rationale	Outcome
Joanna	Ph.D	Yes			✓	She talked to people who would know about academia. Then applied formally for funding.	✓
	Graduate Role in Science	No	✓			The only way to access the job.	✓
Duncan	Labatory technician	No		✓		He heard about the job through word of mouth and then spoke to the employer directly	✓
Rose	Organisational Psychologist	No		✓		Through personal contacts.	✓
Tom	Graduate Training Scheme	Sometimes	✓			Applied to numerous GTS and only disclosed on the ones that offered a guaranteed interview.	✓
David	Researcher	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
	Researcher	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
Mary	Police Role	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job	✗
Sandra	Information Officer	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job	✗
	Disability Advisor	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
Phillip	Labatory Technician	No	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓

Sophie	Nurse	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
Sally	Disability Officer	Yes			✓	Contacted the employers first, then formal.	✓
Rebecca	Voluntary Organisation Officer	Yes		✓		Found the role through working voluntarily for the organisation then being made a paid, permanent member of staff.	✓
Paul	Council Position	Yes			✓	Contacted the organisation to discuss his needs then applied formally.	✗
Charles	Special Needs Teacher	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✗
	Special Needs Teacher	Yes		✓		He volunteered then the employer took him on after volunteering.	✓
Val	Office Assistant	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
Dot	Insurance Officer	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
	Teacher	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
Hayley	TU officer	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
	Civil Servant	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
Emma	Teacher	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✗
	Policy Officer	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓

Lisa	Policy Officer	Yes		✓		She knew the people who were offering the job and contacted them directly about working for them.	✓
	Graduate Training Scheme (disability)	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
Pam	Disability Officer	Yes		✓		Through professional and personal contacts.	✓
	Social Workers	Yes			✓	Spoke to the employer first then applied formally.	✗
Claire	Graduate Training Scheme	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
	Information Officer	Yes		✓		She knew the people she was going to work with, on this basis they employed her.	✓
Keith	Fitness Instructor	Yes		✓		He used the gym himself and from that the employers hired him.	✓
	Graduate Training Scheme	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✗
Joe	Graduate Training Scheme (disability related)	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✓
	Graduate Training Scheme (mainstream)	Yes	✓			The only way to apply for the job.	✗

Table 4.1 shows that the sample used formal methods of job searching most frequently. The table indicates that the disabled graduates used formal methods for career type jobs. In contrast, for casual work, the table suggests more informal methods were used. Given that research shows that all graduates take approximately three to five years to find graduate level employment (Purcell et al, 2005; Teichler, 2007), graduates could be overly reliant on informal methods to access their non-career jobs.

In some cases the participants did not have a choice of recruitment method. Dot, for example entered the teaching profession which has a standardized formal entry process. This finding reflects literature that reports that recruitment methods have become more formalised over time. From the table it is clear that the most successful way of applying for a job was the informal method. Those who used informal methods were more likely to be successful in securing work.

Summary

These results point to an aspect of variation, the profession the graduate entered because some professions only had one method of entry.

Networks

In relation to informal recruitment methods, namely the use of networks, did the sample use different types of network to non-disabled graduates? The data clearly shows that eight from the sample gained their employment through network contacts, either personal or professional:

A friend of mine who was doing a PhD made me aware of the job. It didn't really affect him but it affected some of his colleagues. As soon as I found out who to talk to, I came down to the university and found the professor and I talked to him and they were impressed by my enthusiasm and said they would give me a morning trial.

DUNCAN

The job at Y sort of came through sources that I know. My ex line manager is also a chair of X and I also know the CEO... We met at a reunion, I had heard a rumour that there was this vacancy through my line manager and she enquired about if they were doing anything about it; around this time I also met X in this reunion and we got talking and it sort of went from there.

LISA

All eight participants were successful in their applications that arose out of 'networked contacts'. Each position gained was an appropriate graduate level position, with the exception of Duncan, who was applying his knowledge of Physics. This finding is significant because the participants were able to access jobs that were of a suitable skill level through networks. Accessing suitably skilled work was something the participants were struggling with via other methods, shown by the rejections they talked about. What type of networks, therefore, were the participants using? In general it would seem, with the exception of Lisa, the participants were using either professional or personal networks to access jobs. It was only Lisa who was using a disability related network to access a job.

To distinguish the particular characteristics that make disabled graduates distinct from other minority job seekers, the research sought to identify similarities in the stories of those who were successfully employed through networks. The eight participants who gained meaningful employment through networks all gained graduate level employment in fields related to disability and equality, with the exception of Duncan. It could be suggested therefore, that as a result of their personal experiences with disability, the participants had available social capital to exploit. Through the assertive nature of their personalities, they were able to secure jobs through this channel.

Summary

The data indicates here that the disabled graduate experience is not that different to non-disabled graduates in terms of the type of networks used. However, there is a twist to the tale; the difference lies in the composition of the networks. The disabled

graduates' networks were made up of family and friends but also others with disabilities, some working in key organisations. It was for this reason they were able to secure work in the disability field, through personal contacts. Therefore, while the broad thrust of the research shows that disabled graduates, like non-disabled graduates use networks to locate work, the data shows that the composition of those networks is different. Furthermore, the composition of the networks reflects the graduates' disability. This research does question earlier research that found that networks resulted in lower quality jobs for graduates (Mahuteau and Junankar, 2008; Try, 2005; Saks and Ashforth, 2000). This is another point which shows the disabled graduate experience is distinct from that of other graduates. To overcome these obstacles the research indicates that disabled graduates use networks and target job search at special types of employer likely to be receptive to them – disability organisations. It would appear this type of employment is a coping strategy until mainstream employment catches up with the needs of disabled people.

Shortcomings of Standard Selection Processes

The data indicates that, in general, participants did not feel that standard selection processes allowed them to showcase their skills, or explain their story. CVs and application forms were not generally favoured. Rebecca was particularly anxious about the gap on her CV, which was easily explainable in person, but she felt on paper it would be perceived negatively.

...now I am facing my biggest challenge as I have a gap in my CV and I have to try and explain it...it looks worse on paper than it is.

REBECCA

Rebecca felt that if she could just get into an interview then she would be able to explain the gap and it would not be viewed negatively by employers. Overcoming the first hurdle and into the interview was Rebecca's main concern. Several participants followed their concerns about interviews and CVs with a suggestion of how they could be better assessed for work. The participants wanted some sort of trial process. This data suggests that the participants are advocating a type of work sampling as their preferred method of selection. The DEA who was interviewed also

reported that his clients who had a form of work trial, performed better than in a traditional selection process and often secured employment this way.

The disabled people who I manage to get onto some kind of work trial scheme are the ones who are more likely to be kept on by that employer or use the experience to get work elsewhere.

ALAN, DEA.

Duncan had first-hand experience of this type of job trial/work sampling. Duncan was contacting friends for information about available jobs. One friend told him about a vacancy at a university and said the manager was very nice. Duncan contacted the manager and from talking to him found that he too had difficulties getting a job because of stigma. As a result, Duncan could explain his skills to the employer and he was allowed a work trial, to showcase his skills.

But I went through a rather unusual process for that...an unusual interview. It wasn't really an interview it was a trial. I sort of feel it's little wonder that I got the job because I was actually able to show my hands on skills rather than being asked quite specific questions that I did not know the answers to... I definitely feel that the nature of my recruitment was very key to my success.

DUNCAN

Demonstrating hands-on skills was also central to Keith's success, who was applying to work in a gym, as a fitness instructor:

I went along and the manager who interviewed me had himself been through an accident, so he was able to look past my accident and he said: 'OK I can see you have qualifications' and he took me into the gym and asked me to do an induction and afterwards he said it was one of the best inductions he had ever had and so the next day he offered me the job.

KEITH

As a result of Keith's accident, initially he had very robotic movements. He felt these movements were deterring employers from hiring him. Through the hands-on job trial he was able to demonstrate his skill and show that whether he had robotic movements or not, he could still be a good gym instructor. In a similar vein, Joanna feels that she needs to be able to show her skills to secure a position in a Russell Group university:

...so I would have to be something extra, extra special to be taken on. That is why I've worked so hard in my thesis to publish so much. It's my way of proving what I'm capable of.

JOANNA

Joanna felt that employers would overcome their misconceptions if they could see her skills in action. Joanna's career plan was to publish and use these publications as a tool to prove to employers they should hire her.

Due to the popularity of work trials among the participants, managers were questioned about the possibility of job trials. The HR managers gave varying responses. Three of the 16 managers felt that it was a good idea and could potentially look into operationalizing work trials.

We do not currently have a job trial scheme, but we do have summer internships. I suppose these could be used as a form of job trialling. Students do usually get a job at the end of it

HR MANAGER 3

All of the other managers had concerns about how a job trial would work, especially given the huge amounts of applications they receive per position.

It is a good idea, but how would we whittle the applicants down?

HR MANAGER 5

Despite budgetary concerns, two CSOs were increasing their use of work trials to help disabled people find employment. One scheme is run by SCOPE who employ graduates in large organisations to see how they cope. Key contact personnel are available to support the disabled graduates with any problems. SCOPE's scheme is similar to the approach taken by the Jobcentre, where the Work-Prep scheme gave disabled people a chance to show their skills:

I find my clients do not come over well in their interview. If they can be given an extended assessment over weeks or days, they do better. That was the beauty of the work prep scheme where a DEA put someone on a placement and the client would be assessed doing the role.

ALAN, DEA

Due to financial constraints, this JCP scheme is no longer in place.

What this evidence shows is that the majority of disabled graduates in the sample were concerned about the use of conventional selection techniques – CVs and interviews – because they felt that these methods work against them; they favoured trials or tests that allowed them to demonstrate skills and aptitudes that may be missed through reliance on conventional methods. Each of these participants illustrates that a job trial was beneficial in gaining employment, which reflects earlier research by Bertolino and Steiner (2007) which showed work sampling was a good method of recruiting new employees.

Summary

These findings are interesting because other literature shows that formal selection methods are less discriminatory (Moss and Tilly, 2003). What the disabled graduates are highlighting is that these formal processes do not work for them. The candidates wanted to tell their story and felt a flexible system would facilitate this. Part of the desire for flexibility is to show employers what they can do, to convince the employer to “*take a risk*” on them. These key points make the disabled graduate experience in this sample different to that of non-disabled graduates reported in the literature. This uniqueness and variation could be because disability is not easily explained on an application form and non-disabled graduates do not have to try and explain such complexities.

The responses from the HR managers echo earlier research that they can be inflexible in supporting disabled people in work (Cunningham et al., 2004). Furthermore the fact that HR managers are concerned about cost and volume of applications reflects research which shows equality and diversity can take second place to financial concerns (Dickens, 1999).

Assessment Centres

An assessment centre is usually mandatory for graduate training schemes. In the sample there were only a small number of participants who applied for graduate training schemes and an even smaller number who were selected for an assessment centre. As a result little data about assessment centres was generated. The comments that were made were mainly from participants with dyslexia, who found psychometric testing difficult; for example Keith and Rose.

It was always when they did psychometric testing, that is where I would struggle.

KEITH

Keith was not successful at an assessment centre and became a gym instructor, as discussed earlier. Rose persevered with the assessment centre process and secured work in a large international organisation. She reported that the psychometric testing was “*almost unfair*” because she felt her dyslexia meant she did “*not stand a chance*”.

A more dominant finding was that the secretive nature of assessment centre tasks meant that there was ambiguity about what reasonable adjustments would be needed. The participants did not know in advance what tests they would be given so could not request necessary adjustments. Therefore, the applicant was relying on HR to guess what adjustments would be necessary. This problem is summarised by Lisa:

If they have assessments or test with them then perhaps ‘yes’. Sometimes it is very difficult because half the time they do not know what the test is, or they do but it is an unseen thing, so they can’t give too much away, so it is one of those things, that if you don’t really know what it is about it is very hard to ask things.

LISA

It is crucial for applicants to have the necessary adjustments to enable them to perform to the best of their ability.

All of the training materials were provided in Braille. There were a number of different tasks throughout the day: we had to do a presentation and they offered me a reasonable adjustment of extra time but I didn’t think I needed it for the presentation.

JOE

Joe, who has two sensory impairments needed assessment material provided in Braille, which allowed him to complete tasks successfully (For further discussion on reasonable adjustments see chapter 8).

Summary

In summary the data on assessment centres indicates a distinctive experience for disabled graduates, however this finding is cautionary due to the sparse nature of data generated. Literature shows that formal recruitment methods, of which assessment centres are a part, improve equality outcomes (Brown and Hesketh, 2004). What the data from this thesis indicates is that for disabled graduates assessment centres may not be fair because the disabled graduates do not receive the necessary adjustments. Failing to receive the necessary adjustments means that disabled graduates are unlikely to perform to the best of their ability. The data also supports research which shows that disabled people are reliant on managers' knowledge of their condition to support their needs and this is unsatisfactory (James et al., 2002).

This evidence shows that the selection methods the graduates encounter have considerable wider implications. A key finding from the research is that it would appear more structured selection methods may themselves have serious shortcomings and unseen biases. There is evidence for other minorities that formal methods that seek to assess capability in a structured way are less discriminatory (Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Moss and Tilly, 2003). What this thesis indicates is that for disabled graduates these formal methods can be problematic. The use of job trials could be considered a formal method of selection and in this respect the research support improved equality outcomes from formal methods. Simultaneously they also point to the problematic nature of formal methods for disabled applicants.

Use of Placements

The data shows that another important way of obtaining a job was through placements. Students who undertake a placement find that their career opportunities

on graduation are favourable and they are more likely to enter graduate level occupations than graduates who have not undertaken placements (Purcell et al., 2005). In this thesis, therefore, it was important to ascertain if disabled graduates had placements and if placements positively affected their job search. Five participants went on placements either during their Bachelor's or Master's degree. Firstly, those who went on placement found it useful in getting a job after graduation. Emma and Paul secured employment with the same employer with whom they were placed and had a positive experience:

I ended up – originally it was going to be a 3 week placement, it ended up 3.5 years working for an MP directly...

PAUL

Three of the sample used their placements to gain knowledge of their chosen industry. Hayley and Rebecca went on placement and as a direct result of their placements they decided that their chosen industry was not suitable because their industry could not cater for their impairment effects; they would be likely to experience discrimination and therefore chose a different career path. This finding is analogous to those from research on women's job search, which indicates that women choose occupations where they are least likely to face opposition, creating occupational segregation (Colgan and Ledwith, 2002) and also reflects research by Netwon et al., (2007) that disabled people enter jobs where they will face less discrimination.

I did some work experience between my third and fourth year... I got an insight into what it would be like to work in industry... so I got an idea of the kind of work that goes on there and I knew I wouldn't be happy doing that.

HAYLEY

Sally found her placement very useful as it allowed her to see how she could negotiate her environment and she gained the confidence to apply for a permanent position in the same industry. Sally went on placement in a school as a careers advisor. During this placement she was able to 'test the waters' to see what adjustments she would need. In addition she was able to 'practice' talking to colleagues about her impairment, which gave her confidence when she started her first job. These are the types of benefits that made some of the sample wish they had the chance to go on placement during their degree course.

Summary

These results support earlier research which shows graduates who have had a work placement are more employable and many secure employment with their placement employers (Mason, 2001). It is suggested, therefore, that placements have similar benefits for disabled graduates as their non-disabled peers. One caveat is that the type of benefits derived is likely to be distinct to disabled graduates. This distinction is because the disabled graduates need to test out areas that non-disabled graduates are unlikely to encounter. Finding out that you need to change your career path because of lack of provision, for example, is likely to only be applicable to disabled graduates. These findings extend current knowledge regarding the value of placements and should encourage career services to engage further with disabled students to facilitate placement opportunities.

Disclosure

The literature review briefly considered issues around disclosure and highlighted questions to be addressed in the research. The questions are; who discloses their disability and why? How did disclosing make them feel and did disclosure have a negative impact?

An employee needs to decide whether to disclose their disability to their employer. If the employee decides to disclose then they need to decide when and how to disclose. Some participants believe that disclosure should be left until a job has been secured, while others prefer pre interview disclosure. The HR managers who had a responsibility for equality and diversity and the Jobcentre personnel advised against disclosing on application. This point is interesting given that legally disclosure should not prejudice an application.

I do not advise clients to disclose on an application form unless they have to... it just makes things easier... a good time to disclose is during an interview, when you can tell your story.

ALAN, DEA

Table 4.1 showed that the majority of the sample declared their disability on application forms. Most participants were anxious about disclosure with only one participant not anticipating any problems from disclosing. Only Rebecca and Beth received any advice about when to disclose. Both women received this advice through third-sector organisation work-based programmes and were advised not to disclose until they absolutely had to.

Jessica, a wheelchair user, does not anticipate problems from disclosure in her chosen career.

... no I hadn't thought about it too much. Inwardly, I did feel that my disability got in the way when attending interviews (not for training contracts but for other positions).

JESSICA

It is interesting that Jessica did not anticipate any problems from disclosure, given that she had the most severe impairment in the sample. Jessica was applying to law firms and therefore felt that her prospective employers would be well versed in their legal obligations. In contrast Lucy was so concerned about potential discrimination and disclosure issues that she chose an alternative employment route to minimise potential problems.

I went down that avenue then instead of thinking about getting a job. I had thought about how I could use my qualification to get work but it left me a bit negative really because I think they might see the disability before they see the qualification. If I asked if I could work from home three days a week it could all bring up barriers before they even offer you the job, so it's not something I've tended to pursue; I've gone down the self-employment route instead.

LUCY

While Lucy's strategy was to exit traditional employment, Paul and Sophie take a more forthright approach believing that it is their responsibility to disclose.

Yes I do [disclose] for the simple reason it would be stupid not too. It can also give you the strength to turn around and bite them if they don't take it on board. You can't turn around against someone under legislation if you haven't done your own bit. Rights are balanced against taking responsibilities and I take my responsibilities seriously

PAUL

Paul is an assertive character by nature and no doubt this has affected his approach to disability issues. Sophie shares Paul's pragmatic and principled approach:

...so I put down epilepsy because a) I have a duty of care to the people that I am with... so I put it down just to cover myself legally.

SOPHIE

Other tactics noted were participants reclaiming power for themselves and choosing when to disclose to an employer, echoing 'information control' (Goffman, 1963). The following participants decided to use their power to 'test' employers. Emma, a wheelchair user decided to disclose her disability at different points in different applications. Claire also chose not to disclose her sensory impairment on certain applications and it was these applications which were most successful.

I phoned a few up to see if they had wheelchair access, so I did a mixture of telling them before I applied, telling them in the application and also just before an interview, because obviously you have to make sure you can get in and I had a mixture of reactions...

EMMA

for jobs and I put that I was deaf I didn't get anything and then I didn't put down I was deaf and I got an interview but I couldn't hear! It was a difficult situation to be in. If I got an interview for not saying that I was deaf, I knew it was because I was deaf that I didn't get in, exactly the same job exactly the same organization even!

CLAIRE

There are indications from the data that impairment type affects disclosure. The data shows that participants with mental health impairments had the most problems with disclosure. Peter feels that the stigma surrounding his condition means he would be unlikely to secure employment and would rather gloss over his impairment:

... probably not no; probably because of the stigma issue, ...as much as I like to be honest about it, say the stigma side of things more than anything, its people's misconceptions and the way they think of mental health issues generally isn't the best. So if I could get around admitting that there had been problems if there was a way that I could get around it and not mention it than I probably wouldn't mention it.

PETER

I am now trying to get back into work. But prior to that I worked as an EFL teacher and I have worked as speech therapy assistant as well and various other jobs, now I am facing my biggest challenge as I have a gap in my CV and I have to try and explain it... I am actually trying to apply to work in MH, sort of, voluntary sector which makes it a bit more sort of ok because I can use it as "life experience" but I am still not sure if disclosure is ok, I'm in a very odd position that I have to explain but I am not sure explaining is the thing that doesn't get me the job.

REBECCA

Rebecca feels the same way about her mental health impairment.

The visibility of an impairment also affects how willing the participants were to disclose. Georgia experienced a mental health impairment in her younger days, which has resolved but she has developed a visible physical impairment. This transition from an invisible to a visible impairment has dramatically changed how she approaches disclosure. Georgia reports that she is no longer able to 'hide' her impairment. Joanna also experienced poor mental health in previous years and she was far less willing to disclose her mental health impairment in comparison to her visible physical disability, which she is open about.

So I think I have been fairly open about my disability [Physical, visible], but back in the early days it don't remember it being on the forms; but if it had been on the forms I'm sure I would have said something...I had a breakdown and I had to be quite careful about how I hid that, if you know what I mean: because mental health doesn't always go down too well, so you kind of fudge the issue. You never quite lie, but sometimes you don't need to tell people stuff.

JOANNA

[I had]... mental health problems and invisible conditions when I was younger, and I had been very careful when to disclose those but now I was going to work in a wheelchair and I was aware it was going to be very difficult to get around. So I answered the questions on the application form about it. There was an EO form which they said was detached from the form, which it did seem to be because they rang me from HR to ask if I needed any adjustments and then they asked permission to report that back to interviewers...

GEORGIA

The participants who chose not to disclose early-on, experienced problems in work later. Duncan did not want to focus on his learning impairment, as he felt it was a 'minor disability'.

I didn't want to bring it up and make a big fuss about it in the beginning. I thought I would wait and see how things went because I didn't want to make a fuss about it if it wasn't a problem and in the end it turned out to be.

DUNCAN

For Duncan this approach backfired. Failing to disclose resulted in his ability to perform his job being called into question.

Irrespective of type or visibility of impairment, most participants felt that the tick-box on the majority of application forms was insufficient to inform employers of their impairment. The participants preferred a section where they could write about their impairment and give an employer additional information.

But on these forms is just a box to tick and doesn't give you much room to elaborate on that and it still puts a lot of people off disclosing.

SALLY

The participants wanted more space to tell an employer about their disability on an application form because they felt this information would help the employer make informed decisions. The participants attributed this to 'wanting to tell their story', a theme discussed above in the recruitment and selection section.

Summary

In summary, the data has shown that participants are unsure when to disclose and are often advised against doing so by third-party organisations, such as the Jobcentre Plus. The majority of literature focuses on motives for disclosure and little attention is paid to when to disclose and whether one should. It is proposed, therefore, that additional knowledge has been added in this area. Current research, discussed earlier, reported that invisible disabilities can be hidden and my research supports this finding, as sometimes those with invisible disabilities tried to hide their impairments. The findings also echo research by Lucas (2008), Jans (2012) and Vickers (1997) that the nature of a person's impairment and the likelihood they will need adjustments will affect whether a person discloses. Finally participants with mental health difficulties had the most concerns surrounding disclosure: this is not surprising given that it is well established that those with poor mental health experience the greatest amount of discrimination (Riddell et al., 2002). These results indicate that type and visibility are key sources of variation in the disabled graduates' experiences.

Guaranteed Interviews

Positive action is allowed in the Equality Act 2010 and was allowed also in the Disability Discrimination Act. One form of positive action is the guaranteed interview scheme, which is a voluntary scheme that organisations join where they interview every disabled candidate that meets minimum criteria (DWP, 2012). The purpose of this scheme is that it gives disabled people the opportunity to meet employers to eradicate any misconceptions. This scheme is usually only operated by public sector

employers, but other employers which are members of the 'Two Ticks' scheme sometimes opt-in. The questions that need to be answered from the data are: did the participants use the guaranteed interview scheme, why and what did they feel about its use?

All participants who commented on the scheme were employed. There were differing perceptions of the scheme. Some people viewed the scheme positively and others negatively. There was some commonality in the characteristics of those who had a negative perception of the scheme. All those with a negative perception had visible, physical impairments which meant they had no control over disclosure. In contrast those who were positive about the scheme had an invisible impairment. One example is Sophie, who had an invisible impairment, who was pleased a guaranteed interview scheme existed, even though she had not applied via the scheme.

They have this disability section on the form, if you tick that there is this process; you can have a guaranteed interview... that box should guarantee you an interview so you can get through the door and like I said, show them who you are.

SOPHIE

In contrast, David with a physical, visible impairment felt that the concept of a guaranteed interview was basically 'box ticking' and made him feel bad:

...they might have a personal or human resources head that says it's good to employ him because it ticks one of the boxes on the DDA. But it is not a reason I would want to get a job...

DAVID

This view was shared by Sally who experienced the system both as a prospective employee and has also witnessed the reaction of her manager to new applications from disabled people.

I was convinced that the only reason I'd been called for the interview was because I was disabled and I met the minimum criteria; I felt I'd been invited to an interview just to tick a box, which made me feel quite angry to be honest...I think when an application form lands on a desk and someone has ticked the box about disability and meets the minimum criteria they get very excited, certainly my manager does. They think: 'great we need more representation.' I'm not all that comfortable about that because you are seeing the disability and not the person; it's another stat.

SALLY

Data from an HR manager supports this point that some disabled people are not happy to use the scheme.

I don't know why but we don't have many applications using the guaranteed interview scheme, very few applicants want to have an interview under the scheme.

HR MANAGER 2

Nancy experienced negativity from her non-disabled peers when using the guaranteed interview scheme. They saw the scheme as giving her some sort of privilege over others, rather than 'levelling the playing field'.

As soon as I walked into the place this young fellow said to me: 'you are really lucky you got an interview'. I thought, 'what does that mean?' it meant, I realised afterwards, you are really lucky was simply that they had to interview anyone who was able to do the job, who was disabled.

NANCY

While the viewpoint of Nancy's peers seems harsh, this research did find one participant, Tom, who has an invisible, self-defined mild impairment, who used the system instrumentally.

I put on the form about my disability. I was a little bit cynical I am afraid. For the public sector jobs I did but for the private sector jobs I didn't, I think; because I thought there was more chance of getting in because you have guaranteed interviews with the civil service, so I am afraid I played the card there.

TOM

This point illustrates that the scheme is flexible as graduates can choose to use it or not. Tom, for example, only disclosed on the applications that would grant him a guaranteed interview. The data shows that only a subset of the sample used the scheme. This is because the majority of the remaining participants did not know about the scheme, or did not want to disclose their disability. This point indicates that more could be done to make applicants aware of the scheme.

Summary

In summary, the data has shown that only a small subset of the sample used the guaranteed interview scheme and knowledge of the scheme was poor. In addition to this many participants reported being unhappy with the scheme. They felt that the

scheme was tokenistic and made them feel devalued, as found in Cassell's (1996) research. This finding resonates with earlier research by Noon, (2010) which reports that minority groups are unwilling to engage with positive action. The fact that the experiences of disabled graduates reflect the experiences of other minority groups means their experiences of positive action are not distinct. The empirical research show that while the government feels this scheme is positive because it allows disabled people to explain their story, it also leads to feelings of stigma and labelling.

Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the experiences of disabled graduates as they looked for work. The data showed that the job search process was a protracted experience with formal and informal methods used to locate jobs. The overall pattern showed that the graduates were using formal methods to access career type jobs and informal methods to locate 'filling-in' casual type employment. The type of work the graduates wanted was defined by suitable work hours, location, work that was interesting and had good career progression. Networks were an important source of jobs and often provided skilled, graduate level work. Many participants were worried that formal application processes did not allow them "*to tell their story*" and they favoured a job trial scheme. When this suggestion was put forward to HR managers, they were reluctant to see its value. Few participants had been to an assessment centre but the main concern was that the secretive nature of the centres meant the candidates could not request specific adjustments so they were at the mercy of HR managers to guess how their needs could be best met. Placements were found to be beneficial for the graduates and many of those who took placements secured employment with their host organisation at a later date. Disclosure was a source of worry for the participants and this worry led some failing to disclose. Some were tactical in their disclosures and fared better in applications where they did not disclose. The guaranteed interview scheme was disliked by participants because it made them feel tokenistic and undervalued.

Given these key findings above, how do they compare with non-disabled graduates? The job search was lengthy for disabled graduates but this is the same for non-disabled graduates (Teichler, 2007). Difference did occur, however, in their expectations of the job search. Traditional graduates were positive about how quickly they would find work (Purcell et al., 2005) in contrast the disabled graduates were not confident. The method of recruitment used by some firms was found to be discriminatory with many graduates reporting that they felt formal methods were unfair and did not allow them to tell the employer their story. This data provides a twist to earlier research – formal methods may reduce discrimination for other groups (Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Moss and Tilly, 2003) but are nevertheless problematic for those with disability, e.g. assessment centres. Another distinctive element of the disabled graduate experience was that in the sample applications through networks resulted in skilled, graduate level employment. This is in contrast to literature that found networks gave rise to low skilled employment (Mahuteau and Junankar, 2008; Try, 2005; Saks and Ashforth, 2000). The composition of networks was also different for disabled graduates, comprising members of the disability community, family and friends. Placements were beneficial for disabled graduates and this is the same as their non-disabled peers (Perryman, 2002; Purcell et al., 2004a). Disabled graduates, however, find placements helpful for different reasons to non-disabled graduates. Disclosure was problematic for the sample and this reflects earlier research that it is a problem for other minority groups (Colgan et al., 2007). What was distinct about the graduates' experiences was that they used information control to decide when to disclose as a form of testing an employer. In terms of the desired characteristics of work, some similarities exist, career progression was important to the disabled graduates, but potentially less so than their non-disabled peers (Perryman, 2002).

To what can the variation in the results be attributed? The type of job is one source of variation. For example, those who wanted career type jobs would use formal methods of application while those who wanted stop gap employment would use informal methods of job searching. Another source of variation is the type of impairment the graduate had. For example, those with invisible impairments had different experiences of disclosure to those who had visible, physical impairments. Variation also appeared the degree to which people used agencies to help them

navigate the labour market; for example, the use of SCOPE to 'test the water' of graduate employment. A final source of variation was the use of social networks; Those in disability networks used these to get good jobs with supportive organisations, those who were less networked were not so successful.

In summary these results show that graduates are not a homogenous group and therefore it is important to study the experience of minority groups. The next chapter explores the type of jobs the graduates hold.

Chapter Five: The Nature of Jobs

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings that deal with the nature of the jobs the disabled graduates held. This will be achieved by briefly exploring the dominant themes in the literature and then presenting the research findings. The research findings will be compared with the findings from the literature and judgements will be made as to the contribution of the data in light of existing research.

The chapter begins by considering the jobs in which these disabled graduates are employed and examining underemployment in the sample. This discussion also explores the participants' contentment with work, the extent to which underemployment is chosen as a coping strategy and whether it is forced upon disabled graduates. The next section of the chapter examines the strategies that the graduates have used to improve their labour market position and introduces the notion of 'job growth'. Finally the advantages and disadvantages of paid work are discussed from the perspective of the graduates.

Underemployment

The literature review established that underemployment occurs when someone is employed in a position considered to be inferior to their capability, either in terms of hours or skill (Feldman, 1996). Underemployment is a common phenomenon among graduates (Brennan and Tang, 2008, Ellias and Purcell, 2004a, 2004b). Elias and Purcell (2004b) recognised that professions such as nursing and primary school teachers now require degree qualifications and this fact means graduates are employed in more diverse areas than previously (Elias & Purcell, 2004b; Teichler, 2000). To understand this new distribution of graduates Elias and Purcell (2004b) reclassified each of the SOC (2000) 353 unit groups. Data was then aggregated into graduate or non-graduate work, and further classified into four categories, shown in table 5.1. These new categories are useful because they allow an understanding of the new occupational structure of the UK labour market. They also reflect the

changes in mass higher education and how the UK economy has allowed the extra supply of graduates to be absorbed.

Table 5-1: SOC (HE): a classification of graduate occupations. Elias & Purcell, 2004b: 6-7.

SOC(HE) category	Description	Examples
Traditional graduate occupations	The established professions, for which, historically, the normal route has been via an undergraduate degree programme.	Solicitors; Medical practitioners; HE and secondary education teachers; Biological scientists/biochemists
Modern graduate occupation	The newer professions particularly in management IT and creative vocational areas, which graduates have been entering since educational expansion in the 1960s.	Directors, chief executives (major organisations), Software professionals computer programmers, Primary school and nursery teachers
New graduate occupations	Areas of employment, many in new or expanding occupations, where the route into the professional area has recently changed such that it is now via an undergraduate degree programme.	Marketing & sales managers; Physiotherapists, occupational therapists; Welfare, housing, probation officers; Countryside/park rangers
Niche Graduate Occupations	Occupations where the majority of incumbents are not graduates but within which there are stable or growing specialist niches which require higher education skills and knowledge	Leisure and sports managers; Hotel, accommodation managers; Nurses, midwives; Retail managers

Underemployment in the Sample

Firstly, therefore, what was the level of underemployment in the sample? In order to answer this question the disabled graduates' jobs were compared to those listed in table 5.1. Those whose jobs are found in the SOC (HE) classification were classed as graduate level.

To distinguish between graduate and non-graduate work; firstly it was decided that only the most recent and current occupation would be considered (some had moved between graduate and non-graduate employment throughout their careers). The results show that 14 participants were working at graduate level according to SOC (HE) and six participants were underemployed. Table 5.2 shows those participants who were working in graduate level occupations and the category of occupation in which they were working.

Table 5-2: Participant and Type of Graduate Occupation

Participant	SOC (HE) Classification as being of graduate level
Tom	Modern Graduate Occupation
David	Traditional Graduate Occupation
Rose	Modern Graduate Occupation
Sally	Niche Graduate Occupation
Joe	New Graduate Occupation
Sandra	New Graduate Occupation
Sophie	Niche Graduate Occupation
Claire* ⁹	New Graduate Occupation
Emma	Niche Graduate Occupation
Hayley	New Graduate Occupation
Phillip	Traditional Graduate Occupation
Paul	Modern Graduate Occupation
Lisa	Niche Graduate Occupation
Rebecca	Niche Graduate Occupation

Table 5.2 shows the distribution of graduate work among the sample.

⁹ Joe and Claire needed a degree to get onto their graduate training scheme but did not feel that the work they undertook was of graduate level.

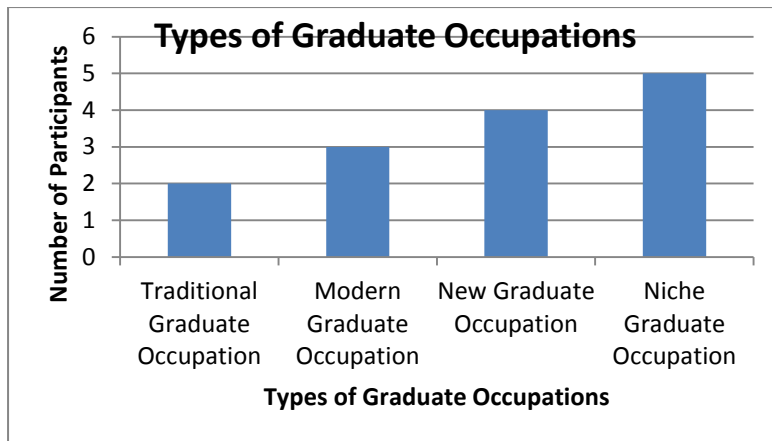


Figure 5-1: Distribution of Graduate Occupations

Table 5.1 clearly indicates that the largest category comprises niche occupations, followed closely by new graduate occupations.

...it is weird because X has.... [they are] different in that they never ask for qualifications. It is along the Colin Barnes lines [experience is more important than qualifications]...

LISA

What is the experience of the participants working in graduate level occupations? Interestingly, two of the participants viewed their job as below graduate level, when in fact they were on a graduate training scheme. Both Claire and Joe were on the same graduate training scheme, but both felt that they were given work that was not suited to their abilities. Claire and Joe were the only two participants to report their graduate level positions did not use graduate skills. When they were asked to describe their work tasks, it became clear that they were not carrying out graduate level tasks, but rather tasks associated with entry-level roles. These entry-level roles were not transitional, so the work did not become more skilled the longer they were in work. Unfortunately this low level of skill was also reflected in their lower pay.

...it is not stretching enough. I said to them that it is turning my brain to mush. I know [it's a graduate level position] but they don't. It's a shame because I don't feel my skills are being utilized.

CLAIRE

Working with the staff networks I don't think it's particularly graduate level because you are doing things like organising meetings, booking venues, maybe taking forward actions and taking minutes of meetings.

JOE

Interestingly, Paul, Lisa and Rebecca, who all worked in the disability arena had graduate level jobs according to SOC (HE) and used graduate skills but their job did not require any formal qualifications.

When the tasks that Lisa, Paul and Rebecca undertook were examined, it was clear they were engaging in niche graduate level work, according to SOC (HE). Paul talked passionately about teaching at higher education institutions and his involvement with employee representation bodies. In this role he would travel around the UK and present talks on disability issues and motivate disabled people to facilitate change for themselves. Rebecca, in her most recent role is working with people with mental health impairments. Her day-to-day tasks involve interviewing service users and feeding back their opinions on the services they use. From this information, it is then her responsibility to produce consultation documents and then ensure these ideas are taken forward to the board. Her aim is to produce a set of service user documents that guide people with mental health conditions through the NHS and to create integrated care pathways.

Summary

This data confirms research by Chevalier and Lindley (2009) and Elias and Purcell (2004b) that niche and new graduate occupations are growing to absorb the extra supply of graduates. The distribution among the sample of disabled graduates is not dissimilar, therefore, to the distribution among non-disabled graduates. What would

appear to be slightly different is that in the disability sector, graduate roles did not necessarily require degree qualifications.

Reasons for Underemployment

The chapter has established that 14 participants were employed in appropriate graduate level work, however six were underemployed. The chapter now turns to explore the experience of underemployment among the sample.

The literature review reported that underemployment can have the same negative consequences as unemployment (Maynard et al., 2006). Further data showed that underemployment can last between three and five years post-graduation (Blenkinsopp & Scurry, 2007; Purcell et al., 2004). Additionally if you are currently underemployed, it can increase the likelihood that you will be underemployed in the future (Elias & McKnight, 1999; Mason, 2004). The reasons for underemployment vary; contributing factors include the subject studied at degree level (Chevailier & Lindley, 2009) and choosing to be underemployed. Data shows a transitional phase for finding graduate employment which could suggest that underemployed graduates view their immediate post graduate employment as a stop gap (Blenkinsopp & Scurry, 2007, 2009). The motivation for pursuing 'stop gap employment' varies. Some graduates wish to prolong their university days, by remaining in the location where their social network exists (Marriot & Ball, 2009). Other students have left the job hunt too late, and cannot secure entry to graduate employment schemes until the start of the following academic year (Purcell et al., 2004). While others do not want to settle down and can justify their position by finding friends in similar situations (Scurry & Blenkinsopp, 2009).

Underemployment can also be a method to achieve work-life balance, called downshifting. Downshifting is when someone takes on a lower skilled job or a job with reduced hours (Guest, 2008; Goulding and Reed, 2008). While the literature

illustrated positive benefits of achieving work-life balance through downshifting, negative aspects to being underemployed were also discussed.

Table 5.3 shows which participants were underemployed, their occupation and satisfaction levels.

Table 5-3: Experience of Underemployment

Participant	Type of Underemployment: Skill or Time	Occupation	Reason for Underemployment	Content with labour market position?
Nancy	Time and Skill	Office Assistant ¹⁰	Could not get any other job	No
Georgia	Time and Skill	Disability Assistant	Chose to be underemployed to negotiate work and impairment	Yes
Duncan	Skill	Labatory Assistant	Could not get any other job	Yes
Pam	Skill	Disability Assistant	Could not secure any other work	No
Dot	Time and Skill	Insurance Claims Assistant	Chose to be underemployed to be less stressed	Yes
Keith	Skill	Fitness Instructor	Could not find any other job.	Yes

Have the underemployed graduates always been underemployed or did they hold graduate level positions prior to the onset of their impairment? By answering this question it will be possible to determine if the onset of an impairment increases the chances of being underemployed.

Out of the six graduates who held non-graduate positions, according to SOC (HE), three did not have impairments earlier in their career; for Dot, Nancy and Pam their impairments started in mid-career. Impairment had a drastic impact on each of them

¹⁰ Nancy is an example of someone who was underemployed, stuck in a routine administration job, filing, copying and taking minutes. She was particularly disgruntled with this, given that prior to her impairment, she had been involved in “really interesting” jobs, where she held leadership positions.

as they had successfully held down a graduate level position prior to becoming ill. Dot was happy to be underemployed in terms of skill and time, in contrast Nancy and Pam were not.

... these jobs you had been applying for, were they relevant and in relation to your past level of employment and experience?

No, they were lower [skill]... I had been head of an organisation that gave career counselling to women, and I have been a career counsellor. I have been head of an organisation that is run and funded by students that does environmental and social justice research and action. I have been head of a shelter for women and children that have been abused. That is just some of what I have been doing..

NANCY

Nancy and Pam were unhappy that since the onset of their impairment they had been unable to secure graduate level work and were frustrated by this turn of events. Despite being hired for a low skilled job, they felt their employer should have used their higher-level skills. These participants explained their skills and experience to their employers in the hope that they would receive some kind of promotion, but the employers still did not utilise their skills. This data indicates that these participants may have lost jobs and slipped down the labour market because they developed an impairment. It would appear for Nancy and Pam these non-graduate roles were 'dead end' without promotion prospects.

Table three shows the reasons the participants were underemployed. There appears to be two main reasons for their underemployment: they either chose to be underemployed or could simply not get a job elsewhere. Some graduates were actively seeking employment below their ability in order to negotiate the world of impairment and employment; using underemployment as a coping strategy. The general pattern is that the majority of those who were underemployed were content with their situation. It is interesting, therefore, to firstly examine the participants who chose to be underemployed

Firstly, some were content with underemployed because it allowed them to manage their work and impairment. Dot was a qualified teacher yet was working as an

insurance office assistant. She was happy to be underemployed because it meant she could work and manage her impairment.

Do you know what? I am actually quite happy, I don't have to go home and mark books and prepare lessons, I finish work (I was doing 8-4 at the time), I am home by 4:10 and the night is my own". It was lovely.

DOT

Dot found that working as a teacher was too taxing. Instead she chose to work in an insurance call-centre. Opting for this work meant that she was less stressed and could relax in the evening, which helped her impairment. For Dot alleviating stress was more important than being employed at graduate level.

Charles, included in the table because he is working as a volunteer is another example of someone who choose to work in low skilled work to manage his impairment and work. Previously he had been a senior school science-teacher but gave up work as a teacher because he was not able to manage his impairment and work.

I recognised my limitations and I thought mainstream teaching, with classrooms of teenagers isn't healthy for you! But I thought I could work, one to one and classroom support, that kind of thing but that wasn't something they could offer me. so out of that conversation I decided to hand my notice in for August.. now I am unemployed but I do 2 hours on a Monday and 2 on a Thursday and I co-tutor people with learning disabilities; life skills and rights and responsibilities and first aid and I really enjoy it.

CHARLES

Even though Charles was forced to give up his teaching role he is now happy voluntarily tutoring people with learning disabilities. This role, in his opinion, requires less skill and knowledge than his previous job. He finds this new role a lot less stressful and because he secured the role through the Jobcentre Plus via supported employment services he has good support. This support means he has been able to build up his confidence and learn how to operate with Asperger's in a new environment.

The second group of participants are those who are underemployed but happy with their situation because they are glad to have a job. Keith, Duncan and Georgia fall into this category. Keith's impairment was the result of an accident at university and this had severely impacted upon his work choices. Despite qualifying with a good degree in business Keith found he was happiest working in the health and fitness industry as a fitness instructor.

I love my job and I love what I do and the main fact is that I am somewhere where I can make a real big difference. However I am coming up against the same problems with this company so I am now looking to go on.

KEITH

The above quote shows that Keith did not derive his satisfaction from being able to manage his impairment and work but instead through helping other people and actually having a job. He talked passionately about one lady who he helped walk a 5km 'fun run', which he completed with her, to give her support.

...when I was with Esporta there was a lady who had been born with a tumour or something and she couldn't ... she had been through a lot of disabilities growing up. She could walk but not walk very far and when I was at the club someone had put her in touch with the club and told her to contact me. I started to work with her and Help The Aged charity got in touch with her about doing the marathon for them, so she did the marathon, she did it over a week and I got her up to the point where she could walk about 4 hours a day and she took all week, but she did it. I was helping her with her training and building her up for it. I was asked to go down and walk one of the days with her, I was quite privileged... Things like that really made a difference and made me quite proud to be doing the job that I was doing. It has always been seen as quite a basic job but I think of it and the way that I see it is that it is not a job that anyone can do.

KEITH

This shows that some of the participants were happy to have a job and derived satisfaction from their work despite being underemployed.

In contrast, there are some participants who are unhappy to be in low-level jobs. Pam was not happy being employed in a low skilled job. Pam has a Bachelor's and a Master's degree, yet is in a non-graduate role in the disability arena. She works as an equality and diversity advisor, but gets very frustrated as she is "*not even trusted to write a page of A4*". This shows that Pam's dissatisfaction with her job is because, according to Pam, she is not able to use her skills.

In a similar vein, Nancy is unhappy with low skilled work. There are other factors at play, however. Nancy feels that the board members in her current organisation are negative towards disabled people and this leads her to make the following comment: *“I am very ambivalent about this position or any position in this organisation at the moment.”* Therefore Nancy is dissatisfied on two accounts, the low skill level of the PA/Admin work and the internal politics of the organisation. When questioned further about the internal politics Nancy was unwilling to elaborate, despite assurances of anonymity.

Summary

The above results are varied and specific factors can account for their variation. Firstly, the data indicated that onset of an impairment while in employment can cause downward mobility in the labour market, indicating impairment is a causal factor. When examining the reasons for being underemployed, the data showed two main reasons, either the graduates could not get a job elsewhere or they wanted to balance impairment and work. Of central importance, which adds additional dimensions to existing research is the idea of work-impairment balance. The literature showed that some people choose to downshift to negotiate a successful balance between work and non-work life (Goulding and Reed, 2008). What this data showed was that for disabled graduates, they are not choosing to downshift because of work-life balance but because of the need to strike a balance between work and impairment. Impairment is not incorporated into the reasons for choosing to downshift in the general literature.

Strategies to Improve Labour Market Position

After establishing whether the participants were content with their jobs, consideration was paid to those who tried to improve their position in work. The data shows that for those who were not happy with their job prospects there were two options, either do nothing or try and improve their position. The research observed some participants who did try and improve their situation and in my research this has been termed job expansion.

The research showed two trends in relation to job expansion. Firstly, those participants who engaged in job expansion did so via two means; job enlargement or job enrichment. The first method, *enlargement*, is when a participant voluntarily, without extra pay, takes on more tasks at the same level as existing job duties. The second method, *enrichment*, is when a participant takes on new tasks, again without remuneration, that involve higher levels of skills than required for current job duties. Both job enlargement and job enrichment strategies were reported, with differing results for different participants.

Job enlargement is the first strategy to be explored. Joe and Keith both enlarged their jobs. Joe took on extra activities at the same level, doing extra work with staff networks, such as following up on actions generated and extra administration jobs. This was not rewarded with a promotion but Joe did receive an extension to his contract.

I suppose the only thing that has changed, in respect to my job, is that one of the roles that was given to me... we used to have in our office a team support, which to a lay person is an administrator, our administrator left the team in April so we were a person short but we still had his duties to do so a lot of them were hoisted on to me as it were.

JOE

Keith also engaged in enlargement activities but received no promotion and his actions were not noticed by management.

I always wanted to be accepted and seen as a reliable, hard-worker so I would always go beyond my duties for the company but this was never even thanked or even acknowledged/appreciated.

KEITH

Rebecca and Lisa also deliberately engaged in enlargement methods; however only Rebecca's actions resulted in full-time work. Rebecca was working as a volunteer for a mental health service and through her work with this service she was able to gain full time, paid employment. During her volunteer work she would feedback ideas and suggestions to the service manager. As a result the service manager sought funding to employ her as a full-time member of staff. Rebecca showed the manager that her personal knowledge of mental health issues could be a great asset to the

organisation. Lisa was not so fortunate. In a previous role Lisa was working in the disability field. She took on extra administration duties while on an agency contract. Occasionally her employers would realise that the contract was due to expire and renew for a period of time. This continued until she reached the stage where she would be entitled to more employment protection. As a result, her employers made her redundant despite the extra work she had been doing. Currently, however, Lisa has moved jobs and is happy in her new role.

There were various motivations behind the participants desire to enlarge their jobs. Could any of these motivations be attributed to their impairment? Rebecca and Joe were motivated to enlarge their jobs to prove to their employer that their disability was not going to hinder them in work. Joe was motivated to enlarge his job because he was on a six month placement scheme. He wanted to prove to his employers that he was good at his job despite his impairments. In both Joe and Rebecca's situation this enlargement method worked well.

In contrast, Lisa and Keith were motivated to enlarge their jobs for non-disability related reasons. Keith wanted to enlarge his job because he enjoyed what he did and found personal satisfaction in going above and beyond what was required of him. Lisa simply wanted full-time employment; she was not concerned about the impact her disability had on her ability to do the job. It would appear; therefore, that it is possible to suggest that those who grow their job through job enlargement for disability related reasons are more successful than those who enlarge their job for non-disability related reasons.

The second method used to grow jobs was enrichment this was used by three participants in the sample, Sally, Joanna and Paul. Sally became engaged with the board of the organization for which she was working and took on duties at a far higher level than which she was employed.

I had so much time on my hands because I couldn't physically do the job - I found myself bored to death day in day out and I found myself getting more involved in the disability equality side of things with the action group. I was looking around the college thinking: 'that needs improving, we need to sort that out', talking to learners. I basically hatched out a job specialising in that across the College. A lot of it is strategic, looking at our policies, coming up with strategies. I've just put together an action plan for disability equality for all areas of the College; basically to embed disability equality in everything that we do.

SALLY

Sally engaged in job growth twice and received promotion both times for her efforts. Sally talked about being motivated to 'grow her job' because she was bored at work. What came across in the interview was that she was a very driven character and was not content to be bored at work and therefore looked for tasks that she could complete. She even described herself as being a "driven person".

Similarly, Joanna and Paul deliberately took on tasks at levels above their position. Joanna and Paul, both while students, engaged in lecturing and lecturing and publishing respectively. This strategy was successful for Joanna as it resulted in a fixed term lecturer position. Paul was able to hatch out a career using his lecturing and publishing skills; however as he is self-employed it is not possible to ascertain whether this was equivalent to a promotion or not. For Joanna, she was motivated to go the extra mile because she felt that she had to prove she was better than she needed to be for a role, because of her disability; a form of coping. Paul's motivation was somewhat different. Paul is extremely passionate about disability rights and this is what motivated him to challenge himself. By enriching his job role, Paul was able to spread the message about disability inequality, but also satisfy his desire to constantly challenge his mind

Summary

The data indicates that enrichment may lead to better opportunities, measured in terms of increased skill utilisation, in the labour market. The findings suggest that job

enrichment is more likely to be motivated by disability related factors, such as wanting to prove oneself in the labour market.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Working

Satisfaction with Job

The literature review considered levels of job satisfaction. A Spanish research project examined levels of job satisfaction for disabled compared to non-disabled workers. It found that disabled workers have greater returns in terms of job satisfaction compared to non-disabled workers (Pagán and Ángel Malo, 2008). This has been explained in terms of the lower expectations of employment of minority groups (Clark, 1997). It is of interest, therefore, to uncover issues relating to job satisfaction in the sample, and to identify what influenced the feelings of satisfaction.

It is perhaps unsurprising that all of the participants who were employed in graduate level work and were given graduate level tasks, were content with their jobs. Rebecca is now employed in a graduate-level position. However, when I first interviewed her, she was not. She is working in the disability arena, focusing on mental health service users. Rebecca gets a lot of job satisfaction from using her skills and being able to help people.

It's really gratifying to feel you've given someone some hope and a lot of people will come to us rather than go to a statutory service... mostly yes. I really do enjoy my job. I get a lot of good opportunities and meet a lot of great people. It feels really positive to be in a position where I can come across professional enough to be respected and you can see that pushing the service user agenda does make a difference.

REBECCA

David, who is an academic doctor is happy in his role in the higher education sector. He is content he is using his skills but is worried about the short term nature of the contracts. As a result he is considering more secure options in the future. Nevertheless he is still happy in his role.

Tom works in the financial sector and at the time of the final interview he had been promoted and was working on different projects across the UK. He enjoys his role because it gives him a vast range of experience and skills. The different project rotations mean he is constantly learning new skills and meeting new people and this gives him job satisfaction.

This data indicates that like traditional graduates (Purcell et al., 2004), disabled graduates in the sample derived satisfaction from using their skill and qualifications. These results suggest, therefore, that the experiences of disabled graduates may not be different to those of non-disabled graduates.

Advantages of Working

It is important to consider the advantages of working in a study of disabled graduates because the majority of public policy aims to get disabled people into work to foster economic independence (DSS, 1998; DWP, 2004c). Alongside economic independence, working is central in shaping how a person defines, identifies and makes sense of themselves (Bain, 2005).

Many of the participants were keen to talk about their love of working. Table 5.4 shows who reported finding working beneficial and why. Table 5.4 shows that 17 participants spoke about the benefits of work. A common concern was that their job gave them an identity and helped them shape a notion of who they were. When this job was taken away, their sense of self and identity was eroded.

Table 5-4: Benefits of Working Experienced by Sample

Participant	Type of Benefit Derived from Working
Sophie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role in life/society • Perspective • Identity
Amelia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulation • Provided an escape
Charles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form of distraction • Improved his mental health
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of income • Kept his brain active
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a sense of purpose • Source of personal motivation
Hayley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved self-esteem and confidence • Source of social interaction • Kept her skills up to date
Joanna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a routine • Source of social interaction
Joe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved his confidence
Lisa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved her confidence
Val	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alleviated boredom • Gave her a routine
Lucy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave her a focus • Alleviated boredom
Mary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave her a routine • Stimulated her brain
Peter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helped his mental health
Rebecca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave her structure • Source social interaction • Improved confidence • Provided status in society
Sally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave structure • Provided sense purpose • Improved confidence
Sandra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave her purpose • Provided role in society • Source confidence and self esteem
Vincent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave him a purpose • Source social interaction

Identity

Sophie was very passionate about how her occupation defined her. She had been a nurse for so long that she felt she would be lost without her title. She later linked this feeling to her need to care for people and feel useful. Hayley changed her career as a result of a negative work placement experience, which caused her to question her

future because she had always assumed she would work in science. Despite this change in career Hayley is now happy working in a disability role.

I was very torn at that point because from GCSEs onwards my whole life had been about science and here I was saying 'actually I am not going to do this anymore.' It was part of your identity by then, I was a chemist, I was saying I am not going to be a chemist anymore and I really struggled with that in a bizarre way.

HAYLEY

I am a nurse, what else can I do, I love nursing and if they take that away from me, then life is not worth living and you sort of lose your identity, you are still a family member but you are not your own person as somebody who fulfils a role in society. As soon as I got back into nursing I felt a purpose in society.

SOPHIE

Closely allied to the notion of providing the participants with an identity, was that work gave their life purpose, which they found beneficial.

I have to work; I have to have a role in life. Yes definitely. When I have had periods out of work ... I have found what has helped me readjust and re-evaluate and move on in life had been getting back into work and working with people less fortunate than myself"

SOPHIE

When I start working after a break I am always delighted as I am not so bored anymore and I feel like I have got a sense of purpose and that is wonderful and I love working and I have not been as nearly as happy as I used to be now that I don't have quite such a clear cut career path as I used to.

GEORGIA

But it is TOTALLY worth it because I have a purpose, and a role in society, and can fulfil my potential. And I can't tell you what a difference it makes to my self-esteem, confidence, self-worth and sense of fulfilment to be working (in a role commensurate with my abilities – the effect wouldn't be the same if just palmed off into any work, which seems to be some people's idea of all disabled people are fit to do).

SANDRA

These comments were all made passionately with the faces of many of the participants lighting-up when they talked about why they loved working. Closely linked to having a purpose is how work provides motivation - motivation not only to

work, but motivation to engage in everyday activities, external to the work environment.

Being employed provided the participants with a form of social contact. The work environment prevented them from becoming lonely and provided companionship.

I think some people work very well on their own and others need to be part of a team and what worries me with fluctuating impairments - you are forced to work at home to be almost solo employed because you can pick and choose what you work, but then you never get the sense of working with the group and it can be very isolating.

JOANNA

... interaction with other people makes a huge difference to me I know if I am feeling low or isolated I have to go out and make myself socialise. I know it is something that I have to do because it makes me feel better.

REBECCA

there are days when I sit here and think 'what am I going to do?' but I am not quite 50 years old yet, I still have another 15 – 16 years of FT employment in me and the prospect of spending the next 15 years, sitting in my flat here and going downhill is quite dispiriting in a way. It's also the social isolation. You meet people at work, obviously and socialise with people and have a life outside of your home.

VINCENT

Vincent was particularly concerned about his lack of social contact. He was not finding it easy to locate work and had little social support around him. This lack of social support reflects Vincent's troubled background where he experienced episodes of homelessness.

Work allows the participants to take control of their life, they feel that they are more in control of their lives.

By working I feel more in control; it's not that things happen to me it's that I go and do things, so it's a big difference. I think also there's the recognition from other people that you do things. I do things at home on my own, but nobody ever sees those things...

REBECCA

More than anything else what working does for me is make me realise that my disability is not a weakness, which is what I thought it was. There's nothing tragic about it, I don't like it. I could lose the rest of my sight any day, or it could last for another 10 years and when it goes it'll go like that (clicks fingers) probably overnight through a haemorrhage. The last thing I do every morning it open my eyes because the fear is there, when I open my eyes and what I've got left is still there and it's a bonus and I'll come into work and do the work that I'm paid to do because I know that I'm good at it. I feel like I've got a purpose, I fit in and I've got a role to play.

SALLY

The more in control the participants felt in work the more they were able to take control in their non-work lives. Sally, for example, as a result of the confidence she gained at work was able to say 'no' to some courses she was put on and instead carved out a role for herself among the staff instead. In more measurable ways, working allows the participants the ability to keep their skills up to date. This was the general opinion, even if they were not employed in a graduate level position.

There are a plethora of examples from the data where participants gained confidence from working.

But also each time I face a new challenge and get through it I know I can do it again, it is a confidence booster... It is too easy to let your confidence drop and think you can't face that situation. Whereas with work I have to face those situations to do my job and that keeps me going.

HAYLEY

I think that had there not been something like the Scope scheme then I think I would have struggled to find a job and I would possibly be working in a call centre possibly because I would have just lost confidence to keep applying because when you're knocked back so many times it's quite difficult sometimes to stay positive about it because for the government it is a big thing to get people off benefits and into work but if they are being told not to apply for things because you're disabled then what are you supposed to do? Although I would never do it myself I can see why some people to give up and stay on benefits.

JOE

I sat and thought about it and I thought well at 23 when you're told you'll never work again you'll either curl up and die or become a disabled person or you have to do something about it. I was very frustrated because I didn't not want to not be in work; I did not want to not have something that I did, you know. I knew that I had limitations and I was fully aware of the fact that there would be issues in going back to work but never for once was it something that I didn't want to do; it was just a case of dealing with the CMT and getting a job at the same time.

LUCY

This confidence, gained from work, overflowed into other areas of life as well.

but there is both the fact that work gives you the money to enjoy the leisure and that if you do interesting work it is good for the brain and keeps you alive, sparky and thinking about stuff. The trick, for me, is to find enough work to keep me sparky, and do enough stuff in my leisure, reading fiction, drawing, something else to give myself that creative spark outside of work, rather than putting everything into work.

DAVID

In terms of a positive impact it is good because it builds your confidence, most of the time, it gives you the belief that you can do something worthwhile, even if that is just being able to earn your own money and being able to function in society just like everyone else.

PAM

Therefore, there are numerous positive effects of working that flow into the participants' non-work life.

Summary

From this data it is noticeable that the benefits of working reflect many of those cited in the general literature; for example confidence and self-esteem such as (Bain (2005) and Williams et al., (2009). One caveat is that non-disabled workers are less likely to have confidence eroded because of the stigma attached to their impairments. There is one area where the experience of disability closely reflects the experience of unemployed/redundant workers. Literature reports that unemployed and/or redundant workers feel useless because they have no job (see Blyton and Jenkins, 2013; Bockerman and Ilmakunnas, 2006 and Turnbull and Wass, 1997). This feeling was reported in the experience of the disabled graduates, they no longer felt worthless because they had a job.

Warr (2007), when discussing unemployment states there are two responses to being unemployed: “constructive adaptation” and “resigned adaptation”. Constructive adaptation involves positive moves to engage in activities outside the labour market, such as hobbies and expanding social networks; the resigned adaptation involves reduced aspirations and low emotional investment in a person’s environment. The data clearly suggests that being in work allows the disabled graduates to engage in social activities outside work. They are using the benefits of work in areas outside life. This shows constructive adaptation in response to being in work, a potential twist to Warr’s (2007) original work on unemployment.

Disadvantages of Working

Despite the positive effects of working, some participants reported negative experiences. These experiences centred around negotiating stigma.

My confidence was also slightly rocked as I felt I was being watched all the time and I had to prove myself all the time. If I had a headache I wouldn't go into work because if I went into work and complained of a headache or was pale I was aware people thought I was about to have a fit. So I felt it was easier to let someone else go in and do my shift than set off the gossip again. Extremely frustrated, annoyed and trapped in a label that was hung over me.

SALLY

...at that time I still saw myself as, I don't like to say it, as having a disability and not being the same as everyone else. I always wanted to prove that I could do more and so people like my mum told me that they took advantage of that."

KEITH

I think it's this issue of having to be over and above what other people have. You have to have something extra in order to prove you are as good as they are. It's also a personal issue for me because I still don't feel I am as good as someone else. Which is partly what is driving me to do a Ph.D because I think when I have a Ph.D then I will be satisfied that I am as capable as anyone else, I am intelligent, I am able to cope with the demands of academic life etc.

PAM

None of these participants liked having to prove themselves but were resigned that it was an inevitable factor of life. The data also found participants felt fearful of the unknown - working represented an unknown entity.

In terms of finding work at that point, if I'm brutally honest with you, the thought of working scared the living daylights out of me... I honest to God thought I was unemployable; I couldn't see anybody giving me work... I thought that my vision impairment made me useless and I just could not see how I would cope getting to work, being at work, doing a job and I thought I was unemployable. Fear of failure I guess...On paper I was clearly something else other than I think I am: on paper I suppose I'm pretty impressive but in my mind I was completely unemployable, disabled and therefore useless ... I was convinced that the only reason I'd been called for the interview was because I was disabled and I met the minimum criteria ... Particularly coming into work, realising that I've probably got more to offer than a lot of people who've been working here and long-time; I mean that in terms of, as I said to you, but I had always thought of having a disability made me weak and unemployable but in fact it doesn't; I've got a lot to offer.

SALLY

These quotes show that some of the participants, especially prior to working anticipate stigma and discrimination. Interestingly the more positive opinions,

discussed earlier, are occur after the participants have been in employment. Again this points to the centrality and importance of employment for disabled people and reflects earlier work that stigma is a large issue for disabled people (see Barnes and Mercer, 2005 and Crudden and McBroom, 1999).

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the nature of the graduates' jobs. The chapter has used SOC (HE) (Elias and Purcell, 2004b) to ascertain the level of underemployment among the sample. The majority of the sample reported working in appropriate level graduate work, mainly in niche graduate occupations. All those who were working in graduate level occupations were happy with their jobs because their skills were being used, with the exception of two participants. The remainder of the graduates were underemployed. There was a mixed feeling among these participants, some were happy to be underemployed while others were discontented. Some had chosen to be underemployed to negotiate a work-impairment balance, while others were underemployed because they could not locate appropriately skilled employment. Those participants, who were not happy with their job, chose one of two strategies to improve their position, either job enlargement or job enrichment. The participants who used job enrichment were more successful in improving their employment than those who used job enlargement. The chapter then considered the benefits of working. The majority of the sample reported being happy and that work gave them a sense of identity, self-worth, motivation for work and non-work tasks, and provided a source of social contact and confidence.

This chapter noted several key distinct features for disabled graduates. Firstly, the need for a work impairment balance as opposed to the work life balance reported ubiquitously in literature. The second distinctive feature why work gave the participants confidence – it helped them overcome stigma and discrimination.

Various sources of variation were noted in the literature. For example, impairment was one factor that accounted for the variation in the findings, for example, impairment impacted the ability of some to secure work. The stigma facing disabled people also accounts for variation. Those who faced stigma were motivated to find work to prove their self-worth. This source of variation points to the ability of an individual to execute a coping strategy. Those who executed the strategy best, were the ones who were able to improve their labour market position the most.

The next chapter looks at the experience of being in a job. Is absence a big issue for disabled graduates? What about bullying and harassment – are disabled graduates victims?

Chapter Six: Experience of Being in a Job

Introduction

This chapter considers aspects of the working lives of graduates, firstly, by examining absence and how graduates and management responds and, secondly, the extent to which the disabled graduates have experienced supportive work environments. Finally, the chapter concludes by exploring bullying and harassment; in particular there is a focus on understanding how the context for bullying, impacts on those involved and steps taken to manage this impact.

Absenteeism

Absenteeism has been considered within this study because of the impact that an impairment can have on work attendance. The manner in which absence is managed is thus likely to be of central importance to the disabled graduates' experience of work. This next section explores disabled graduate attitudes towards absence due to ill-health and their experiences related to negotiating and taking sick leave.

Work intensification, harsh economic climates, together with a degradation of employment conditions has led to more stringent controls on employee absence within organisations (Miller, 2013). As the literature review demonstrated, whilst there was a rise in absence due to ill-health, resulting in disciplinary action, managers were generally dissatisfied with organisational policies on absence and were uncomfortable in enacting these (Baker-McClearn, 2009). Furthermore, graduated return-to-work and early intervention are reported as helpful in the return-to-work process (James et al., 1997). Additionally, disability leave facilitated the return-to-work but take up was reported as being low among employers (Simkiss, 2005). As a result of the literature review, the data addresses the graduates' experiences of absence policy, which policies were more supportive and why.

Given that the literature review also established that presenteeism was a concern for employers (Demerouti et al. 2009) and there are increasing incidents of presenteeism during economic downturns (Miller, 2013) it was important to address presenteeism in the data. Was presenteeism a feature of the disabled graduate experience and if so, how did it present itself?

Firstly, how many participants reported absenteeism? Six participants in total talked about absenteeism, all of which was long term. Table 6.1 illustrates which participants reported taking sick leave, the type of leave, management responses and the impact of that response.

Table 6-1: Experience of Absenteeism

Participant	Type of Absence	Management Response	Impact on the Participant
Dot	Long Term	Initiated grievance procedures	Stress and union involvement
Sandra	Long Term	Lost her job because it was fixed term contract	Stress and financial problems
Joanna	Long Term	Lost her job because it was a fixed term contract	Stress
Charles	Long Term	Supportive	Nil
Georgia	Long Term	Supportive	Guilt that her students were not getting taught.
Pam	Long Term	She lost her place at university	She had no confidence

Table 6.1 shows that four out of the six participants had negative experiences and two had positive experiences of absence.

Positive and Negative Experiences

The pattern in the data was that there was a mixture of positive and negative experiences in the sample. Dot, for example had negative experiences of sick leave policies and had been disciplined as a result of her absence. The quote below shows

how Dot was initially meek about taking sick leave, but as time progressed and management became less supportive she began to fight back for her rights.

Because the first time they disciplined me for being sick I just rolled over a bit. I didn't have anyone with me, I just took a friend in. After I passed that stage I wore myself into the ground and the next time I got sick I started off all meek and mild "yes, yes I will do that" and they promised stuff they didn't deliver and I thought "right" and when we got to stage two the union came in.

DOT

Dot was working in a highly unionised organisation. She was on "on first name terms" with her union representative and was very grateful for their support. At the time of the interview her disciplinary action was on-going. Dot reported, however, that she was reluctant to fight the case and file an official grievance, although if absolutely necessary she would look into her options.

Sandra and Joanna also had negative experiences of sickness procedures, which resulted in Sandra and Joanna losing their jobs.

I had been on a fixed term contract so that expired whilst I was on sick leave. So that left me with the difficulty of having no job to go back to.

SANDRA

... so I went off sick and then I lost my job because of that. A clause in my contract that I had failed to notice and I was heading towards some big operations and I knew I was going to be off for 6 months after the operations, so I left that and the job just folded.

JOANNA

Absence on fixed term contracts led Sandra and Joanna to lose their jobs. Both Sandra and Joanna felt this treatment was unfair and they felt lost and stressed because of unemployment. This point is of particular concern, because if absence is an issue for disabled employees and research shows disabled people are more likely to be employed on non-standard employment contracts (Schur, 2003) then they could be at greater risk of losing their jobs than non-disabled employees.

While the data had cases of negative sick leave experiences, the evidence also showed pockets of positive experiences. Charles and Georgia had positive experiences of sick leave and were both employed in the same industry – education.

... in teaching there is never any malice or anything, people go off sick, that's it, there is such a high record of sickness in school; quite often with stress related disorders.

CHARLES

They encouraged me not to, in the college where I was working; they said "take some time off and see how you feel". And I did that for a few months but I actually felt really guilty because the college was keeping the job open, so my students weren't really getting taught...

GEORGIA

While Charles was happy to take as much absence as he needed Georgia was more reluctant. Georgia worried that her students were not getting taught while she was away. It would seem that this difference in orientation to absence is a result of the participants' different personalities.

Given the data shows variation in the experience of sick leave, is it possible to explain why this variation exists? Georgia and Charles, both working in the public education sector, had flexible, supportive absence policies. Charles believes that absence is common in education and that is why he was treated so well. Miller (2013) found that absence levels in education were the highest in the public service, matched only by the health sector. These results suggest that if all staff are prone to taking sick leave, then a disabled employee taking sick leave would not stand out, potentially resulting in a positive experience of sick leave. Those who have supportive, flexible absence procedures are more likely to have a positive experience of absence.

The data indicates that the presence of a union has some mediating effect on absence. Charles and Georgia, working in the education sector worked in a highly unionised workplace. Dot, on the other hand also was working in a highly unionised organisation but did not have a positive experience. It is suggested, however, that if

Dot was not a member of a union her experience would have been worse. All of the absences reported were long-term, therefore it is not possible to ascertain if the length of absence would cause a different management response. In summary, therefore, it is suggested that these findings reflect wider evidence in the literature.

Disability Leave and Graduated Return to Work

As discussed in the literature review, disability leave is a management policy whereby disabled employees are allowed time off for disability related absence that does not get recorded on their sickness record (Simkiss, 2005). From the HR interviews it became clear that very few HR managers knew what was meant by disability leave and when the concept was explained, it was disregarded.

The most common response was that disability leave was not required because sick leave policies could be altered to accommodate disabled employees.

We don't have a disability leave policy. There are certain triggers that go off in the sickness policy but for disabled employees we can move these triggers back. This is done at the discretion of the line manager, with HR guidance in more complex cases.

HR Personnel, Private Sector, responsible for all nine protected characteristics.

Many HR managers reported that it was the responsibility of line managers to implement sick leave policies. This approach can be problematic because discretion of the line manager results in non-uniform treatment of employees. As a result, devolution to the line may lead to a weakening of equality outcomes, such as found in Dickens and Colling's (1994) study of British Gas. The role of line managers is discussed, at length, in chapter eight.

The data showed that organisations failed to see the value in disability leave because they perceive flexible sick leave policies are adequate to support disabled workers. This point illustrates that HR managers have missed the key difference

between sick leave and disability leave and supports Simkiss (2005) that the availability of disability leave remains low.

The literature showed that after a period of absence a graduated return-to-work programme was most effective at integrating chronically sick workers back to work. The thesis only had one case of a graduated return-to-work programme. Sandra began by working 23 hours a week and increased to 27 as she recovered. Sandra was pleased that she had this option and reports it being central to her gaining employment after being ill with ME. Sandra's positive experience of graduated return-to-work shows the importance of graded return-to-work and reflects the findings of wider research on gradual return-to-work programmes and their benefits (James et al., 1997). However, given that there is only one case of return-to-work programmes conclusions are tentative.

Presenteeism

The literature review discussed presenteeism and how it affected workers and the data suggests presenteeism was an important factor in the participants' experiences of work.

The research shows that various reasons for presenteeism occur. Mainly, the disabled graduates did not want to appear weak, or to take time off for disability related issues. Amelia, a self-employed music teacher, was struggling to manage her impairment effects and her workload. She found that she needed to take time off from teaching students but did not take time off because she did not want to let the students down and wanted to seem capable.

These findings potentially question work by Aronsson et al., (2000) and Hansson et al., (2006), who offer different reasons for presenteeism, such as being in work to gain favour with the boss and the employees feel irreplaceable. In contrast, the disabled graduates did not want to be absent because they did not want to be judged

as weak. This finding could be specific to disabled employees when facing stigma associated with disability in the workplace. This is a stigma that non-disabled workers are unlikely to face.

Supportive Organisations?

The chapter now turns to consider the supportive nature of the graduates' employers. Some organisations are perceived to be more 'disabled-friendly' than others. Public policy has sought to recognise disability friendly workplaces in order to diffuse good practice through schemes like "Two Ticks for Disabled People" and the slogan "Positive about Disabled People". The literature indicates that certain types of organisations are more proactive at supporting disabled people than others. Usually organisations that have previously employed disabled people, voluntary, larger and public sector organisations are supportive of disabled people (Roberts et al., 2004). Research shows that these organisations go to greater lengths to ensure disabled staff can access the workplace and are proactive in their support of disabled workers (Branfield and Maynard, 2001; Goodley, 2005; Rita et al., 2007; Roulstone et al., 2003). Therefore, the data address what types of organisations the participants were employed in and did the type of organisation impact the participants experience of work and if so why?

A plethora of data indicated that the type of organisation was an important factor in the experience of work. The general pattern shows that the majority of participants worked in the public sector. Figure 6.1 below shows the sector distribution in the sample.

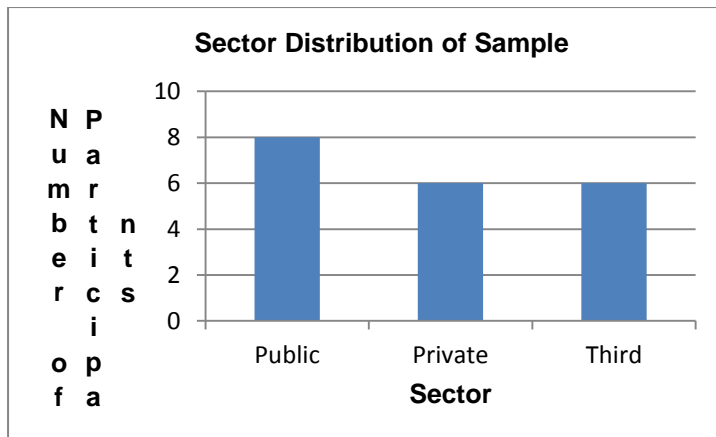


Figure 6-1 Sector Distribution of Sample

Firstly, in what sectors were the graduates employed? Figure 6.1 above shows there is a relatively equal distribution among the sample for all three sectors. Despite the relatively equal distribution, the data showed mixed experiences of work. A recurrent theme among the participants, however, is that those who worked in a third sector organisation, or in a disability role had more positive experiences than those in the private or public sector. In order to understand this it is important to examine the industry distribution in the sample.

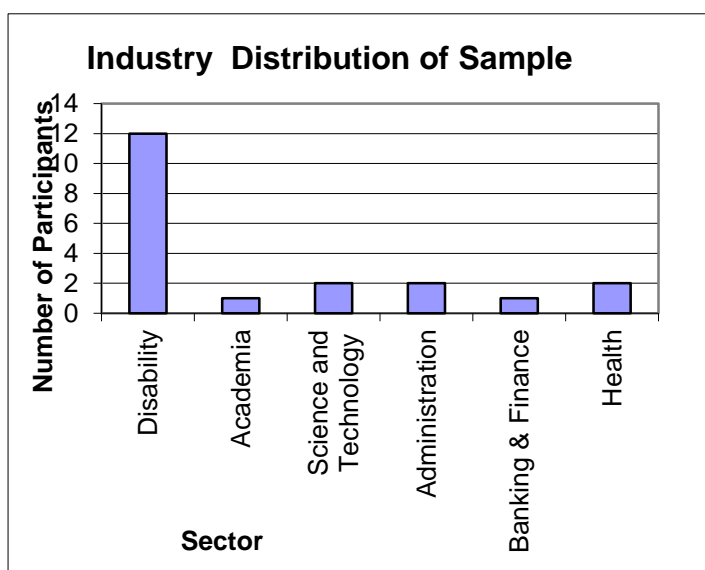


Figure 6-2: Industry Distribution of Sample

From Figure 6.2 it is apparent that working in the field of disability is the most common area of work. The data shows that those who worked in the third sector, in disability organisations, experienced a more supportive organisational environment. Hayley, Rebecca and Lisa found that working in a third sector role meant that norms and stigmas associated with disability were challenged more easily:

It is a great place to work. You go to work, be yourself and sort of get on with it and go home and it's a great place to work and you felt that you are never questioned if you ask for something...you could probably argue that the organisation is exclusive to disabled people. I mean sort of... I don't know... the sort of place where if you are disabled you fit in and you sort of belong and you get on and you don't question things.

LISA

I think because of the kind of environment, people are quite happy to say 'I find this difficult – can you help me' – they know it is a two way street, it's not about thinking someone is stupid or not up to the job.

REBECCA

Also when I established myself my reputation goes before me now. At conferences that I have been arranged to speak at, they arrange that. The attitude is so much better which makes doing my job so much easier.

HAYLEY

Lisa points out that the majority of her colleagues are disabled, therefore being disabled is 'the norm'. Lisa reported if she needed time off for medical appointments this would be granted freely because it was regarded as a standard request. Hayley, in contrast, did not have so many disabled colleagues, but because the organisation was focused on workplace equality she could still ask for what she needed. This attitude was reflected in the wider sector in which Hayley worked because she always felt accepted when she went away to training or meetings.

Given the positive experiences of the participants, is it possible to ascertain what makes some organisations more supportive than others? The quotes above indicate that being taken seriously and respected in work (Hayley) resulted in a positive experience of work, while for Rebecca the ability to ask for what was needed without being questioned was central. This finding shows that the ability to question norms and ask for what is needed makes working a positive experience. This experience

led to increased job satisfaction and general wellbeing for the three participants above.

The research data also showed that working in an organisation that was directly related to your personal impairment was likely to result in more positive experiences. The participants perceived a link between the congeniality of the organisation's culture and their impairment type. Sophie felt that there would be a more supportive atmosphere in a role that reflected her impairment.

I would like to work where I am an agency nurse [with epileptic patients] because a lot of the patients are epileptic as well and I think that is why the manager made his decision to do what he did because the nurses understand epilepsy as well. I find them far less judgemental in psychiatric nursing, they are more supportive or what they don't know, they will ask you what they don't know, they won't listen to gossip.

SOPHIE

It was an inclusive environment, not 100% but it was better than wherever I've been since. You would hope because it is a deaf charity that they would be understanding and most of the time they were. I didn't feel deafness was a big problem there; it was difficult but not a huge problem. When I moved to another area outside the deaf field it hit me how big a problem it was being deaf.

CLAIRE

These quotes show that Sophie and Claire liked working in an environment that understood their impairment. They found that it was only in an organisation that sought to help people with similar impairment to themselves that they would be supported and understood. While it is likely that working in an impairment-specific organisation that reflect one's own impairment is likely to increase understanding it is unlikely that this is the sole reason participants would have had positive experiences. The type of policies and practices that transpired from working in an impairment specific organisation were also likely to have been supportive.

Hayley, Claire and Sophie previously worked outside the disability sector and therefore they can accurately compare their experience to positions outside the

disability field. Claire has held many different positions but felt most easily accepted in a role related specifically to her impairment. Similarly, Sophie had worked in the healthcare industry in many different departments, yet it was only in the department that dealt with patients who had a similar impairment to her own, that she actually felt accepted.

Negative Experiences of Disability Role

Given the mixed nature of the responses there are some examples of negative experiences in a disability role, but not in a disability organisation. Pam was working as a disability officer, yet she was unhappy with the environment she worked in.

I am an E&D officer and I am expected to go out and advise schools and departments about how they should be reacting to any member of staff/student who has a disability; yet I am working in a department that can't even give me my basic rights!

PAM

Sally was in a similar position to Pam.

There still needs to be an awful lot of education around disability in this place because disabled people are very poorly represented. There is certainly an issue around disclosure because I know of many, many people who have disabilities but have not disclosed. That concerns me because, I'm hoping it's not true, but it might be that there is still a sense of fear around disclosure; there is still a sense that disability equals weakness

SALLY

In this quote Sally is talking about the atmosphere in the college where she works that might deter students or staff from disclosing. These quotes suggest that if you are working in a disability role in a public or private sector organisation you are more likely to experience a non-supportive atmosphere than if you are working in a disability organisation in the third sector. It would appear that participants were more likely to have negative experiences in organisations where support was ad hoc or not mainstreamed. This finding reflects the importance of mainstreaming, as advocated by Liff (1999).

Another source of negative experience of work was expectations. The data shows that some participants, naively, anticipated one organisational culture to be replicated in another organisation, in the same sector.

My first significant experience where I actually had any disability issues, as such, was when I was with [X employer] – I'd had the disability to varying degrees on previous posts, but never brought it to bear in relation to the jobs...so I stupidly, naively thought things would be reasonably good in other universities. University is all part of higher ed, the knowledge economy and so it was a bit of a shock to see it being so 19th century and now I will look a lot more carefully when I go for another job next time.

DAVID

David's experience has taught him to be more cautious. At the time of the interview he was nearing the end of his contract and was determined to look more closely at his next workplace to anticipate any disability related problems.

... it's been a job that I need to push for deaf awareness. I did a six-month placement in Z and because it was a smaller place they were more willing to learn about deafness and to make more reasonable adjustments and I had an easier time with access to work; they were more understanding. With X, I wrongly assumed, because they're a bigger organization they would be more aware, they've been okay but I expected better.

CLAIRE

Claire's assumption ill prepared her for work in her new job. It took her some time to adjust but now she is relatively happy.

Summary

In summary, participants who worked in disability roles in the third sector reported better working environments and accommodation of their needs than the participants who worked outside the disability field. Additionally, the participants who worked in impairment specific organisations that reflected their own impairments had very positive experiences. The research further extends the notion of a supportive environment in disability organisations, as proposed by Newton et al., (2007). It shows that these environments are supportive because the employees do not feel hindered or judged when asking for reasonable adjustments. Perhaps unsurprisingly

the findings indicate that specialist 'disability' or 'equality' organizations provide the most supportive work environment, particularly those organisations that reflect an individual's impairment.

Bullying and Harassment

The next topic this chapter addresses is bullying and harassment. Bullying and Harassment is an important topic to consider when researching disabled graduates because research shows that disabled people are vulnerable to bullying (Fevre et al., 2010). Bullying was reported to be a common occurrence by Naime and Naime (2000) and could affect anyone. As a result of bullying, the literature showed that workers usually turned to colleagues or family for support (Pollert and Charlwood, 2009) and bullying was most common in private, large, male-dominated organisations (Einarsen, 2000). Considerable negative consequences were identified as the result of workplace bullying such as poor mental and physical health (Rayner et al., 2002). Given these findings from the literature review, several questions need to be answered. Firstly how common was bullying among the participants, what type of bullying took place – horizontal or vertical¹¹ -, who was the perpetrator, how did the participant respond, what support and advice did they get and from whom and did the bullying have negative effects?

Frequency and Perpetrator

Firstly, how common was bullying among the sample? Only four participants reported bullying overtly - Dot, Pam, Sophie and Hayley. Sophie experienced negative horizontal and vertical workplace relations and was bullied by colleagues after they witnessed management questioning her impairment and abilities in the middle of the office.

¹¹ horizontal bullying is bullying by colleagues and vertical bullying is bullying by supervisors

The girl behind me had spoken to another girl and they were talking about a lady at the age of 40 doing a reading test. So I went to one of the ringleaders and said: "can I join in this conversation?" and she said: "we are not talking about you" she asked why I was doing a reading assessment, I told her that the fonts were enlarged because I had asked them to be but then it upset everyone, so it has gone back now and so I have asked to be shown how I can change it on my individual computer. She then asked why that meant I needed a reading assessment. I said that I have told them that I may have this scotopic sensitivity syndrome and I needed an assessment to see what backgrounds I need etc. she still asked why I had had a reading assessment; so I told her I had dyslexia.

SOPHIE

The incident significantly impacted Sophie's emotional wellbeing; she was upset when she recounted the event. The incident occurred when colleagues complained about Sophie's IT adjustments, resulting in them forming a clique that excluded her. The vertically bullying consisted of her manager questioning her abilities, in front of colleagues, compounding the problem.

In a similar vein, Pam was also bullied by colleagues, when they failed to take into consideration her disability and her right to dignified treatment.

I knew it was going to be extremely difficult because the administrator was a bully and I seemed to be on the receiving end of her bullying. So I wasn't getting particular support from them... I think the disability also had a role to play in it because um... she didn't make any allowances for me at all. She didn't even make sure she spoke clearly, that she looked at me when she spoke. If I ever said to her, can you speak up, take your hand away from your mouth, she would get all huffy and walk out of the room. It's difficult to know if the disability was a reason partly for the behaviour or whether she used the disability as a way of getting at me, if you see what I mean...

PAM

Pam's case illustrates that her boss did not want to make simple adjustments, such as speaking clearly, so that Pam could lip read. Hayley, in contrast, did not classify her experiences as bullying, but from her account of what happened, it suggests she was bullied by colleagues. Her property was not respected, which among other things, resulted in her leaving her position.

And the problem with that, was although I set aside my stuff, other people in the lab in the day time would use my stuff and not clean it up and they caused quite a lot of my experiments to be set back because of things like glassware being contaminated and screwing up all my results. So I had to start again and my supervisor was not managing the team properly in terms of telling them: 'look this is Hayley's area, this is her stuff, and you do not touch it.' It was incredibly frustrating.

HAYLEY

It was clear in the interview, that recalling these events was distressing for Hayley. She felt victimised by colleagues and also let down by her boss, because he failed to take supportive action. As a result, Hayley experienced negative horizontal and vertical workplace relations.

Dot was also bullied by managers in relation to absence, as discussed earlier. Managers made snide comments about her sick leave record and “*snubbing*” her at work. As a result of this bullying she was even more reluctant and concerned about her return to work.

Reaction

When the participants were bullied how did they react? After the incidents of bullying started each of the participants took action to eliminate the bullying, albeit it through different means. Sophie found her own way around issues by befriending colleagues and using this relationship to banish misconceptions:

So I thought I would let them know me as 'Sophie the nurse' and see if they would get to know me as an individual first, gain their trust so that they can know and understand me and feel confident that I'm not a nurse who is going to go in and stop them doing their usual practices that maybe I didn't like but they were used to.

SOPHIE

For Sophie, befriending was instrumental in helping her deal with her disability at work; a form of coping strategy. This strategy was effective as it stopped people gossiping and she was able to banish any myths surrounding her condition. Pam and Hayley, although they did not turn to anyone for support, were still pro-active in managing the situation. Hayley just got her ‘head down’ and continued her studies

and Pam left her role and decided to change career. Dot was the only participant who was less proactive in her response to the bullying. Dot was reluctant to find support for bullying could be because she felt she was reluctant to return to work because it was an interim job while she learnt to cope with her impairment. In contrast, for Sophie, Hayley and Pam their jobs were career jobs and therefore they may have perceived it worthwhile locating support. In all four cases of bullying none of the participants took formal action against their employers, or discussed the events with their line manager. When questioned about their failure to take formal action it transpired that they thought either nothing would be done, or that it just was not worth the fight.

Impact

According to the data what were the effects of bullying? As reported earlier, Dot felt she would not return to work as a result of bullying, similarly the bullying affected Pam so badly that she had to leave her position:

There was no point going back to her and telling her things were getting worse or things were the same. I think I was too scared to take it further and I did go and see the head of student services at one point but I couldn't bring myself to say that I was being bullied by these people because I wasn't sure it would be dealt with in the right way and I also felt that if I didn't have my manager on my side then it would be a lost cause and she could basically say what she liked and it would be her word against mine. The bullying got worse over time and in the end I thought to myself 'I just have to get out, it's going to be the only way to get away from it really.

PAM

Pam's experience highlights how management can group together to protect one another. She did not want to contact her boss's boss because she felt it would be detrimental and not solve the problem.

Summary

In summary there were only four instances of bullying in the sample. The bullying resulted in poor mental health for the participants and job losses. This finding reflects earlier research which shows that bullying results in mental distress (Rayner et al.,

2002). The research also confirms that bullying can drive out workers from an organisation (Vega and Comer, 2005). It was not possible to ascertain whether horizontal or vertical bullying was more common as many participants experienced both. When comparing with existing research it would appear that being bullied because of a disability is not that different to being bullied for any other reason. There is one twist to the story, however – research shows usually people take advice from colleagues, friends and CSOs about bullying. The disabled graduates in the sample did not take advice from anyone. This point indicates this finding could be distinct to disabled graduates. It could be suggested that they failed to take advice because they felt ashamed or that there was no one who would understand their situation. Additionally, of concern - given that bullying is proven to cause mental distress, this could be more damaging for disabled graduates who already have a mental health impairment.

Stigma, Discrimination and Legal Protection

The chapter now turns to consider the experience of stigma, discrimination, grievances and use of equality legislation. Of note, during the course of the research new legislation was introduced. In October 2010 the Equality Act, 2010 came into force, which replaced the previous Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its subsequent amendments. Some of the participants, therefore, were questioned under the latter legislation, while others under the new legislation. Despite the changes in legislation the participants' attitudes to the law of disability were the same and did not improve as the legislation was reformed.

The literature review established that despite an increase in the scope and depth of equality legislation unfairness at work still exists. The majority of literature on disability in work charts vast experiences of discrimination at work from failure to get suitable jobs to managers' prejudice (see Barnes and Mercer, 1999, 2005; Foster and Fosh, 2007, 2009; and Woodhams and Corby, 2003). The literature review showed how the current two pronged approach is considered ineffective to enforce the legislation (Colling, 2012; Dickens, 2012a). The literature review considered how

employment tribunals are partially ineffective because they rely on workers knowing their rights yet many workers are not aware of their rights (Gooding, 2000). As a result many cases go unreported (Colling, 2012; Dickens, 2012b). The second method of enforcement was the administrative approach which was also seen to be lacking because the sanctions are considered weak (Deakin et al., 2011). What were the experiences of the participants in work – did they face discrimination and stigma, did these cases lead to grievances and how well did the law protect them in such situations?

Literature also reports that membership of a minority group is not an exclusive activity; many people belong to more than one minority group simultaneously. In order to understand this concept the theory of intersectionality is used to explore the nature of the interaction between these multiple memberships and is essential to discovering shared oppressions and integrated interests (Foster & Williams, 2010) and to conceptualise the individual differences instead of social group differences, compounded through the equal opportunities approach (Greene & Kirton, 2006). Was compounded disadvantage and intersectionality a problem for the participants?

The participants did face unfairness at work; the data is full of numerous examples of unfair treatment. Unfairness at work manifested itself in two ways, through stigma and discrimination. The data showed more incidents of stigma than actual discrimination. In terms of employment related discrimination, 11 participants reported instances of discrimination. This is in comparison to 18 accounts of stigma. Below are some examples of the stigma the participants faced.

but the attitudes I got from people was that there was no place for me there, there was no credibility for some young disabled woman to be saying, actually, I should be able to talk on the same level as you about my work, as you do about yours...A professor, who was chair of the committee at the time said, um... said he had grave concerns about disabled students doing postgraduate degrees, especially at Ph.D level, as it would lead to a dilution of academic standards!

HAYLEY

Hayley is used as the main example of stigma. Hayley experienced stigma not only because of her disability but also because of her age during her postgraduate degree.

The impact of the stigma participants faced was huge. In some cases it led to David, Lucy and Paul self-selecting career paths that meant they would face the least resistance.

I went down that avenue then instead of thinking about getting a job. I had thought about how I could use my qualification to get work but it left me a bit negative really because I think they might see the disability before they see the qualification. If I asked if I could work from home three days a week it could all bring up barriers before they even offer you the job, so it's not something I've tended to pursue; I've gone down the self-employment route instead.

LUCY

In David, Lucy and Paul's situations they took action to manoeuvre around the stigma, they avoided the situation that generated the stigma. Lucy and Paul achieved this through self-employment and David by ignoring the fact he had not got a job because of the incorrect assumptions someone made about his abilities.

Source of Discrimination

Turning to explore the incidents of discrimination, a vast range of incidents were reported, from victimisation to institutional discrimination including failure to access jobs due to impairments and employers being unwilling to alter premises. Below is a brief presentation of a few incidences of discrimination.

I worked for a counselling association, part time as a counsellor and I would like to think that I was a reasonable counsellor but again my disability came into it because sometimes a client would actually not want to see me because I was disabled because they felt I wasn't up to the job...

JOANNA

Joanna was really annoyed about this incident. She felt her employer should have stepped in and supported her. The employer did nothing to support Joanna and relocated clients to other counsellors. This situation compounded the experience for Joanna and left her feeling very low and she did not fight the situation. Paul, on the other hand fought.

I brought an action because I applied for a post in 2004 as part of the criteria which wasn't advertised in the advert, I actually did ring and speak to the person, it said find out more about this post ring, and I spoke to head of department and I said I am an older person and a disabled person but I have experience and they said I was just the person they wanted. Then the application form came and the criteria "essential – car user". I rang up and said I can't drive but there is A2W which would allow me to do what you need. They said "no, no sorry application rejected". So within three minutes I was on to a CSO within 8 minutes I had had a fax stating where X were wrong and I sent a letter to the CEO, got a letter back apologising that they had discriminated against me but that in the meantime the job had gone to someone internally.

PAUL

Paul was very happy with the outcome of this case, he received an apology and the employer admitted they were wrong. Despite Paul receiving an apology he still did not receive a job offer from the company. Paul's situation is an example of indirect discrimination.

All the episodes of discrimination were analysed and it was found that incidents of discrimination were almost always preceded by episodes of stigma. Evidence from the data, suggests that what turns stigma into discrimination is the need for an employer to make changes to working practices, a lack of knowledge or the need to undertake a task, previously untested.

Basically there wasn't enough money in the DSA for me to have someone with me for the duration of that training course. I got an agreement from the department that they would fund it, but I didn't get any money up front. So in the end, I found a friend of mine, who said she wouldn't charge me as long as I paid for accommodation and food, she would be there with me but she didn't have any chemical understanding or knowledge about the technology and stuff. It helped, but it was not adequate at all. But I still had to pay for that. It was only when I threatened to sue the department that they coughed up the money. So it was the fact that department was expecting me to shut up, put up with it and not cause a fuss and that added to my financial pressures as well. It was like, what am I doing, how can I have the career I want to have if I am being sent to these things that are not accessible?

HAYLEY

they just couldn't get their heads around how the DDA would apply to me. I would ask them if I could leave early some days in order to boost my energy levels, and come in early other days, and they said: "well what if other people want to leave early?" and I tried to explain that the other people weren't disabled, so that would be different situation! So they had real trouble getting their head around this sort of thing and it just became increasingly difficult for me to work due to the inflexibility.

GEORGIA

Hayley and Georgia's examples demonstrate how employers are reluctant to make changes to the workplace and this reluctance can result in discrimination. Hayley needed someone with her to attend a conference and the department were very reluctant to make funds available for her to have the support she needed. Georgia found her employer was very reluctant to make changes because he could not see how the changes were justifiable.

The second reason stigma results in discrimination, is the discriminators' lack of understanding of disability. The data has many examples of situations when an employer does not understand a situation, usually has poor knowledge of a particular disability and as a result reacts in a discriminatory manner.

Back then it was oh... you can't be nurse and have epilepsy as it puts the patients at risk. So many, many years ago at 21, I'm now 47, they tried to stop me from being a nurse. They said I was unfit, unsafe to practice and I was putting patients at risk, reported me to the UK CC and to the Fitness Board...

SOPHIE

Sophie's example illustrates how her employer did not understand how epilepsy would affect her in the workplace and as a result of their ignorance chose to discriminate against her.

The data found no examples of compounded discrimination. There were several gay, female disabled participants in the sample but they did not report stigma or discrimination in relation to their multiple identities. Sally for example said that "*not many people know that I am gay, I don't think it is an issue.*" Given that LGBT status is a 'hidden' issue, as reported by Day and Schonerade (2000) it could be that intersectionality was not an issue because the participants hide this aspect of their identity. Additionally, only Joanna reported being discriminated against in the computer industry because she was female, but this occurred before her impairment began to adversely impact her life and prior to her considering herself disabled.

Participants' Response

Given the ubiquitous nature of discrimination in the data, what was the participants' response to discrimination? In order to understand the cases in the data, the incidences of discrimination are detailed in the table 7.2 below. The incidents of discrimination are cause for grievances and have been labelled as this in the table.

Table 6-2: Experience of Stigma and Discrimination

Participant	Grievance			Grievance Action?	Rationale	Support	Outcome
	Stigma	Discrimination	Cause				
Sophie	Epilepsy is a form of possession.	Removed from her nursing duties.	Employer's lack of understanding of epilepsy.	Grievances and potential employment tribunal	She believed she had been discriminated against	Trade union involvement by 'accident'	Case was not yet concluded and Sophie was still on sick leave.
David	People on sticks cannot play games.	Not offered job on the grounds of inability to play games, which were a non-essential part of the role	Unwilling to make reasonable adjustments	Complained to hiring company.	Their decision was unfair.	None	None
Claire	Deaf people cannot undertake customer facing roles	Not given skill appropriate levels of work.	Employer's inability to consider new ways of working or implement assistive technology.	None	NA	NA	Left her position.
Dot	'sick' people are not worth employing.	Unreasonable action taken against her for sick leave	Employer was unwilling to see issue as a disability.	Grievance and potential employment tribunal.	She believed she had been discriminated against.	Trade union support because she had built up a relationship with the equality officer through-out the grievance case.	The case was not concluded at the time of the interview.
Joanna	Disabled people are not as skilled	Clients refusing to see disabled counsellor	Employer unwilling to educate clients on their attitudes.	Complained to line managers.	She felt this was unfair and she was not able to use the skills she had.	None	She left the organisation.

Participant	Grievance			Grievance Action?	Rationale	Support	Outcome
	Stigma	Discrimination	Cause				
Jessica	People who are paralysed are not easy to employ.	Building was unsuitable and lack of facilities provided	Employer lack of ability to adapt working patterns.	Complained to CSO	She felt she had something to offer employers but unless someone gave her a chance she would get nowhere.	CSO – advice.	Employers told to improve practices.
Duncan	He was not performing well at work therefore he must be incompetent.	Told to improve or he would get the sack.	Employers did not provide the RAs that he needed.	He wanted to take legal action against the company, but was not sure what action to take	He believed he had been discriminated against.	He had support and advice from his parents.	After a meeting with his parents management gave him what he needed.
Emma	Buildings do not need to be adjusted	Poor physical access to buildings.	Emma could not get into the organisation for her job interview.	She challenged the companies because they were breaking the DDA.	They were breaking the law as all buildings have to be physically accessible.	No-one	She was unable to secure work at the inaccessible organisations.
Georgia			Was injured through a poorly maintained access ramp.	She sued the company.	Lack of duty of care.	Friends and family gave her advice.	She received compensation and an apology from the company.
Hayley	Disabled people should not be doing PG courses.	Not making adjustments for those who are disabled on PG courses.	Lack of necessary reasonable adjustments	She thought about suing the company.	She felt discriminated against.	Advice from a friend who had been through a similar situation at the same workplace.	She decided not to take action as she was fearful it would block her progress in her organisation.
	Disabled people do not need adjustments for work	Failure to supply financial means for assistance	Lack of necessary reasonable adjustments	She thought about suing the company	She felt discriminated against and frustrated	none	She decided it was not worth the fight.

Participant	Grievance			Grievance Action?	Rationale	Support	Outcome
	Stigma	Discrimination	Cause				
Paul			Had an accident at work which resulted in his life changing injuries.	He tried to sue the company for compensation.	Lack of duty of care.	He received advice from solicitors.	He was unable to make a claim against the company due to it operating in many different countries.
	A car is necessary to carry out the job.	Job application unfairly refused on grounds of disability	Employers lack of knowledge of impairment and unwillingness to adapt to new ways of working.	Complained to organisation with support of CSO	Breaking the law	advice	Apology from organisation.
Sally	Guide dogs cannot enter a school	Refused placements due to presence of guide dog	Unaware of legislation and unwilling to make changes to work practices.	None taken	NA	NA	NA
Pam	An impairment stops a person performing well at work.	Refusing disabled applications.	She was not given a job when she felt she was the strongest.	She challenged the company about their hiring decision.	She felt her disability had played a role in their hiring decision.	She received advice from a CSO.	She did not take any further action other than complaining about their decision. Nothing more was done.
Sandra	Disabled people more hassle to employ	Refused job on grounds of flexible working request.	Inability of employers to adopt flexible working practices.	None taken	NA	NA	NA

Using this data it is possible to ascertain that the majority of the sample failed to take formal action, as was seen in response to bullying and harassment, reported earlier. When causes for this failure to take action were investigated, four key reasons were identified; poor knowledge of legislation, the negative impact of taking action, an inability to prove discrimination had occurred and fear of the consequences of action.

A significant issue in taking action was related to the participants' knowledge of legislation. The majority were not aware of legislation's provision and did not know what their rights were. The few participants who were knowledgeable and were confident to use legislation were the participants who worked in equality. For the participants who lacked knowledge, a disability related CSO was the preferred source of information. In the data only two participants talked about tribunals and neither had taken action against their employer through Employment Tribunals (ETs). Both Dot and Sophie saw value in taking their employers to an ET but hoped issues could be resolved before getting to this stage.

I wouldn't have a clue, I am assuming the Union could point me in the right direction, but no I am not going without a fight and I think they realise that now...

DOT

Sophie was particularly happy to take formal action against her employers if the situation could not be resolved by other means.

The second concern when using legislation was that taking action against an employer would impact negatively on their health.

... but I think I got to a point where I got fed up fighting, fed up of asking for things that I wasn't going to get. I also found the job quite stressful so I was using a lot of energy to do the job and I didn't have enough left over to cope with fighting them as well, not fighting them

PAM

As a result participants refrained from holding employers accountable.

The third reason many cases of discrimination and grievances went unreported was that participants felt the legislation did not provide adequate coverage and their ability to 'prove' what had happened was questionable,

We did have a few instances where playschools would just turn me down and I would say 'you are not allowed to do that' but basically it wasn't worth the fight. I think legislation is a really grey area and not everyone understands it at the moment and society doesn't really pick up on what it actually means.

EMMA

I know the legislation, but what is that going to do if I go into an interview, I get interviewed and I fail. Who's to say they are not discriminating me. They are giving me the interview but they are not giving me the job. So in that space in-between who's to say they are not discriminating against me. They can say we are Equal Opportunity. We have given her a chance; she didn't meet the criteria so who is to say they are discriminating me in-between.

MARY

Emma's situation disheartened her so much she ended up changing her dream of a school career. Mary also felt like giving up. These examples show that when discrimination occurs in recruitment and selection the participants feel the discrimination is harder to prove. They feel they are not covered by employment law because they are not yet employed, but at the same time do not know how the law protects them.

The final reason participants did not take action about discrimination and/or grievance is they felt scared about taking action.

...you know... I think I would be scared to... I don't think I would, if I am honest. When that lady said that to me in the interview I really wanted to challenge her when she was just being honest... that was just her wanting to know. The thing is it is so hard because it does impact on my work, it does mean that I am not as thorough and it does mean ... which is what I struggle with in my own head, almost. At the same time I really wanted to challenge her, because you cannot say that, it is complete prejudice against me, but I was too scared. So I don't think I would if it came to it.

ROSE

The majority of the participants felt that nothing would be achieved if they did take action and they did not want to be labelled as a troublemaker by an employer.

Summary

The research showed that, in line with wider literature, unfairness is still an on-going experience for many people in the labour market (Barnes and Mercer, 2005; Dickens, 2012a). In general, the concerns of the graduates reflect other research findings which indicate that many discrimination cases go under the radar because people do not take action (Dickens, 2012b). The literature review raised the question of the efficacy of employment tribunals however there were only two cases of potential ETs, therefore there is not enough material to comment on whether they are an effective means of implementing legislation. The data did show that a key variable in whether the participants were willing to use legislation to protect them was how knowledgeable they were about the law. This reflects wider literature that says many people are unaware of their legal rights (Barnes and Mercer, 2005; Colling and Dickens, 2012, Dickens, 2012a). Furthermore, the data suggests the participants felt that legislation favoured employers, as they could not prove what happens in these 'grey' areas, in particular in the recruitment and selection process. The literature search did not uncover any literature that alluded to this point.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the experience of being in a job. The first area that was explored was absenteeism. The data showed that a small number of the sample reported long term absence. The majority of these participants had a negative experience with only a small number having positive experience of absence. The negative experiences included disciplinary procedures and losing jobs due to sick-leave records. All of these participants experienced inflexible absence policies and procedures with little support from management. The two people who had positive experience of absence related this to their sector of employment-education. The data showed that none of the participants had experienced disability leave and HR managers saw in it little value. The data only had one case of a graduated return-to-work-programme but this was reported to be very helpful. The participants reported not wanting to take time off for disability related matters because they did not want to appear weak. This finding on presenteeism, therefore adds an extra dimension to work by Caverley et al. (2007) and Baker-McClearn et al's (2009) where workers

engaged in presenteeism when sick pay was withdrawn or there was a threat of dismissal or disciplinary action. The data showed there was relatively equal distribution between all three sectors in the sample but the majority of participants worked in a disability related role. It was in these disability related roles that the participants reported the most supportive environment; in particular those roles that reflected their own personal impairment. The research showed that only a small number of participants reported bullying which was both horizontal and vertical. Each incident of bullying was a negative experience for the participants resulting in some leaving their positions. The data on stigma and discrimination showed that the participants did face unfairness at work. Many participants did not want to take legal action because they felt fear, did not know their rights, would be unable to prove discrimination had happened and felt it would have a negative impact on their health.

The greater number of disabled people on short term contracts (Schur, 2003) is of concern for disabled people because this research shows the disabled graduates were more likely to lose their jobs because of absence if they were on non-standard contracts. The issue of presenteeism showed some distinct features for the disabled graduates. The literature reports that people do not want to take time off work because they feel they are needed in work and want to be in work to appear a model employee (Aronsson et al., 2000 and Hansson, et al., 2006). In contrast, what this research indicates is that the disabled graduates do not want to take time off because they do not want to appear weak. The disabled graduates' experience of bullying also has a unique feature to that reported in the literature. The literature states that victims usually seek advice from CSOs, trade unions and family and friends (Rayner et al., 2002), in contrast the disabled graduates did not seek help from anyone. This finding potentially questions work by Pollert and Charlwood (2009) who found that the majority workers took advice before taking action about bullying. Bullying had the same effects on the sample as those reported by Rayner et al. (2002) such as chronic stress and anxiety, physical ill health, lower social support from colleagues and mental distress.

Additionally the research found line managers attributed secondary importance to equality and diversity matters, as found by Gonas (2004). These findings support work by Liff (1999) and Forth and Rincon-Aznar, (2008); the empirical research furthers literature because they identify a gap between policy and practice as training was notably absent. These findings also indicate support for Hoque and Noon's (2004) hollow shell idea because policies were in place in many organisations but the participants did not see them put into practice. The HR managers reported that it was usually the line manager who dealt with sick leave policies and decisions were at his or her discretion, highlighting the variability disabled employees would be subject to, which echoes work by Cunningham and Hyman, (1995).

The variation in the experience of work can be attributed, firstly, to the sector of employment. Those working in the education sector had a more positive experience of sickness absence. In addition organisations that had flexible policies were the most supportive, indicating that the type of organisation a person works in and the organisation's policies have an impact on their experience of work. The presence of a union also has some mediating impact on absence, as indicated by the data. Again, the presence of an impairment and stigma are sources of variation. For example, impairment and stigma are what drives the participants to want to come to work when they are not well enough because they do not want to appear weak. The personality type of the participant and their willingness to seek advice was another source of variation. For example, those who took action against instances of discrimination were more likely to receive a positive outcome than those who simply left the organisation to avoid the situation.

The next chapter explores the issues related to management relations and reasonable adjustments.

Chapter Seven: The Role of Line Managers and Effective Workplace Support

Introduction

This chapter presents empirical findings regarding the disabled graduate experiences of management which includes reasonable adjustments and Access to Work. Due to these topics being referred to by a number of respondents as being integral to their successful experiences of work, these findings are presented separately from other empirical data to explore them in more depth. Reasonable adjustments are the accommodations an employer has to make to enable a disabled person to work. The Access to Work programme is government funded and reduces barriers to work for disabled people by funding adjustments.

The chapter is structured as follows: firstly, the relationships between disabled employees and management are explored, in order to provide a context to the second section, which contains the findings on reasonable adjustments. Finally, the evidence of use of the Access to Work programme is presented and discussed. Each of these three sections begins with a preamble that summarises relevant literature, before the empirical results are described.

Relations with Management

The literature review explored a number of key themes in relation to line managers. The first theme was the trend for HR activities to be devolved to the line (Cunningham and Hyman, 1995). This theme noted that line managers were often inconsistent in their application of HR policies and that this was particularly concerning for equality and diversity (Cunningham and Hyman, 1999; Watson et al., 2007). The second theme concerned the role of equality specialists and champions. The literature discussed how these actors can be key mediators of change in organisations and may play a role in implementing law and public policy (Goss et al., 2000, Hoque and Noon 2004). The third central theme was the importance of supportive, informal arrangements with line managers, especially in relation to

flexibility, which could be particularly important for disabled people. The literature indicated personnel with a responsibility for diversity are important in an organisation and this can take the form of diversity champions – diversity champions are usually senior general managers, e.g. board directors who give weight to diversity policy. While the champions can be positive for equality, EAUFR (2009) found they face barriers in their work because the commitment to equality is not reflected through-out the organisation (Colgan, 2012; Healy and Oikelome, 2007). Therefore the role of specialists can be problematic in organizations when there is mixed commitment to diversity.

There is relatively little research about how minority groups interact with line managers. Existing literature shows that disabled employees are more likely to encounter good practice¹² when specialist HR managers are present, which usually occurs in larger organisations (Hoque and Noon 2004, Goss et al., 2000). The research literature shows that other important factors affecting positive experiences for disabled employees were membership of the ‘Two Ticks’ scheme and the use of external advisors(see Goss et al, 2000).

Line Managers and Equality Specialists

The first area to be addressed is who was responsible for equality and diversity and the E&D training line managers received. Attention will be paid to the disabled graduates’ experiences of line managers’ knowledge of policies and willingness to help disabled graduates.

Availability of Specialist Equality Staff

Firstly, how important were specialist equality and diversity HR personnel? The participants often reported not knowing who to contact if they had a disability related concern. The evidence suggests that there was not a named disability specialist in many of the organisations.

¹² In this study, this means the awareness of and preparedness to take steps that can improve access to employment, understanding of legislation and the willingness to embark on voluntary projects.

About 6 months into the post they [line manager] decided to do a review of my situation, and I thereby found out the name of one contact in Facilities Management who could be of some use re disability things, and I eventually (through sending many, many emails) found out the name of the person in HR with whom the buck apparently stops on similar, but that's as far as I've got re gaining contacts...

DAVID

David worked in a large public sector organisation and got very frustrated when he tried to arrange his disability support. It was only through his personal determination and perseverance that he located the right people, to get the correct support he needed. Without this support David would not have been able to access the building and receive the physical adaptations that made his job possible. Sandra had a similar experience to David.

...the honest answer is, I don't know [if there is a disability-specific HR manager]. There might be but I've never needed to go. If I have ever had an issue I have raised it with my line manager and we have dealt with it there.

SANDRA

Sandra, despite working in a large public sector organisation, was also unsure of who to contact but felt confident that her line manager would be able to deal with any issues. This confidence was based on her line manager successfully dealing with issues in the past.

The data suggests that participants working in the field of equality or in a disability organisation are more likely to have a named and visible member of staff to contact for disability support.

yes I would have a named person to go to; it would be my line manager's line manager because of where I am I have access to that but I think for other people it would be either the staff networks or they could approach our team directly.

JOE

Joe worked in the equality department of a large public sector organisation and therefore was aware of who to contact for disability support. Joe was confident that he would be able to contact someone because he knew how the equality department operated, he worked there. He was less confident that members of staff who did not work in the equality department would know where to obtain support.

Emma attributed the availability of key disability support staff to her organisation working in the disability field.

Yes [there is a named person to contact]. She co-ordinates Access to Work(A2W) and support and is supportive and approachable. I think their ability to engage with A2W and be supportive is linked to them being a service user organisation.

EMMA

This data indicates variation in the availability of disability specialists for advice and support. Emma is an example of those in working in the disability sector that attributed the availability of support to working in a disability environment. Joe and Sandra also had insider knowledge of disability in their organisations because they worked in the equality team. Their own team were responsible for supporting disabled employees.

In all 16 organisations from the HR interviews, someone had direct responsibility for managing disability, usually the member of staff being interviewed. The level of responsibility varied greatly: some HR managers had responsibility just for disability, others for all nine protected characteristics. Naturally, those managers who had to attend to all protected characteristics had less time for disability matters.

In terms of the HR interviews all of the 16 interviewees stated that line managers should be contacted to deal with equality and diversity, in the first instance. There was variation, however, in terms of disability champions and senior HR support. Some organisations had senior managers in HR that would support line managers in issues that were more complex or unusual while others did not. For those who did not have a senior disability or equality specialists it was up to the line manager, solely, to sort out equality problems. This variation can be attributed to the sector of the organisation. All of the public sector organisations interviewed had senior HR equality and diversity managers, while only two of the private sector organisations had such personnel. One of the roles of equality personnel is equality monitoring. When questioned about equality monitoring all public sector organisations carried this out, as outlined in the Public Sector Equality Duties. In contrast only half of the

private sector organisations carried out such monitoring, all of which were considered exemplary in the field of diversity.

Networks were also a key responsibility of E&D staff. The majority of the private sector organisations had a disability network and one of those that did not had it as an action point for the near future. The majority of the public sector also had networks and they were generally regarded as positive. The quote below shows the HR manager from a large private sector talking about the role of their network.

We have employee networkers for: disability, ethnic minorities, women and LGBT. Their purpose is to help provide a focus area for the company to test waters about certain things; we run focus groups to understand how people feel and come up with action plans. Personally, I wonder if there is a stigma from being associated with network, but maybe not because they are growing

HR MANAGER PRIVATE SECTOR

This quote shows that the network is not just for the benefit of the employees but also for the benefit of the employer to allow them to test out new initiatives. This was a common theme that emerged from many of the private sector network groups.

In addition the HR managers reported a role for external bodies such as the Business Disability Forum. They reported that the forum was helpful for support and advice but often the cost of joining was hard to justify in an economic downturn. Many managers were hopeful that as the economy improved they would be able to re-instate the services of external bodies such as these.

Summary

The data shows patterns of variation. The first source of variation is the role in which the participant is working. The evidence suggests that if a person works has a disability related role they are more likely to be aware of specialist support available.

Furthermore, the data suggests that a public sector organisation is more likely to have senior HR managers responsible for equality and diversity, which improve the position of disabled staff. As a result of these findings it can be suggested that one source of variation is the sector in which the disabled graduate works and the HR structure in the organisation. The literature reports that senior managers are highly visible in organisations (Healy and Oikelome, 2007), however this finding was not supported by the data. The data showed that the participants only became aware of senior manager disability champions when they had difficulties in work. The research, therefore points to two concerns that specialisation could be important but also that there needs to be access to that specialist knowledge. Further insights show that those who have a named disability person to contact fare better and have more positive experiences in the workplace. Furthermore external bodies such as the Business Disability Forum and networks were beneficial for minority employees.

Training

A second concern is training received by line managers. The majority of the HR managers, who were interviewed, reported that they did not provide specific disability training and the majority of training was voluntary. They would advise line managers to contact HR if any disability related concerns arose. Yet, despite this advice only 10 of the 16 organisations had a specialist HR advisor for equality and diversity, as discussed above.

The quote below shows the attitude of one of the large private sector organisations.

We do offer training to our line managers regarding equality and diversity. All nine protected characteristics are covered, so naturally disability is one of them. There is not a great attendance at these events, but I suppose this isn't surprising, given that they are not compulsory. We do encourage line managers to attend, but we do not force them.

HR Manager, large private sector organisation.

It could be suggested that if training was mandatory then more knowledge would be passed to HR managers.

The data showed variation in the provision of equality and diversity training. Only three organisations ran compulsory training for line managers; two were large public sector organisations and one was a large private sector organisation. The HR managers from the majority of the organisations reported that line managers did not like attending training and for those who did attend training there was no formal method of assessing whether they had adopted new concepts.

Data indicates that the provision of training varied by sector and approach to equality and diversity employed by the organisation. The literature suggested diversity training is more likely in the public sector and in larger organisations (Hoque and Noon, 2004; Wanrooy et al., 2013). This finding is supported by the data in the thesis. Furthermore, the empirical research showed that only three organisations had compulsory training and this could potentially be one factor to explain why experiences are poor for many disabled graduates

Knowledge of Disability

The third question to answer is did the graduates believe that line managers had adequate knowledge of disability and organisational policies? The general thrust of the findings was that the participants felt that their line managers had little or no experience of dealing with disability. The impact of line managers' lack of knowledge was also relatively uniform; negative experiences in work for employees because of

lack of provision and understanding. Sophie and Duncan's situations provide illustrations.

And from then on she stopped being my line manager; she transferred over because she felt she wasn't suitably trained to deal with disabilities in the workplace. She said she had extensive training in physical disabilities but because this was a learning disability then maybe she wasn't suitable. So I got handed over to another person to deal with me; who was even less suitably qualified because it is not something that is common in the workplace.

SOPHIE

Sophie is referring to when her line manager changed her role because she did not feel qualified to cope with Sophie's situation, which disgusted Sophie. She could not believe that in a healthcare environment the line managers had little experience of disability. This was similar to Duncan.

They are quite a small company and they have never had anyone with disabilities, certainly not dyslexia so it was a very new case for them... But I'm still quite annoyed about this because they knew and they tried to pile all the blame on me. They [line manager] obviously hadn't done any research or if they had they were keeping quiet about it. I don't know which one that was.

DUNCAN

Duncan was particularly annoyed about his 'run in' with line management because it happened some months after he began work and he had already informed them of his impairment. Duncan's situation arose because line management did not feel that he was working to a high enough standard, this added to Duncan's feeling of indignation. Sally was also indignant about having line management problems. Sally has a visual impairment and felt annoyed that on the one hand the college were happy to use her disability related experiences to enhance their services for disabled users, but on the other hand they were not prepared to implement support.

I always find myself having to explain to my manager: I am visually impaired, I am going to an environment that I don't know, how on earth do you expect me to find my way around? That is not me putting those barriers there that's just how it is; so little things like that worry me. That may mean me having to have another chat with Access to Work to see if they can support me.

SALLY

The context of the quote above is that Sally was asked to attend a training event at a different college in a different city. Sally had not been to this college before or indeed

to the city. Sally informed her line manager that she would need to take a carer with her to the event as she would not be able to find her way around. The line manager could not see why this would be necessary and only after a few discussions did they relent and release funds for a carer.

The results about management knowledge of disability were fairly uniform- knowledge was poor. This result reflects work by Cunningham and James (1998).

Poor Cooperation and Lack of Understanding

The evidence also shows that line managers were reluctant to cooperate with disabled employees. Line managers often made adjustments on behalf of the disabled employees, without consultation. This effectively marginalized the voices of the disabled graduates, made them frustrated and led to inaccurate provision.

On my first day my [line] manager told me that she had never worked with a deaf person before, I felt that she was nervous and perhaps worried of the fact I was deaf. She was going into uncharted territory despite her working at the police station for very many years...The fact that the team (my manager in particular) felt I was vulnerable kept cropping up, especially when dealing with the more difficult 'customers' i.e. visitors to the station... Maybe my manager did have safety concerns and had my best interests at heart as she did have years of experience in the job. She may have had bad experiences working on the front desk; it is possible she thought that if she and other hearing members of staff had problems I would be a sitting duck.

CLAIRE

Claire, who was on a disabled graduate placement training scheme, left this placement because of lack of co-operation and support, she felt she could not operate effectively. Management put adjustments into place without consulting her. The only adjustments she required for her front desk role were a hearing loop and a special microphone for the customers. This situation could have been easily avoided had management spoken to Claire about her needs.

The participants also accused line managers of failing to understand their conditions and see their concerns as significant. Keith had low-levels of energy and needed to

work hours that allowed him enough time to rest but his manager was reluctant to offer him flexible working.

...the next managers came in, they weren't very considerate of my problems with tiredness. They kept on giving me late shifts then back in on early the next day and they kept on pushing me and pushing me...

KEITH

Pam's manager also did not see her requests as significant enough to warrant action. This lax attitude by her manager led to Pam's health deteriorating.

And eventually I ended up with health problems again because of that I went to my line manager who was a different line manager [than before]. He wouldn't do anything about it, didn't want to know; said that I was the only person having problems so why should they do... things just for me.

PAM

The fact that it was only Pam who needed adjustments should not have stopped the employer making the necessary accommodations. Similar to the other participants, Pam was astonished the line manager believed that this reason was justifiable. It would appear from the data that energy impairments were particularly poorly understood by line managers.

From these three cases it is clear that it was common for line managers to lack knowledge of disability and preparedness to educate themselves about disability. The data suggests that line managers' lack of knowledge stems from little mandatory training. Poor organisational systems are likely to be the reason for few training opportunities; however, the participants blamed the line managers personally for their failures. These findings support earlier work by Liff (1999) and Colling and Dickens (1998) that devolution of HR line management may not be positive for equality outcomes.

Reasonable Adjustments

The second central theme in this chapter is reasonable adjustments. The literature review discussed how reasonable adjustments are enshrined in legislation, and how an employer has to make reasonable accommodations to ensure a disabled employee is able to carry out their job to the best of their ability. There is, however, confusion over the meaning of 'reasonable adjustment' and the term is poorly understood among employers (Roberts et al., 2004). The literature review focused on the difficulties disabled workers faced securing adjustments and found that line managers were key in the successful implementation of adjustments (Foster, 2007), reflecting the debates discussed above. Further key points that emerged from the literature showed employers regarded adjustments as cost prohibitive (Schur, 2003) and employees in part-time work and on non-standard contracts were less likely to obtain adjustments (Shuey and Jovic, 2013).

The literature review established that time related adjustments were popular and largely took the form of part-time or flexitime arrangements. Working time was not only used as a method of obtaining adjustments but also as ways by which people managed work-life balance (Abendroth and Den Dulk, 2011). While time-related adjustments are popular, part-time work has been shown to be less likely to be compatible with promotion, being taken seriously and can result in lower status (Kirby and Krone, 2002). Did the data therefore show that any participants were engaged in time related adjustments and were they hard to secure?

The literature review also detailed the large volume of literature that deals with how employees cope with stress at work. This literature has given rise to what is known as 'coping strategies' (Carver et al., 1989) and communities of coping (Korczynski, 2003). The literature has tried to understand the types of strategies that workers use to cope with these pressures, as well as the determinants and outcomes of workplace coping strategies, which the literature review linked to the ability to achieve work-life balance. What types of coping strategies were present among the sample?

Using the above key points from the literature review it is possible to structure the data to answer research problems-how common were requests for adjustments, who was responsible for implementing the adjustments, how were they achieved and what was the outcome for the participants?

General Trends

The interviews generated a plethora of information about reasonable adjustments. The ability of participants to negotiate successful reasonable adjustments impacted greatly on their perception of successful employment, and in some cases the lack of reasonable adjustments resulted in unemployment.

The sample generated data about 35 jobs. Of these 35 jobs, 22 jobs received adjustments; the remainder did not receive any, either because requests were refused or because the participant did not request any adjustments. Table 7.1 summarises key information regarding the participants and their reasonable adjustments.

Table 7-1: Reasonable Adjustments Required

Name	Job Description	Sector	Type of Reasonable Adjustment	Method to Obtain RA	Successful
Sophie	Healthcare Advisor	Public	Technology	Formal	No
	Healthcare Provider	Public	Work Itself	Formal	Yes
Amelia	Teacher (Self Employed)	Private	Technology	Formal	Yes
Claire	Civil Servant	Public	Technology Personal Assistant	Extra-organisational	No
	Civil Servant	Public	Technology Personal Assistant	Formal	Yes
	Civil Servant	Public	Technology Personal Assistant	Formal	No
Dot	Finance and Banking Advisor	Private	Time	Formal	No
Duncan	Science and Technology Lab based	Private	Work Itself	Informal	Yes

Emma	Voluntary Sector	3 rd Sector	Physical Personal Assistant	Extra-organisational	Yes
Georgia	Academic	Public	Time	Extra-organisational	No
	Academic	Public	Time	Formal	Yes
Hayley	Academic	Public	Technology Personal Assistant	Formal	No
	Voluntary Sector	3 rd Sector	Technology Personal Assistant	Informal	Yes
	Voluntary Sector	3 rd Sector	Technology Personal Assistant	Extra-organisational	Yes
Phillip	Science and Technology Lab Work	Private		Not wanted	No
Joanna	Engineering	Private	Physical Time	Informal	Yes
	Academic	Public	Physical Time	Informal	Yes
Joe	Civil Servant E&D	Public	Technology Personal Assistant	Formal	Yes
Keith	Health and Fitness Advisor	Private	Time	Extra-organisational	Yes
Paul	Academic	Public	Time	Formal	Yes
Nancy	Civil Servant	Public	Time Physical	Formal	Yes
	Administration	3 rd Sector	Time Physical	Formal	Yes
Pam			Physical	Formal and Informal	Yes
Rebecca	Volunteer	3 rd sector	Time	Informal	Yes
	Service User Advisor	3 rd Sector	Time	Informal Extra-organisational	Yes
Rose	Business Services	Private	Technology	Not aware	No
Sally	Counselling	Public	Technology Personal Assistant	Informal Unstructured	Yes
	Student Support	Public	Technology Personal Assistant	Formal	Yes
Sandra	Civil Servant E&D	Public	Time	Formal	No
	Civil Servant	Public	Time	Informal	Yes
Tom	Banking and Finance	Private		Not wanted	No

Type of Adjustment

Firstly, what type of adjustments did the participants require? Data was analysed to ascertain the most popular type of adjustment required. Figure 7.1 shows the results below.

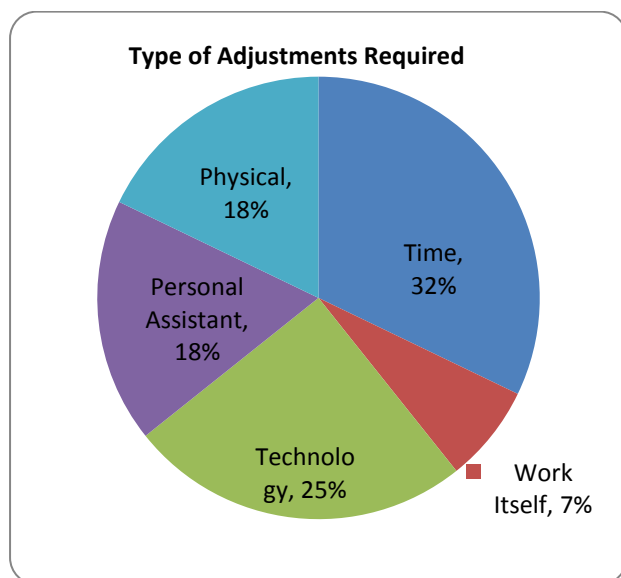


Figure 7-1: Type of Adjustments Requested

Working Time Adjustments

Figure 7.1 shows that the most popular reasonable adjustment was adjustment to working time. For some participants this was flexible hours, for others part-time work. Some of the participants felt they could work full-time but needed to have flexible hours so that they could attend medical appointments or start work later in the day if necessary. Others felt they were not able to work full-time and part-time work would be more suitable. Jessica wanted part-time work to allow her to negotiate working with her impairment and for her to 'find her feet'.

I would want to work part time initially because I am unsure of how physical it would be in terms of travel, extra time would need to be put aside. I would need to find my feet.

JESSICA

Jessica was particularly unsure of how she would negotiate work and her impairment because she had taken time off after becoming paralysed. At the time of the interview she was contemplating re-entering the labour market for the first time since her accident. She felt that due to her geographical location she would need to travel

quite far to get a job in the legal field (for which she had just undertaken a degree). She felt she would only manage to work part-time because of the energy travelling would consume. In the future she hoped that she would be able to increase her hours to full-time. While Jessica was positive about working full-time in the future her immediate plans centred on applying for funding to study for a Ph.D. She wanted to apply for a Ph.D because she felt her job applications would be unsuccessful because of her impairment.

Georgia wanted to work flexibly so that her work hours were evenly spaced throughout the week. As she gained confidence in her ability to manage her condition she was able to increase her hours.

I have always had this condition and my energy levels have been low, so I have said to employers: "can I make sure I don't teach more than 2 hours in a row" and that sort of thing, and they have always been fine with that. Then I asked for that to be stepped up a little bit and asked if I could come back part time, which they were ok about.

GEORGIA

Georgia was using flexible hours as a form of return-to-work strategy. The part-time, flexible hours were granted by her employer and Georgia attributed this to working in education. Georgia felt that the education sector was used to part-time workers because of its high numbers of working mothers. As a result her request was not considered unusual.

Despite the popularity of time-related adjustments and the policy intervention of flexible working, not everyone received the time adjustments they needed. For example, Keith did not secure the shift pattern he needed. Keith had a serious accident and as a result had a physical and energy related impairment, which required flexible working. He was required to work a late shift until 10pm and be back in work for 7am the next day. He told his managers that he was not coping with this shift pattern, but they still did not alter his shifts.

Gwen, Paul and Lucy, on the other hand were able to secure the time-related adjustments they needed. All of these participants were self-employed. Lucy worked around her children's school hours and medical appointments, Paul gave lectures and talks when he felt strong enough and spaced them out to suit his energy levels. Gwen, a self-employed music teacher, worked in the evenings so she could rest all day. She then only gave as many lessons as she felt she could manage, although she did frequently push herself to enrol more students. These jobs have not been included in the table above because they are all self-employed.

Physical Adjustments

Another popular adjustment was physical adjustments. Nancy received this support while at a previous job; "...they provided me with my scooter, my chair, stationary for one hand, and a tape recorder." The equipment allowed Nancy to have freedom to get around the organisation independently and the tape recorder meant that she did not have to take copious amounts of notes in meetings. These were relatively inexpensive support measures, but made a huge difference to Nancy.

It [the equipment] makes me so independent, it's great.

NANCY

David had somewhat more complex access requirements, although he tried to downplay them.

I just filled in [form about my needs] 'part time wheelchair user, so relatively level access to the place, I can deal with a few steps but ideally not dragging the chair up a whole flight'.

DAVID

Here David is talking about what adjustments he would need at an interview. In reality David needed quite a few access requirements, to allow him to work. His access requirements meant he was moved around the building a lot, until eventually his employer found a suitable office where his wheelchair would fit and he had level access.

Technology Adjustments

Two other commonly implemented adjustments appear to be made hand in hand. The data shows that those participants who required technology always required a personal assistant in addition. Technology usually came in the form of computer-assisted equipment, such as speech-to-text software, or screen readers. Usually this software was expensive, but the employers were willing to purchase it. Joe, for example, had speech-to-text software and a personal assistant to enable him to carry out certain aspects of his office based job, such as answering the telephone. Lisa, raised an interesting issue:

It is up to the company that bought it [the computer software] initially if they are happy for you to take it with you [to your next job]. I have always done that but it has gone along the lines that people didn't really know I took my computer stuff home with me!

LISA

Lisa was the only participant who was able to take her software with her when she left her employer, and others reported that, in the early stages of employment, they had used software left behind by previous employees. The participants usually had to use older software while they were waiting for Access to Work to provide their new equipment.

The data showed that all of the participants who needed equipment adjustments were able to gain them, usually through the involvement of Access to Work, who provided funding.

Adjustments to 'Work Itself'

The final type of adjustment identified by the research was adjustments to 'work itself'. Sophie had adjustments made to her work, without her consent. Sophie faced bullying and harassment at work, as detailed in the previous chapter. This situation resulted in her being removed from her standard work and given 'maintenance' work because she was not deemed safe to work with patients. Management's argument was that this change of work role enabled her to remain in employment. Duncan, on the other hand, was pleased to have adjustments to his work.

That sort of thing [adjustments] is often offered to me and not having a disability that doesn't manifest physically I don't really understand what anyone is supposed to be able to do for me, but the suggestions that Nick made about how to timetable my day really helped. They are invaluable. So she didn't impose a timetable on me...well in a way she did. She suggested one and I adapted it. There were these pieces of equipment which would be set up differently and I would leave them and come back to them and when I came back to them I couldn't really remember how I'd set them up so it was a relief to be given specific permission to stick pieces of paper to the equipment just with a note on. It was literally a list of how it was set up. You put different sized things in it and I just needed to write down what size it was. It saved many minutes wondering what I had done.

DUNCAN

The need for these adjustments arose because Duncan was underperforming at work.

No Adjustments

The final category from the analysis was those who did not have any adjustments. This is where participants did not want reasonable adjustments. Tom is an example of someone who did not want reasonable adjustments:

No I haven't really had any reasonable adjustments. They give you a laptop anyway, that's all I really need. I haven't asked for anything else.

TOM

Tom, working in the consulting industry felt that with the provision of a laptop his dyslexia needs were met. Laptop provision was standard in his organisation and therefore he did not require any 'special' treatment. Tom was very keen to avoid drawing attention to his impairment and importantly this reason contributed to him not asking for reasonable adjustments. Similar to Tom, Phillip also did not want any adjustments. He felt that he did not need adjustments and did not want to draw attention to his impairment. What is common among Phillip and Tom is that they both had dyslexia, which resulted in mild impairment effects. These impairment effects did not hinder them doing their job.

Summary

The variation in the ability to secure time related adjustments can be attributed to the participants' type of employment. Those who secured successful time related

adjustments were all self-employed and therefore in control of their own time. The only exception was Georgia, who had a graduated return to work which was widely accepted in education. It could be suggested, therefore, that successful time related adjustments in any other sector would be dependent on supportive line managers and organisational structures.

The literature states that adjustments to work itself are the hardest to secure (Foster, 2007). In my sample it was only Duncan and Sophie who required adjustments to 'work itself' and they were able to gain this successfully.

Tom and Phillip did not want to draw attention to their impairment effects because they were mild is in stark comparison to literature that shows that students with dyslexia form the largest group of disabled students in higher education and they receive a plethora of support (Williams, 2007). The data suggests, therefore, that if participants do not require adjustments in the workplace then dyslexia has reduced impairment effects as the graduates enter employment. This finding could be because of the ubiquitous nature of information technology in the workplace, therefore the impairment no longer creates a disadvantage for the graduate.

Process of Securing Adjustments

The second question posed, is how did the participants secure their adjustments? Analysis uncovered three main routes for obtaining adjustments; formal, informal and extra-organisational. Formal involved senior HR managers, extra organisational involved Access to Work and line managers working together and informal related to adjustments the participants made themselves or received from colleagues.

Formal

The data is now used to explore the process of obtaining adjustments through these three different channels, firstly formal. Some participants were working in organisations that had formal procedures in place for RA, such as a specific member

of staff responsible for reasonable adjustments and fixed procedures to follow. Usually in these cases the participants received the support they needed, for example Joe had a sensory impairment and needed quite a lot of technological support but his needs were met.

I have a computer that has speech software I also have something called the Braille display. It displays what is on the screen in Braille, which is really helpful if I'm on the phone. I also have a portable note taking device which has a little keyboard so I can make notes and a recording device which I can record meetings on. In terms of non-technological support I have a PA help with various tasks like photocopying, filing, taking me to somewhere if it is not familiar to myself. She will also help take the minutes as well, just in case, as an extra safeguard. I had mobility training when I first started but that is not a reasonable adjustment that I need any more unless they drastically decide to change the building! That would become an issue again if I move departments or jobs but at the moment that is pretty much what I have in place.

JOE

Joe¹³ found his technology provision essential to help him do his job. He was fully aware of the type of support he would need prior to starting work and was proactive in arranging the support. The correct support meant he was able to work well in his role and he secured an extension to his placement.

There was, however, variation in the sample because not all participants who used the formal route had positive experiences. Some of Claire's attempts at achieving reasonable adjustments resulted in not receiving the support she needed despite using HR. In Claire's case this was particularly interesting because some of the adjustments she needed were very easily achieved. Claire had a sensory impairment and was working in an open plan office. Relying on lip-reading to communicate, it was essential that Claire was sat facing her colleagues and as a result desks needed to be moved. Despite putting the request through the correct channels, it still took a disproportionately long time to change the desks around. This particularly frustrated Claire because it was such a simple adjustment.

¹³ There were many cases where the formal route was used. Joe has been used as a main case because of the amount of support he required and the positive impact it had on his ability to carry out his work.

When the HR managers were questioned about formal RA processes they were asked if anyone used a “Disability Passport” as advocated by the Business Disability Forum. This passport is a tool to help line managers and employees communicate in a formal but open manner and to document changes. Two organisations had implemented this practice and found it very useful. They reported line managers and employees benefiting from the new approach. Interestingly the two organisations who had this practice in place were private sector organisations who were considered exemplary in the field of equality provision.

Extra-Organisational

The second method to obtain adjustments was through an extra–organisational route. Hayley is an example of someone who used this approach to secure the reasonable adjustments she required. Hayley engaged her line manager and Access to Work in supporting the provision of technology and a PA. Claire, in a different job to the one discussed above, also engaged with Access to Work. There were, however delays in providing the support she needed, the technology was very slow to arrive and she had to struggle along until it arrived.

I let rip. I had two meetings and it was all getting on top of me and I was getting so stressed and I was very unhappy and in tears and in the end it all came out and I said to look I don't feel I'm getting the amount of support that I want or need and I don't think you are being very forthcoming either.

CLAIRE

As the quote illustrates above, failing to have the correct adjustments was detrimental to Claire’s feeling of wellbeing. This experience was not unique to Claire but illustrates a general trend in the data that failure to secure necessary adjustments results in distress and unhappiness for the participants.

Informal

Sally and Hayley are examples of participants who used informal methods, i.e. colleague support, to get the reasonable adjustments they needed.

One of the areas that has been a bit of an issue, I love the irony of this: when I was invited a year ago to join the Equality and Diversity Forum by the vice principal, knowing fully well I was visually impaired, she invited me to the first meeting and did a PowerPoint presentation! Thanks that was just great. But it makes me mad as hell it really does, particularly in the equality and diversity forum. What I ended up doing now is compromising with them, I get agendas and minutes sent to me in advance and I will always say to them any information that you are going to discuss send it to meet electronically and I'll flaming well enlarge it, I'd do it myself!

SALLY

In this instance the formal method failed and Sally was left to make adjustments herself so that she could function in her role. The quote below from Hayley shows how she used colleague support to negotiate unfamiliar external environments.

I wouldn't say adequate support but I was surrounded by the type of people who are more tuned into equality and making things accessible and doing their best. I had a text phone in the office and I had a method of how staff in the office supported me, if we went out to meetings or whatever was going on. I used conversers and then when I dealt with TV and Radio, we let them know in advance that I was deaf and asked them the questions and told them not to go off script, pretty much. So I knew what the questions would be and they were fine about that. It was just that environment where people are more tuned into equality issues so it was pretty good.

HAYLEY

Hayley was pleased with this outcome but attributed it to the friendly nature of the staff and because she worked in an equality organisation. The nature of the organisation meant staff were aware of equality issues and helped, without it being a big issue. For example, Hayley never had to explain her deafness to anyone, it was just accepted that it was part of her and she would need help with certain tasks. In this organisation Hayley's impairment was not used to make Hayley feel inferior in any way. The implications of these findings where participants make their own adjustments are very important. They imply an informal coping strategy has been used – negotiating with work colleagues. This example shows how disabled graduates are active agents in their work lives.

Summary

The sample showed variation in the ability to secure adjustments. This variation can be attributed to the method the participant used to gain adjustments. The participants who used formal and/or extra-organisational methods were most likely to obtain adjustments. Those who used informal methods were most likely not to receive the support they needed if they had unsupportive line management or the cost of equipment was high. The most successful route for obtaining adjustments was informal: relying on colleagues or making adjustments yourself. Those who had informal arrangements were all successful in achieving adjustments because they were relying on themselves. Despite the success of this approach it was nearly always because the other more 'traditional' approaches had failed. Additionally, irrespective of method of obtaining adjustments, participants were most likely to obtain the support they needed if they worked in a disability related organisation.

After establishing the different routes and success and failures, it is important to ascertain whether impairment type affects the route taken to achieve their adjustments. It is important to examine this aspect because it relates to the impairment effects discussed by Thomas (2007) in chapter two. Did the type of impairment affect the provision of reasonable adjustments and if so, why?

The data indicates that impairment is a source of variation. Participants with mental health impairments only received informal adjustments. Rebecca's current line manager, for example, allows her to come in late to work if she has had a bad night. While Rebecca sees this as positive she is wary that should her line manager change, these "*informal privileges*" may be removed. The lack of formal adjustments for people with mental health impairments is worrying, given that literature shows people with mental health impairments have the worst employment outcomes (Run Ren et al., 2008). This finding could go some way to explain why they have poor employment outcomes. If their adjustments are informal, HR is not involved, and they are dependent on sympathetic and supportive line managers. Poor adjustment

provision could also be attributed to the reluctance of those with mental health impairments to disclose.

It can be concluded, therefore, that it is important to give consideration to impairment effects. By examining the impact impairment has on reasonable adjustment provision it has been possible to explain some of the variation in the sample. This work finds support, therefore, for Thomas' (2007) impairment effects and the general body of work that suggests that excluding the body from disability research results in only partial explanations of experience (Crow, 1996; Shakespeare and Watson, 2001; Thomas, 2007).

The literature review also identified that organisational size can affect the provision of reasonable adjustments. Due to the nature of the sample it was not possible to ascertain which theory found more evidence in the data. All of the participants, with the exception of those who were self-employed, worked in large organisations. It was not possible, therefore to see if those who worked in small organisations had better provision as suggested by Shuey and Jovic (2013) or whether Hoque and Noon (2004) where large firms were more likely to have better disability policies and implementation was supported.

Key Themes

Personal Responsibility

Irrespective of the route and outcome achieved there were common themes from the empirical evidence. The first theme that presented itself was that participants felt that they had to take personal responsibility for their adjustments. While some were happy to do this, because it gave them a sense of control, others were more negative. Sally, for example, made her own adjustments so that she could complete her role and this gave her a sense of control.

What I had to do in those schools was to do a lot of group work, so in terms of making adjustments I made my own, I prepared resources that I could use and wouldn't necessarily adapt them for anyone else but for me. As long as I could do it I just assumed everybody else would be fine. I just took control of it and did what I felt I needed to do, which did work.

SALLY

In contrast, Rebecca felt very unhappy about her role in the reasonable adjustment process.

If you need adjustments or anything it always seems to be on you to prove you can do the job; not on the employer to prove they are willing to make adjustments... I don't want to have to ask for adjustments, I don't want to have to admit to anyone, even myself, that there are limitations on things I can do and maybe there are certain things at certain points in time that don't work for me. They don't think about the psychological effects of having to go to someone who is your manager, you want to look competent to them, and you have to go to them and say I have X condition and I need to have these things changed for me, and I think it takes guts to do those things. I don't think people recognise that.

REBECCA

The personal responsibility for sorting out adjustments was made difficult because many participants did not know what support they were entitled to, or what to ask for. The data shows this was a particular concern for those with fluctuating conditions, as reported by Rebecca.

It is also very difficult for reasonable adjustments to say what I might need because again I guess, like you, it is incredibly variable, sometimes I am ok and other times I can't speak to another human being, trying to explain that sometimes when you come in that you will have to spend the entire time doing admin work is almost too much of a hurdle.

REBECCA

Georgia was new to her role and this made her unaware of what to ask for, and this affected provision as it was her responsibility to initiate proceedings, under Access to Work protocol: *"I was new to the effects of these mixed conditions and I wasn't sure what could be done either. So it was a bit difficult really."*

Poor Line Management Support

While the employee is responsible for initiating the adjustment process, line management were reported to be simultaneously unaware and inexperienced in their role. Many participants reported that line management had little or no experience in dealing with reasonable adjustments, so the participants were sceptical about the capacity of their line managers to meet their needs, as reported by Claire.

I put on the form that I'm deaf and I need a BSL interpreter. It varies whether they understand interpreters; most of them haven't used interpreters before. I was asked once if I could bring my own interpreter! I don't have my own interpreter! They said it was up to me to arrange it and I was supposed to pay for it as well. They are getting better but I know when I first started looking for jobs they hadn't got a clue but they are getting better now with deaf awareness. But I still have to say that I don't have my own personal interpreter and that they have to get one.

CLAIRE

Sophie was in a unique situation; her reasonable adjustments were the result of business need.

The manger took me aside on my next shift and asked if there was anything else going on. I said: "well I am epileptic, I haven't had a fit since 2002 I am just wondering about the legal ramifications of me being in, on my own, with a violent person, if I have a fit, is he at risk or am I at risk? Who is at risk?" he said: "oh we have never had this before" and I thought oh here we go... but as it happened what they do now is they put someone else in and I am the second watcher. That was the manager's own choice, it isn't something that has gone through occupational health or the agency at all, but I think they are desperate, they can't get staff in this unit because it is a really violent unit, and because I am a worker he likes to work with, I think it is something he did off his own back to keep me there as an agency nurse he can rely on.

SOPHIE

These incidents highlight a lack of knowledge and awareness about issues that face disabled people, which was shown to be significant in the discussion of the role of line managers. This view was supported by an interviewee from an agency that supports disabled people into work:

It is not that employers want to discriminate, it is that they lack the education they need to help disabled people. If we can educate them, they will be able to provide better provision for disabled employees. I have found that many are happy to learn about what they need to do.

Team Manager, Support Agency.

Failure to provide adequate support is often because line managers are not educated about disability. This lack of education results in the participants' feeling hindered and this, in turn, negatively affects their experience of work.

Time Delays

For those that did obtain adjustments, the process was slow, which hindered their ability to carry out their work tasks and this frustrated them.

I went on a week's annual leave. I came back from the annual leave and that is when they said "You can't do calls, you are unsafe" I said: "what do you mean I am unsafe, I have had a reading assessment, and I was allowed to do three shifts". They said: "ah well, we have thought about it since then and we need to return you to occupational health" and that was their 'get out... I've now been waiting months for a decision.

SOPHIE

Sophie thought that coming back from annual leave would mean that all would be sorted. This assumption turned out to be very wrong.

Consequences

The final question to be addressed is; what were the consequences when the adjustment process failed or succeeded? Failing to receive the adjustments the participants needed had a huge effect on their ability to enjoy, carry out and retain their jobs, leading some to unemployment and others to self-employment.

For three participants, in particular, the problems with reasonable adjustments were enough to highlight the advantages of self-employment. Amelia and Paul had no problems with reasonable adjustments because they were self-employed. They chose self-employment because it allowed them to 'practice' what they needed in the workplace and gave them the flexibility to implement necessary adjustments. This finding suggests that turning to self-employment is a form of coping strategy and also indicates people being forced from conventional employment. Amelia is an example.

I turned high tech to compensate – I got various keyboards, there was one that is an Interactive Music Work Station which had various... you could record things in slow motion, it records digitally. Because my hands were so bad I couldn't play the piano as I had been able to do so before since the operation in Dec 1996, I bought this keyboard around that time. I could use both hands to play what should have been the right hand and while that was playing back I could play the other hands using two hands onto another track. The only skill was to coordinate them precisely together so that the balance was right. That took a bit of practice but it was a lot less work than recording each piece several times on a real piano. During the lesson they had to respond to the recording rather than me respond to them because I couldn't play live anymore... I couldn't have done this if I was working for someone else.

AMELIA

Lucy was working as a phlebotomist in a doctor's surgery. At the onset of her impairment she became unable to carry out some key duties. She asked her boss to be retrained and offered to work in other parts of the GP surgery. The boss turned down these requests and as a result of not making adjustments and bullying by colleagues, Lucy left the surgery. Lucy then decided her best option was self-employment. She could work not only around her son's school day, but also more easily manage her impairment. At the time of the second interview Lucy was setting up a business and was hopeful that she would manage her time successfully and in a way that did not make her impairment worse.

From the data we can see that Amelia and Paul have used a problem focused coping strategy. Both Amelia and Paul changed their ways of operating in work (turning hi-tech for Amelia and campaigning on different issues for Paul). This change in direction allowed them to use their impairment effectively in work and overcome any impairment effects. Amelia was able to offer a better experience to her students because she was incorporating multiple instruments into her recording and this activity improved her skills. Paul gained a lot more work by using his experience of disability to branch out into the disability arena for equality lectures. Amelia and Paul are proud of what they have achieved and their strategies have been successful.

In comparison Duncan took the route of avoidance, which the literature shows us is less likely to lead to job satisfaction (Carver et al., 1989). He avoided the situation with his employers and refused to ask for the help he needed for his dyslexia, which resulted in his abilities being called into question. Hayley had to change career as she was unable to carry out the tasks she needed to do, without necessary support.

... and I thought 'I cannot cope being in this environment any more'. 'I just can't access and participate in the way that I need to.' I could see that I could not have the career that I want to have when all these obstructions were in the way all the time and it just reached the point where there is only so much one person can do on their own and there was nobody there backing me up.

HAYLEY

Hayley's experience was so bad that she changed her career from academia to equality. Initially after working in academia she became a civil servant. While working as a civil servant she experienced even more discrimination; she was not given challenging tasks at work because she had a hearing impairment. This event led her to question working in the civil service and as a result she chose to work in the broad equality field. Hayley felt working in a disability organisation would mean her needs would be met more easily; this is discussed earlier in the chapter.

Summary

This section has established that participants were unhappy with taking personal responsibility, poor line management knowledge of disability, time delays and the negative consequences that arose from requesting adjustments. There was some variation in the sample which can be attributed to the type of impairment- visible or invisible and the person's ability to effectively execute a coping strategy, such as the ability to turn to self-employment. The organisation's approach to managing diversity was also a source of variation. For example, those who worked in a proactive disability environment faced less negative consequences of adjustment requests, if any.

The data would indicate that the disabled graduate experience of reasonable adjustments is not that unique to other disabled workers. The data suggests that, as Cunningham and James (1998) reported, line management are key in the implementation process and the data also finds support for Foster (2007) that adjustments are often dependant on line management co-operation. One twist to existing research is the ability of graduates to move into self-employment when adjustments are not made, this was not located in the wider literature.

Access to Work

Closely allied to making reasonable adjustments is the use of Access to Work (A2W). Access to Work is a government-funded scheme to help employers meet the cost of adjustments for disabled employees. Employers have six weeks to make adjustments for new employees and then they are reimbursed on a sliding scale (DWP, 2013a). The disabled employee is responsible for contacting Access to Work to request an assessment. They are sent a form which covers information about the type of their disability and what support they would need. This form is then sent back to Access to Work who make suggestions about what equipment or adaptations should be made. At this point the employer is contacted and receives a copy of the form. Access to Work then pays up to 100% of the approved costs for unemployed people starting a job, all self-employed people and employees who have been in the job for less than six weeks. After the six week period the employer is reimbursed for adjustment costs on a sliding scale. What, therefore, are the experiences of Access to Work in terms of suitability of adjustments and employer compliance?

The research explored the graduates' experiences of A2W and found numerous recurring themes. Firstly, it was noted that there were four main adjustment requests: technological – usually IT support such as speech to text software or a text phone; physical—for example, ramps, grab rails; time- flexitime or work scheduling in a particular pattern to allow an employee to rest; and Personal Assistant (PA) support – where a personal assistant carries out particular aspects of a job for which there are no reasonable adjustments available.

Criticisms of Access to Work

The data showed that there is variation in the experience of Access to Work. Firstly, the evidence showed some criticisms and deficiencies with the service. These criticisms will be addressed in turn.

Time Delays

The first criticism is that there were recurrent comments about time delays. Equipment was slow to arrive and this impacted on the ability of some participants to successfully complete their work, however ultimately they were glad that they had support.

It did seem to take a while, for A2W to actually pay and the paperwork was a bit fun! [sarcasm] But I was just grateful that I had support in the office to do that.

EMMA

...at my second employment I got in touch with A2W, it is a bit irritating that you can't get anyone in from Access to Work to do the assessment before you start, because I knew what I needed, but they were fine and my employer was fine. We got the equipment in, we had a bit of a wait for some of it; things like sorting out a BT line so that a text phone would work, so that was all.

HAYLEY

The Access to Work focus group was questioned about why participants would report delays. The response was that often the delays were unavoidable because of procurement procedures; for example, setting up credit accounts with new suppliers. The focus group was frustrated that they were blamed for delays when they often had no control over the process.

Person Dependant

The second criticism is that the data indicates the success of the A2W programme was person-dependant. According to the evidence the person who was dealing with your case was shown to have a large impact on the success of reasonable adjustments.

I'm sure A2W is so people dependant again. There are structures there that are supposed to make it work, um and I was probably on the receiving end of a good group of people at Bristol where they made it all happen, even though it took them ages to do so. If as when I need a different kind of chair or something else, I wouldn't be afraid of going to them and saying... it just depends what work situation I am in.

DAVID

This finding reflects the earlier discussion that the presence of disability specialists, and their knowledge, skills, and motivation to be supportive are of central

importance. This finding is supportive of literature that shows the centrality of disability specialists.

Lack of Knowledge and Employer Compliance

The third criticism of the A2W scheme is that their staff was not seen to be knowledgeable.

The desk/chair was a fiasco as well. I was assessed by a physiotherapist who knew nothing about me and a chair was duly selected from a catalogue (which she had no real knowledge/experience of). At my insistence I went to the warehouse to see if the chair would suit me, although 10 mins is not really enough to know. The physio also measured me up for a height adjustable desk. Unfortunately she assumed that the size given to me for my home office would fit the university office.

JOANNA

Many found it surprising that a organisations such as Access to Work would have staff who lacked knowledge about disability. Fourthly, the respondents reported that employers were unwilling to comply with the scheme.

They did require a 25% contribution from my employer and they asked if I would have any personal use from the chair, so I agreed to pay £500 for the chair, the chair was £4200 in total. So A2W were paying 75%, great, my employer turned around and said, that is not our problem, that is for your contractor, the institution paying for your contract. So I sent them a very snide email back saying "thanks very much for this information. Because this situation is bound to occur in future posts, I wonder if you could refer me to case law examples where this decision has been set. Because as I understand it, I am employed by the university, I am contracted by the university, paid by the university and any papers I write will credit the university". They didn't reply at all for about a week to 10 days and then replied and said 'um yeah ok we will pay'. It strongly implies that they haven't got a bloody clue about access to work and needed a slap around the face in a very polite, snide email type of way.

DAVID

A2W came out and they did an assessment and I think I was supposed to get a chair and a light weight vacuum cleaner, but it never happened because the school was really low on money and couldn't afford to pay out and claim back.

EMMA

The focus group was questioned about employer compliance. They reported that the majority of employers are happy to go ahead with A2W's suggestions. If, however, the employer does not want to go ahead, Access to Work does not have the power to force them to do so.

Impairment Impact

The final criticism is that the type of impairment a person had appeared to impact how helpful Access to Work was. Both Sandra and Georgia had fluctuating conditions and reported that A2W found this hard to deal with.

... they found me a bit difficult because... I think because I had a fluctuating condition..... I think it was because of the advisors I had from them. She clearly hadn't dealt with anybody who was more complicated. I don't know if she was new, or had only dealt with quite straight forward cases but I was asking for things they apparently had never heard of before.

SANDRA

Despite these criticisms Access to Work was viewed positively by the majority of the participants:

...they definitely made it possible for me, I wouldn't have been able to afford the taxis, so it was a very cost effective way of helping me and some of the equipment I eventually got, did help a lot.

GEORGIA

Without the eventual support of A2W many of the participants would have faced even more hurdles in the workplace.

Summary

In summary, the data shows that there was variation in the experience of Access to Work. This variation can be explained by the type of impairment, such that those with fluctuating impairments had less positive experiences of A2W. The variation can also be explained by the A2W employee who was dealing with the case. Some employees were seen as better than others, indicating a person specific variation. Another factor to explain the variation is the type of support needed. The more technological support required the longer the delays. However, despite the problems with the scheme the participants were happy that the scheme was in place to help them enter the labour market. It should also be noted that many of the criticisms levied at A2W reflect the criticisms levied at line managers above.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored line management relations and the provision of reasonable adjustments

The data showed that line managers had immediate responsibility for equality and diversity with some participants also reporting the involvement of disability specialists in HR. Despite the existence of these specialists, they were hard to access. There were no equality champions (senior management acting as a spokesperson for E&D) reported by the participants, only specialist HR advisors. The data indicated that compulsory training of line managers in E&D was poor and line managers had little or no knowledge of dealing with disability issues. The disabled graduates also reported that line managers were unwilling to co-operate with their requests and their needs were not seen as significant. Positive line management experiences were usually reported in the disability or public sector and where a key, easily accessible contact was available. Therefore a key policy finding is the importance of an easily accessible knowledgeable contact.

The second theme in the chapter was the provision of reasonable adjustments. The most commonly requested adjustment was time related and this was either achieved through part-time work or flexitime. The research identified three main ways of securing adjustments, formally, informally or extra-organisational. Those who used the formal route had the best outcome. The participants often felt unhappy that they had to take personal responsibility for securing their own adjustments. Some of the participants who could not secure the adjustments they needed actually turned to self-employment. The RA process was also reported to be slow by all participants as found by Cunningham et al., (2004). There were severe consequences for those who failed to obtain necessary adjustments, such as having to leave the industry in which they were working, not enjoying working and turning to other means of employment - self-employment. Supportive line managers were viewed as essential by participants, reflecting the work of Foster (2007).

The final theme of the chapter was Access to Work. The majority of the participants reported that A2W provision was slow, lacked employer support, and was person dependant. Despite these criticisms it was central to their success at work.

What is distinctive about this research is that it explores the processes and outcomes of reasonable adjustments and therefore offers a unique insight into how adjustments affect disabled workers. There is however, another source of distinctiveness. The disabled graduates who could not secure the appropriate adjustments turned to alternative forms of employment. This suggests that the disabled graduates are using coping strategies to negotiate the difficulties they find in the labour market. This feature is not apparent in the wider literature.

The data suggested various sources of variation. The participants who worked in the disability sector reported finding it easier to access the support they needed from line managers and E&D specialists were easier to locate. This finding indicates that the industry a person works in may affect the ease of support available. The sector of employment also affects whether the organisation has a specialist HR role for E&D. The public sector organisations interviewed all had a HR specialist advisor.

The type of work was a source of variation for the provision of adjustments. For example those participants who were self-employed had the most successful time related adjustments. The involvement of Access to Work also explains some variation in the findings. Those participants who engaged with Access to Work had a better adjustment experience. The nature of the participants' impairment is another source of variation, for example the participants who had learning disabilities had no adjustments and those with mental health impairments all had informal adjustments.

The next chapter explores the external agencies the disabled graduates turned to for support. Was it just trade unions or was there also a role for CSOs?

Chapter Eight: The External Environment

Introduction

This chapter explores the role of external bodies in shaping the participants' experiences of the labour market. The main bodies discussed in the participant interviews were trade unions, impairment specific organisations, general disability organisations and a few general social support organisations. Examples of these organisations include the TUC, Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The key points from the literature review will be recapped. The general patterns in the data will be explored and focus is given to trade unions and civil society organisations because of the wealth of data generated about these organisations. Following the data, judgements will be made about how the research fits with existing knowledge.

In the semi-structured interviews participants were asked if they had had any contact with any outside bodies. This was done to allow the participants to talk about the organisations that were significant for them. As a result, some participants brought up the issue of trade unions and CSOs and discussed how they had been helpful or unhelpful in their work experience. Table 8.1 shows the types of organisation that were contacted, why they were contacted and the outcome of the contact.

The general pattern is that more participants were involved with CSOs than trade unions and that the most commonly contacted type of CSOs were general disability organisations such as the Shaw Trust. There were only two participants who were involved with both a CSO and a trade union, Pam and David. The main reason trade unions and CSOs were contacted was to gain advice and support about a range of issues. Trade unions and CSOs will now be examined in turn.

Table 8-1: Participant Involvement with Outside Bodies

Participant	External Body	Reason for contact/ involvement with external body	Outcome
Sophie ¹⁴	TU	Advice about discrimination in the workplace	Unhappy with support she received
Charles	TU	Advice about sick leave	Reassured about his position
David	TU	Member of union committee	Happy to be active in the union but unsure of his impact
	CAB	Benefit form help	Help with form filling
Dot	TU	Representation and Advice	Happy with support received
Hayley	TU	Equal Opportunities Representative	No longer in post.
Joe	SCOPE	Graduate training scheme	Found a permanent job
Paul	TU	Disabled Members Council and National Executive Member	Happy with achievements
Pam	TU	Recruitment Advice	Unhappy
	EHRC	Information about discrimination	One off advice
Amelia	Cardiff Coalition for Disabled People	Access direct payments	She became a council member and activist
Georgia	Community Law Centre	Needed advice on discrimination	One off visit
	Fibromyalgia UK	Wanted to stay updated with impairment research	She became an activist
Hayley	Disability Wales	Needed advice	One off visit
Joanna	Disability Wales	Advice and support	Member and attends conferences
Sophie	Epilepsy Action	Find information to give to colleagues	One off information gathering
	Business Centre	Needed job application help	Used their IT equipment and information
Claire	SCOPE	Graduate training scheme	Gained work experience but not a permanent job.
Lisa	SCOPE	Graduate training scheme	Gained work experience but not a permanent job.
Charles	Innovate Trust	Help to enter the labour market	Work placement
Emma	Access to Employment	Help with applications	Received equipment to access jobs.
Lucy	Shaw Trust	Help returning to work	Received funding for a course
Mary	Shaw Trust	Help returning to work	Received funding for a course

¹⁴ Only those participants who voluntarily talked about trade unions are included in the table.

Trade Unions

Joining Unions

The literature review explored the main reasons for joining a trade union. Godard (2008) stated that there are three main reasons for joining a trade union; dissatisfaction with one's job or aspects of the job; general positive beliefs about unions and perceived benefits relative to costs of joining a union. Additionally Schur (2003) found that disabled employees who had experienced discrimination at work were likely to join a trade union. What therefore were the motives for the graduates in the sample who joined or contacted trade unions?

The data indicates that two of Godard's (2008) reasons for joining unions are demonstrated in table 8.1. Pam wanted to join a union because she was dissatisfied with her job experience. This point is interesting given that her union experience did not change her situation. Similarly Hayley joined and was active in a union because she was unhappy with how her career was moving in a mainstream organisation and suffered discrimination. David's and Paul's motivations for joining trade unions reflect Godard's (2008) second trigger– general positive beliefs about unions. Paul's beliefs are so strong about the positive influence of unions that he has shaped his whole career around unions.

The research did show instances where participants reported actively not wanting to join unions. For Joanna the strikes of the 1970s had put her off joining a union.

I don't know much about trade unions. I grew up with strikes in the 70s and the power cuts, so unions are bad! But I might talk to some friends and then maybe I would join a union especially as there are some disability groups and unions aren't there?

JOANNA

This showed Joanna could also be motivated to join unions if she needed access to information, reflecting other participants' attitudes above. A second reason some of

the sample did not want to join trade unions was because they were on short term contracts. Joanna was also employed on short term contracts, which, the evidence shows, affects trade union involvement (Schur, 2003). Lisa, also felt that it was not worth the effort of joining a trade union due to the nature of her short term contracts.

I don't know, possibly, it's just a bit like where I have worked I have known lots of people who are and have, it's just when you are on short term contracts it's never entered into the thing, it's a bit like pensions before you can start it is time to shut it down.

LISA

While Lisa and Joanna found short term contracts deterred them from joining unions, David did not find this deterred him.

Given these findings, how distinct is the experience of disabled graduates with trade unions? The reasons for disabled graduates joining tend to be similar to non-disabled workers joining unions. One specific feature is that it is usually disability advice and/or discrimination that causes disabled graduates to join, rather than general workplace issues. Moreover, those participants who were activists were campaigning on disability related issues rather than broader workplace issues. The evidence also supports work by Schur (2003) and Lowe and Rastin (2000) that the number of hours worked and whether a job is temporary or not impact upon whether a worker is likely to join a union.

Nature of Contact

The second question to address is why participants contacted trade unions. The data suggests participants contacted trade unions for advice and support about workplace issues-in two instances for statutory sick leave (SSL) and twice for advice about potential discrimination issues. Charles, in the teaching profession contacted the union as he wanted to know his position even though he did not feel particularly vulnerable (about taking SSL), as it is a common occurrence in teaching.

I went to see the union about it [SSL], basically the country has had such a big problem with incapacity and benefits and all that sort of stuff and to actually get ill health retirement you have to prove solidly that you can never work again.

CHARLES

Charles contacted his union representative for reassurance, which he received and he was satisfied with the advice provided. In contrast, Dot contacted her union representative to gain information about SSL and potential discrimination. She has been happy with the support she has received so far, but her sick leave situation has yet to be resolved with her employer, but she feels her position will be taken more seriously if she has union support.

...so much so I am going to have my union rep there, as I DON'T trust them [the employer]. We have our own union, they are very good, fair play. I am actually on first name terms with my union rep I have seen him that many times!

DOT

Dot used the union to support her when she met with her managers. She always had a rep with her at the meetings. This gave Dot extra confidence to put forward the problems she was having. Dot was not sure, however, whether this tactic was successful in getting her sick leave record set back to zero and whether the rep being present helped her case.

Pam contacted the trade union because she felt that she had been discriminated against in an interview and wanted support from the trade union about her rights and advice on whether discrimination took place. However, due to 'employer-union issues' the meeting was unsuccessful. Pam's union was involved in other disputes in her workplace and therefore Pam did not benefit from union support. The union and the employer were locked in negotiations about non-equality issues. Pam felt this was taking up their time and they did not have the time or resources to spend on her problem.

In order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the role of trade unions, a trade union disability officer was interviewed. John¹⁵ reported that unions now take equality

¹⁵ Pseudonym used.

more seriously and his disability role was created in 1998 because “... *of recognition that it was necessary for TUC to begin to put proper resources into disability equality*”. When talking to John about the type of work he does, he was slightly despondent that not much has changed:

Looking back, we are still talking about the same kind of issues as 10 years ago, which you cannot say about any other area of workplace equality. As employment rates went up and DDA improved, the focus moved away from lobbying around legal change, to working for better practice in the workplace. But changes in the workplace, with some positive exceptions, have been slower than changes in the law.

JOHN (TU Disability Officer)

John admits that trade unions could do more; they do not expect their disability officers to be able to know everything, just to be able to identify problems. John has been instrumental in the Disability Champions Programme, which is an online course to educate individuals about supporting disabled colleagues and affecting change in the workplace. John would like to roll this course nationwide and he recognises the need for more training.

The general trend why participants contacted unions is mixed. This variation can be explained by examining the type of issue for which the trade union was contacted. Sophie and Pam had negative experiences of trade unions and this can be attributed to the ambiguous situation that they were in. In the other instances the union reps were able to offer support about a concrete issue, and therefore were more helpful. As a result it is suggested that unions helped with tangible problems that fell within their usual area of expertise but they were less help with issues that were more complex and of which they had less experience.

Trade Union Involvement

Table 8.1 shows the second way trade unions were used; some participants were actively participating in trade unions. David, Paul and Hayley were motivated to become involved with their trade unions to facilitate change. David experienced poor representation in his union and felt that being a disabled trade union member he had something worthwhile to contribute.

So I went back to the union committee and they seemed really interested because I think they had never had any disabled members of staff on the committee. They are aware of the legislation and all the things they could be pushing for but it never had been in their face. And so they invited me to join the union committee. Which makes me interested to look around the university and advocate for changes to different parts of it.

DAVID

David was happy to engage with the union and despite being a minority member, he not only got involved with equality issues but representation in general. David enjoyed this work, although he found the union's lack of engagement concerning equality issues particularly annoying. For example, he attended an equality conference on behalf of the union. The union readily agreed and asked him to report back any news or potential work they could carry out to improve the situation of minorities in the workplace. David returned from the conference "*fired up*" to tackle discrimination in the workplace and sent off his findings to the union equality rep and other committee members. He became disheartened when he realised that the committee members only briefly read his findings and did nothing to implement any changes. He felt that they did not really have any intention of implementing any changes and just sent him along, as a disabled committee member, so the union would look good- a form of image management.

Paul was also heavily engaged in the union. He believes unions are a tool to change society: "*I believe unions have an important part to play in re-establishing change in employment circumstances.*" Paul spent a great deal of his time trying to effect change in his union internally. As he was self-employed he believed he did not need the union to represent him in work¹⁶. This opinion did not deter him in his quest to improve the union position for other members. In fact, he frequently attended conferences to give speeches on equality issues and has spearheaded a national campaign on a particular disability related issue¹⁷. This campaign has attracted the attention of politicians and is set to influence legislation in the near future.

¹⁶ This is Paul's opinion and does not reflect the fact that unions can offer many services to self-employed individuals such as insurance and advice.

¹⁷ I cannot disclose which issue this is, as it would identify Paul's true identity.

Summary

The data shows mixed results about why people become involved in unions and the outcome of their involvement. Some have become active in unions because of their commitment to unions and because they wanted to make them more responsive to disabled members. Again there are mixed results – some change, some disappointment. The factor underpinning this variation would appear to be the individual's union's approach to disability and potentially the resources available to them.

The literature review established that historically trade unions have been criticised for their failure to represent minority groups (see; Colgan and Ledwith, (2002), Williams and Adam-Smith, (2006)) In particular Colgan and Ledwith (2002) propose failings at representing the views of large groups of people, although Williams and Adam-Smith (2006) argue that there have improvements in their attempts in recent times. Due to their inconsistency in representing equality issues (see Humphrey, (1998)), trade unions are now specifically organised in such a way as to address minority group concerns. Although a distinction can be made between internal and external representation (Heery, 2004), the data remains inconclusive. The data presented in this section on trade unions, it indicates evidence is very patchy and there is a mixed pattern in both internal and external representation. This means that unions are active internally and externally but often in a limited and ineffective way.

Civil Society Organisations.

The second type of organisation the participants contacted was civil society organisations. Eighteen responded that they had received help from general equality organisations, impairment specific organisations or general disability organisations. What, therefore, were the reasons the participants contacted CSOs?

Advice and Support

CSOs were mainly contacted for advice and support about broad labour market issues- usually about how to enter work. In the majority of cases the participants received advice and even funding to help access work. When Lucy was starting her own business designing shoes, the CSO she approached offered to pay for her to attend a shoe designing course. This was instrumental in Lucy having the confidence to pursue her goals. David also contacted a CSO for advice, but about how to fill in benefit forms.

They helped me by basically asking me the question and writing down the correct answer, rather than the answer I would give, re interpreting my words, so they were actually ticking the boxes that they needed to tick for the government, where as I was just saying it in an incorrect manner. They were absolutely splendid.

DAVID

David and Lucy's cases illustrate the wide range of activities in which civil society organisations are involved. CSOs typically are not just concerned with the workaday selves of their clients whereas unions primarily are (although unions do engage with the wider political sphere through campaigns). David and Lucy, both using the same CSO for vastly different reasons, were equally happy with the support they received. This point is possibly a strength of CSOs, in that they have a wide range of services, under one roof. This strength could increase responsiveness to disabled people because they feel they do not need to 'shop around' for advice and support regarding different areas of their lives.

Career Building

The second type of support offered by CSOs was to build careers. The sample included two CSO organisations which have dedicated graduate training schemes, one of which was created "...due to research done in 1999 by RNIB which aimed to find out the reason for blind and partially sighted people having high levels of unemployment." In both cases the CSO interviewees reported the schemes were beneficial for graduates in terms of giving them experience and confidence in the world of work. One of the schemes reported 70% of its participants went on to secure full time work. Their role is not restricted to employee support; each CSO interviewed also gives support to managers: they believe support is the best method

to change the attitudes of employers. Given these extra benefits of CSO involvement, it is understandable to see why the participants were turning to them for support and advice.

The support to enter work from the CSOs was vital in three participants' experiences. Claire, Joe and Lisa all took part in the SCOPE graduate training scheme. This scheme takes on disabled graduates, of high calibre and sends them to host organisations for two six month placements. The graduates carry out normal graduate roles in these organisations but have additional support from SCOPE. SCOPE then also helps the employer and advises them on how to meet the needs of the graduates. The scheme is growing in popularity among graduates and employers. Joe, in particular, was very positive about the influence of the scheme on his career. He turned his placement into a permanent job and feels that without the scheme he would not have found an employer *"to take a chance on him"*. Despite not securing a permanent position Claire also had a positive experience in one of her six month placements. This placement meant that Claire could demonstrate she could hold down a job, with minimum reasonable adjustments and produce a very high standard of work. The work experience she gained on the scheme was directly influential in her securing her permanent role in a general disability CSO. Lisa, like Claire, did not manage to turn her placement into a permanent role but again was very happy with the work experience she obtained and felt that it showed future employers she was capable. Charles, who was not on a graduate scheme, was helped by the Innovate Trust. The Innovate Trust helped him access voluntary work which showed him how he could use his teaching skills while still managing his condition. This gave Charles great confidence and sense of personal achievement. This experience made Charles feel *"as though he could consider working again"*. These examples show that some CSOs, especially the disability related CSOs have a direct influence in helping disabled graduates build careers.

Involvement and Participation

The third reason participants contacted CSOs was to become involved in their activities. Amelia, Georgia and Joanna were actively involved with civil society

organisations, to affect change as campaigners. Amelia found herself becoming involved because she used a general disability organisation to receive her direct payments:

So I got involved with the coalition from being a direct payments user and then I went onto the committee something like the Autumn after I first started being on the ILS myself. I was a director with them for 6 years. I suppose it started to raise my awareness about disability, which hadn't been very raised before that. I didn't know about different definitions of disability until I started working for the coalition.

AMELIA

Amelia took on a central role with her impairment specific organisation. She enjoyed this role and it helped fill her time because she was unemployed. It was through working for the organisation she met her partner and it was an experience she thoroughly enjoyed.

Similarly Georgia was involved with her impairment specific organisation and a general disability organisation and enjoyed the knowledge it gave her about disability.

I am currently fairly involved with the Fibromyalgia UK, just in terms of receiving their newsletters and so on. There is very little going on for my genetic condition, as it is quite rare, so although there is a message board there is no organisation as such. More generally I have been involved in campaigning groups.....: I used to do very supportive campaigning like letter writing and supporting the people who go out and do the bigger things. Recently I have done some direct action campaigning: going to Downing Street and that sort of thing. It is exhausting but it is really interesting as well"

GEORGIA

Georgia took great pride in the activities she carried out on behalf of disabled people. She found it interesting and a good use of her time. She felt she could identify with the people around her and that she was achieving something. It could be suggested that the reason that only a few participants were involved with direct campaigning and other activist work was because it took a lot of energy, as Georgia reports. Managing an impairment, work and social life is exhausting for the participants, without taking on campaigning. It should be noted in this respect that Schur (2003) attributes low levels of disabled people being active in unions to exhaustion from impairments, which findings from this research support.

Positive or Negative Experiences?

How positive were the experiences of CSOs? On the whole the support received from all CSO agencies, was viewed as positive.

when I was off sick I went into Tesco's in Pontypool and there was a stand for Disability Wales, I was obviously in a chatty mood, and this woman told me they were having a conference and why didn't I come along and I thought that will be interesting so I went along and I walked into a room of disabled people and for the first time in my life nobody stared at me. Do you know what I mean?

JOANNA

There were not any cases in the data where negative experiences of CSOs were reported.

Summary

In summary it can be concluded that disabled graduates are using CSOs to provide three different types of advice and support, firstly advice about benefits and the labour market, secondly support in building careers, and finally providing an organisation in which the participants can get involved. These findings reflect work by Heery et al., (2004) that CSOs often focus on labour market not workplace representation. The finding also potentially extends work by Pollert and Charlwood, (2008) that workers contact CSOs about problems with dismissal, pay, discrimination and working hours, but also in the case of these participants how to build careers and benefit information. The general pattern is that participants were happy with the advice they were receiving and would return to the CSO for more advice in the future if necessary. The data also showed three people were active in the CSOs. This was because they wanted to volunteer in an organisation that reflected their identity. This work gave them a purpose and a sense of achievement because they were advancing the position of others in a similar position to themselves.

The data indicates support for the work by Osterman (2006) that CSOs are strong organisations who have power at national and state levels and are successful at representing worker issues in the labour market (see also Williams et al., 2011b). In particular a specific aspect is emphasised, that all CSOs are helpful to disabled people but disability related CSOs are the most helpful for disability related problems.

Trade Unions vs CSOs

From table 9.1 it is possible to see that Pam and David are the only two participants who used both a CSO and a Trade Union. It is also clear that they used these organisations for very different purposes. David used the CSO for help filling in his benefit forms. In contrast he became involved in the trade union to help other disabled workers. Pam contacted the trade union about potential discrimination related action and because she did not receive the support she needed she contacted a CSO.

The distinction in the type of advice required from a CSO and TU is present in the rest of the data, not just in the case of David. The data shows Civil Society Organisations were contacted for general support about welfare issues, labour market problems and building a career, in contrast the TU were only contacted about workplace issues. This pattern of contact reflects the relative expertise of the different organisations. Civil society organisations are more generalist while trade unions are more specialised on the workplace.

In terms of the literature it is interesting to try to ascertain why more participants turned to civil society organisations over trade unions. From the data it is possible to suggest that because the majority of the participants turned to the CSOs for help and advice, usually prior to being in work, then by the time they are in work, a trust relationship has already been established with that organisation so they feel confident asking them for general and workplace support. If the disabled graduate were to encounter a problem at work, then they may then be more likely to turn to

the CSO than the trade union for support. In addition, the CSOs are more likely to have the specialist knowledge that the disabled graduate requires about the labour market and welfare rights or how to find work. It could be possible to say that this is evidence that CSOs are filling a space as a new agent in the employment relationship. The empirical research suggests that CSOs are more effective as actors representing disabled workers than the traditional default – the union, which is contrary to the work of Foster and Fosh (2009). This point can be argued because while the CSO has been used for different information than the TU, more participants were happy with the CSO support than the TU support.

Summary

The data indicates that disabled graduates in the sample joined many external organisations, which could be because there are more organisations for them to identify with. Non-disabled graduates are unlikely to identify with disability organisations because they do not have an impairment. In addition, given that this research shows disabled graduates are more likely to experience problems at work, it is likely there are more reasons for them to engage with external actors.

If disabled graduates are compared to other minority groups it is possible to say their experience is less distinctive. Colgan et al., (2007) found that many of her participants were aware of Stonewall, an organisation to support Lesbian Gay Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) workers, but did not report they were active within the organisation. There is evidence, however of increasing trade unionisation of women, there are more female issues on the TU agenda and this has increased membership (TUC, 2003). In addition other studies report that there are increasing membership of minorities such as black and LGBT (Bradley et al, 2000; Colgan and Ledwith, 2002). This research indicates therefore that disabled people using trade unions for advice and support may not be that different to other minorities using trade unions for advice. It is likely, however that the type of advice is related to disability, which the other groups of respondent are unlikely to contact the union about. In terms of CSOs there are no other schemes like the graduate training

scheme provided for disabled people, for other minority groups. Therefore their use of CSOs to build careers is likely to be unique to disabled graduates. In summary, there is a general pattern of internal and external engagement within unions, however this involves only a minority of sample. What is more common is use of CSOs, not to replace unions directly but to provide a range of support and advice, including support with regard to benefits as well as labour market support. This finding reflects work by Abbott (2004a) and Heery et al., (2004) that CSOs do not replace the role of trade unions per say, rather they support workers in different areas – reflecting Heery's (2004) indifference position.

Conclusion

This chapter had focused on how disabled graduates use external agencies to help them negotiate the labour market.

The general pattern from the data is that more participants were involved with CSOs than trade unions. Those participants who contacted trade unions did so for advice and support about workplace issues. Support for Godard (2008) and Schur's (2003) reasons for joining a union have found to be present among disabled graduates, needing advice and facing discrimination. None of the sample was able to comment if involvement with the TU had helped resolve their problems and there was a mixed response about whether the participants were happy with the help and advice from the trade union. A small minority of the sample were working with trade unions to effect change. The research showed the main reasons for contacting CSOs was about broad labour market issues, not just workplace problems; for example how to build a career. The general pattern was that the graduates were happy with the advice they were receiving from CSOs and would return to them in the future if necessary. The data indicates that the pattern of contact is a reflection of the expertise of the different organisations. This data showed little interaction between trade unions and CSOs and the research identified no cases of union-CSO coalitions in operation, mainly because the two types of organization work in different spheres.

The disabled graduate experience, in the sample, was less distinctive when compared with other minority groups, because of their increasing trade union membership rates of other minority groups (Colgan and Ledwith, 2007).

The nature of the participants' contract was a source of variation. Those participants who were on short term contracts found this deterred them from joining trade unions. A small number became activists in the trade union movement while others were unwilling to join because of their short term contracts which is a recognised barrier to involvement in literature (Heery, 2004; Schur, 2003).

The presence of an impairment accounts for some variation in the sample. Negative responses to impairments caused difficulties at work and it was these difficulties that prompted the participants to seek advice and support from external organisations. The nature of the problem at work was another source of variation. Trade unions were better at helping with more concrete, common problems; in contrast CSOs were more helpful for more complex problems in work.

The next chapter explores how disabled graduates experience the welfare system. Are they subject to the carrot and the stick and which is the most effective?

Chapter Nine: The Welfare System

Introduction

This final empirical chapter explores the experiences of disabled graduates in relation to the UK benefit system. The participants were questioned about their experiences of claiming benefits, their motives for claiming benefits and the processes involved. They were also questioned about their experiences of using the Jobcentre to find work. The data was analysed and the main themes are presented in this chapter. Each section will be introduced by looking at a summary of the relevant contemporary themes discussed in the literature review and posing the questions that arise therein. Secondly the data for each theme will be presented; finally the findings will be used to address the questions that were identified in the literature review. The chapter will conclude by examining whether the data from this research confounds, expands or contradicts current knowledge.

Social Security System

The first theme to be explored is experience of the social security system. The literature review established how the social security system operates, the role of the Jobcentre Plus and other organisations. Firstly this section discusses key trends in the benefit data relating to who claimed which benefits, where they obtained benefit information and their perception of benefits, presented in a table. Then the role of the Jobcentre Plus will be discussed and whether the participants found it an effective means to enter the labour market, what type of advice they received and whether this was useful and what jobs were offered to them. Lewis et al., (2005) argue that JCP personnel had little knowledge of benefits and how to get people back into work: is this what the participants felt? Was the system too complex? Thirdly, the empirical research addresses the experience of being a claimant. Did the participants feel alienated and did they experience stigma from claiming? What impact did this stigma have? Finally, were any of the participants in the benefit-work trap and what was the impact on their life? Using the key debates in the literature the evidence can be used to test which position has the most salience with regard to disabled graduates.

A wide range of data was collected, summarised in table 9.1, which shows that the most common benefit claimed was Disability Living Allowance, closely followed by Incapacity Benefit (now changed to Employment Support Allowance), with the fewest participants claiming Job Seekers Allowance. Unfortunately for the participants, the majority reported negative experiences of claiming benefits. The implications of the results depicted in the table are discussed throughout the chapter.

Perception and Use of Benefits

Firstly, was the process of claiming benefits as difficult as noted in the literature? The general pattern in the data is that the process of claiming benefits is difficult. Two participants tried to claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA) but were unsuccessful. Charles tried to claim because of his hearing impairment and Asperger's Syndrome and Sandra for her ME¹⁸. Fortunately for Sandra she is now recovered, in full-time employment and no longer feels she needs DLA. For Charles the situation is not so optimistic. He needs DLA to make ends meet and has yet to secure paid employment; he currently works as a volunteer, teaching other people with Asperger's Syndrome. The other participants were all successful in their claims; however the process was arduous and difficult, with many complaining about the system.

¹⁸ A chronic condition that causes extreme fatigue and pain.

Table 9-1: Use and Perception of Benefits

Participant	Claimant	Success	Job Seekers Allowance	Disability Living Allowance	Incapacity Benefit	Income Support	Other	Source of information	Overall perception of benefit	Did benefit help their situation?
Joanna	Yes	Yes		✓	✓			JCP	Negative	Partially
Tom	No									NA
Rebecca	Yes	Yes		✓	✓	✓	Council tax Housing Benefit	Friend CSO	Positive and negative elements	Yes
Jessica	Yes	Yes		✓	✓	✓	Direct Payments	Social worker	Positive	Yes
Claire	Yes	Yes		✓				JCP	Positive	Yes
Lucy	Yes	Yes		✓		✓				Yes
Joe	Yes	Yes		✓						Partially
Lisa	Yes	Yes	✓					JCP	Nil	Yes
Mary	Yes	Yes		✓		✓		JCP	Negative	“Essential for her to survive”
Gwen	Yes	Yes		✓	✓		Widows Pension	JCP	Positive	Yes
Sally	Yes	Yes		✓	✓	✓		Social worker	Positive	Yes
Peter	Yes	Yes		✓	✓	✓	Housing Benefit	Social worker	Positive	Yes

Table 9.1 Contd.

No.	Participant	Claimant	Success	Job Seekers Allowance	Disability Living Allowance	Incapacity Benefit	Income Support	Other	Source of information	Overall perception of benefit	Did benefit help their situation?
13	David	Yes	Yes		✓				CSO & family	Negative and positive elements	Yes
14	Sophie	No								Negative	NA
16	Beth	Yes	Yes		✓	✓			CSO	Positive	Yes
17	Amelia	Yes	Yes		✓	✓	✓		CSO & family	Negative	Yes
18	Christopher	Yes	No						Union	Negative	NA
19	Dot	Yes	Yes		✓	Attempting			Union	Negative	Yes
20	Emma	Yes	Yes		✓			Tax credits		Negative	Yes
21	Georgia	Yes	Yes		✓	✓			CSO & friend	Negative	Yes
22	Hayley	Yes	Yes		✓				University	Positive	Yes
23	Jessica	Yes	Yes		✓	✓		Direct payments	Social worker	Positive	Yes
25	Nancy	Yes	Yes		✓				JCP	Positive	Yes
26	Pam	Yes	Yes		✓	✓		Housing benefit, council tax benefit	JCP	Negative	Yes
27	Paul	Yes	Yes		✓	✓			JCP & Doctor	Negative	Yes
28	Rose	No									NA

Table 9.1 Contd.

No.	Participant	Claimant	Success	Job Seekers Allowance	Disability Living Allowance	Incapacity Benefit	Income Support	Other	Source of information	Overall perception of benefit	Did benefit help their situation?
29	Sandra	Yes	No, tried to claim DLA						CSO	Negative	Yes
30	Val	Yes	Yes		✓					Positive	Yes
31	Vincent	Yes	Yes		✓	✓		Housing benefit & council tax	JCP	Negative	Yes

Complexity

The literature review established that the claiming process for many claimants is complex. Several issues pertaining to the complexity of the system arose; namely the ambiguity of Disability Living Allowance forms, and the review process. Georgia outlines how difficult she found the process of applying for benefits:

DLA has been a nightmare; I am just coming to the end of a 3 year award. I found the form utterly horrendous, it makes you feel awful about yourself and the amount of work you have to put into it, to make sure you have covered everything. I had some really good advice from a friend of mine and she said to be careful to detail everything, otherwise I think I would have taken the questions too much at face value and I wouldn't have got anything.

GEORGIA

Rebecca echoes what Georgia says:

The thing with filling out the DLA form is that it is really demoralising; listing everything that you cannot do. And then you begin to panic, because you say you can't do this, but you did it today, so are you lying? 'What if they check on a good day and think I am lying?' On the one hand you feel like a total fraud and the most miserable person that ever lived because of all these things that you cannot do.

REBECCA

The experiences of Georgia and Rebecca were similar. Georgia has a physical impairment, while Rebecca has a mental health condition. This finding indicates that irrespective of type of impairment, experience of DLA forms is the same, they are difficult to fill out and demoralising.

Conditionality

The literature review established that the increased conditionality of benefits is aimed at reducing claimant numbers (Spicker, 2011). Does the data, therefore, show that

participants are dissuaded from applying because of the increased conditionality of benefits? There is some evidence in the data for this effect.

David was reluctant to claim as it “*was a lot of hassle*” and Joanna found the claiming process difficult. Joanna was claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) and wanted to work. Starting work meant that she would lose her IB and she was concerned that she might not manage work and wondered the impact this would have on her benefits. Joanna reports that, in retrospect, had she known just how complicated it would be to re-start her benefits, she would not have even attempted to work.

Benefits have been a bit of an issue. I was on IB before I started the job. So I knew that if I left the job because of ill-health I would just move back on to IB, which I did. However I was now on the Jobcentre radar which has meant I have had to fill in an IB50 every year and attend interviews with an advisor. Therefore doing some work had moved me to annual instead of 3 yearly assessment. If I had known how difficult the job was going to be and how much it was going to take out of me, coupled with these changes, I wouldn't have taken it.

JOANNA

Joanna's experience highlights the pitfalls of benefits. The job she took had a negative impact on her ability to manage her physical impairment and she experienced discrimination in work. Now she has been employed she has to be assessed annually for benefit instead of every three years, which she finds more stressful. Had Joanna not tried to work, she would only have been reviewed every three years.

Vincent's comments summarise the feelings of the majority of participants.

The actual process, as I am sure you are aware is horrendous, the bloody forms, the medicals. I think the whole system is to dissuade people from applying. They are not promoted in any coherent manner or form that I can see. It is well publicised the way the government wants to cut down on claimants, if it was as well advertised to let people know what they are entitled to, and how to apply; I assume that would be a far better use of resources.

VINCENT

The participants were not alone in finding the benefit process complex. Alan, a Disability Employment Advisor, reported spending a lot of his time guiding his clients “*through the benefit maze*”. From all the quotes above, it can be seen that it is not the benefits themselves that are being criticised but instead the processes behind them.

Benefit Information

Now that it has been established that benefits are hard to apply for, where did the participants locate benefit information? The data showed that a common complaint about benefits was the lack of official information that was available in the public domain. The participants felt it was the role of the government, usually through the Jobcentre Plus to disseminate easily accessible information. The sample showed variation about how much information the participants received about benefits and the source of the information.

The evidence identified two types of benefit users, those who did not have information and expected to be told about benefits and those who did not have information and went about finding out for themselves. Joanna is an example of the first type of participant, those who wanted to be told everything.

I also discovered that you could get incapacity benefit while having an ESRC award. That was odd, but quite helpful. I wish somebody had told me that because I would maybe have claimed earlier.

JOANNA

The second, larger group, of participants took action to find out the information. Hayley, for example, resented the fact that there was nowhere to go, to obtain benefit information. As a result she took personal responsibility for obtaining such information:

I have DLA, which I didn't know I was entitled to until a few years ago... with regard to SS I don't think there is much information out there to tell you how to go about finding out what you are entitled to and claiming what you are entitled to.

HAYLEY

Those who took it upon themselves to locate information did so through several key sources; Jobcentre Plus, Social Workers, Civil Society Organisations and family and friends. Below is an example of Vincent who used a Social Worker to obtain the information he needed.

I don't know why, it never occurred to me to apply for any extra benefits for a long time... It wasn't until I moved up here and got myself together and had help from a welfare advice worker that I got put in touch with from my social worker who came and assessed me medically. She twigged early on that I wasn't claiming anywhere near the benefits that I was entitled to.

VINCENT

Table 9.2 below shows who used which sources of information to access benefits.

Table 9-2: Sources of Information

Participant	Organisation	Support	Helpful
Amelia	JCP	To access benefits	Yes
Beth	CSO via JCP	To become 'work ready'	Yes
Charles	Quest Innovative Trust	Job application support and work experience	Yes –helped him find voluntary work that has given him confidence to look for paid work.
Claire	JCP	Did not have a job at 17 so went to see what help she could get.	No, she knew more than them.
David	JCP	To access benefits	No
	CAB	To access benefits	Yes
Dot	JCP	To look for work	No – did not know how to help
Duncan	JCP	To look for work	No – too low skilled work, not enough knowledge.
Emma	JCP	To access benefits	No- process arduous
Georgia	JCP	To look for work	No – suggested too low skilled jobs, not enough knowledge
Gwen	JCP	To access benefits	Yes
Hayley	JCP	To access benefits	No – lack of information
Jessica	JCP via Social worker	To access benefits	Yes
Joanna	JCP	To access benefits	No – process was tiring and painful.
Joe	JCP	To find work	No – unsuitable work
Keith	JCP	To access benefits	Yes.
Lisa	JCP	To find work	Yes, to provide access to benefit but not to help her find work.
Lucy	JCP	To find work	No – lack knowledge and understanding of her needs.

Participant	Organisation	Support	Helpful
Mary	CSO via JCP	To find work	No – tell her to do voluntary work when she wants to earn a wage.
Nancy	NA	NA	NA
Pam	JCP	To find work	No – too low skilled work.
Paul	Shaw Trust	Understand what support was needed at work	No – he felt that the only jobs offered were below him, so it demeaned.
Peter	JCP	To find work	Yes – they have not found him work but he is happy with their service.
Phillip	NA	NA	NA
Rebecca	Work Directions	Financial support and confidence coaching	Yes. Pointed her in the right direction for benefit claims and gave her advice for confidence skills.
Rose	JCP	To find work and claim benefits	Yes –which she believes is because she only used it for a short time.
Sally	Social Worker	Benefit Information	Very useful.
Sandra	Yes to Work	Advice on suitable positions	No, they were encouraging but did not know what to do with people who were “professionally qualified”.
Sophie	JCP	To access work and benefits	Yes
Tom	NA	NA	NA
Val	NA	NA	NA
Vincent	JCP	To access benefits	Yes, a good social worker provided him with lots of information.

Table 9.2 clearly shows that civil society organisations were frequently used by participants to find information about benefits. Were the participants happy with the information they received? In the majority of cases the participants were happy with the service that was provided by CSOs. David, in particular, was happy with the

advice he received, - it allowed him to reduce his stress levels in applying for benefits.

I went to one in X when I decided to fill in the DLA form properly, it's a NGO. They helped me by basically asking me the question and writing down the correct answer, rather than the answer I would give, re interpreting my words, so they were actually ticking the boxes that they needed to tick for the government, where as I was just saying it in an incorrect manner. They were absolutely splendid.

DAVID.

The most successful form of support for benefit applications came from social workers or outside agencies, such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau. This is because they were able to help the participants fill out the necessary forms and they knew "how to word it", which "made all the difference."

I don't know how people manage to get thing[benefits]s; it's not about not deserving it, it's about not being able to fill the form out and I don't think that's right. So I think I've been fairly lucky but because I was pre-warned and because I am a proactive person. I think a lot of people don't know these welfare organisations are there to help them. Even the guidance notes on the web I find really hard to read and gibberish!

REBECCA

Disabled people should be able to access the support they need, but simultaneously they have the responsibility to do what they are able to, to help themselves, like keeping their skills up to date through voluntary work, or by thinking of ways they can improve their opportunities and be willing to work in a lower level job to gain experience.

ALAN, DEA

The importance of engaging with practitioners who have experience of the benefit system highlights the complexity of the social security system and how hard it is to 'win' your entitlement to benefit. Alan, the Disability Employment Advisor, admitted that it is difficult to access benefits, but did not view this as a negative thing.

The quote shows Alan believed that benefits are there to help disabled people but at the same time disabled people have certain responsibilities.

Stigma

The literature review paid attention to how benefits were perceived. It was found that many groups of participants did not like claiming benefits. Are disabled graduates any different? Do they conform to the popular media view that disabled people are scroungers and happy to live off the benefits system (TUC, 2011)?

Table 9.1 clearly shows that the majority of the participants had a negative perception of benefits, in particular benefits that were received in lieu of work. Why was there a negative perception of benefits? As a result of the analysis three main reasons were uncovered. Firstly, some participants felt that taking benefits from the government injured their pride. Sophie, for example, felt that receiving benefits was tantamount to scrounging off other people and this was something she did not want to do.

Claire and Charles also felt claiming benefits injured their pride. As a result of their negative perceptions of claiming benefits, they would only claim benefits if they had no other option.

I am always wary and scared of claiming for things as I don't want to ... I don't like being in debt, I hate being in debt.

CHARLES

In this quote Charles is incorrectly confusing receiving benefits with being in debt. Charles had no other option and was struggling financially and therefore he had to claim, but this injured his pride.

Claire, interestingly, states that claiming benefit would be her last resort, yet later on, she reports claiming Disability Living Allowance. This difference in attitude could be because of the type of benefit she was talking about. She would hate to claim Job Seekers Allowance, but is happy to claim DLA. This indicates that she sees disability benefit as a right, something to which she is entitled, whereas in contrast, she sees unemployment benefit as something of a privilege. Perhaps this is linked to her underlying assumptions, that she can do nothing about being blind, but can do something about being unemployed. When questioned her about her rationale behind her contradictory viewpoint, she replied “...I don't really know that's just how I think.”

The data shows that a second reason that the participants were reluctant to claim benefits was because they were struggling to personally accept their impairments and limitation.

My DLA has stayed the same, I have not applied for any increases or anything. My mum has been nagging me to put in for the higher rate care, but I am not convinced that would be right. I live by myself quite reasonably. I don't need anyone to help me out although my mum does come out and do cleaning, which is a God send...

DAVID

Here, clearly, David needs extra support but is reluctant to use benefits as a vehicle to achieve this support; he is happier for his mum to help. He sees the arrangement with his mum as saving the state money and views benefits as charity and not something to which he is entitled. This opinion was the same for Amelia, who felt that because she could manage on the money she was able to earn, she would not claim benefits.

A third and potentially the most significant reason for a negative perception of benefits is that some participants did not want to claim them because, with the right support, they would be able to work:

Interestingly, with Joe, here he is using the term “benefits” to refer to unemployment benefit, not disability related benefits, as he happily claims DLA. In this situation, unlike Claire, Joe is clear why he feels a distinction between the different benefits. He says that he needed to claim unemployment benefit because of society’s inability to adapt to his needs.

I hated it [claiming benefits]. I guess it was just because I knew that with the right support, I wouldn't need to claim them at all.

JOE

In contrast there were two participants who were happy to claim any benefit, they were instrumental towards the benefit system and did not perceive stigma. Beth and Val see their benefit payments as a vehicle to access ‘luxury’ goods.

... don't mind [claiming benefits]. Would I be able to afford it? [if my benefits were cut]... but then I would have paid my car off in December and my credit card, so in January next year I will be able to clear the rest of my debts and when it comes to November I could be getting a lot less but it should be okay.

BETH

When Val was questioned about benefits, she was only interested in asking how she could lower her council tax by declaring her disability. I explained to her what this would involve and the eligibility criteria¹⁹, however, it was obvious that she did not meet the criteria. She then spent the next ten minutes asking me “...if I just buy a wheelchair and put it in the spare room, will I qualify?” These quotes from Beth and Val (the only two who took this approach) suggest that not everyone accepts stigma and some orient quite instrumentally to the benefit system. Both Beth and Val have significant impairments, so are entitled to benefits anyway. What they do have in common which could explain their instrumental approach is that they are both short of money and their impairments are no longer as severe as they once were. Beth is recovering from serious injuries after a car accident and Val's fluctuating impairment is in remission. What this instrumental approach could illustrate is their fear that they will lose benefit in the future and therefore need to think instrumentally about their finances.

Summary

How unique were the disabled graduates' experiences? One might expect disabled people to be viewed and to view themselves as highly legitimate benefit claimants because they have serious impairments and are therefore entitled to support as a right. Disabled claimants have serious needs, recognised by society and a right to support (DWP, 2006). What the empirical research is hinting at is variation in the orientation to the benefit system depending on what benefit is being claimed. One might expect that disability claimants will have a more not less favourable experience of being claimants than the unemployed or other poor groups. The findings suggest that this is not the case. The data suggests that disabled peoples' experience of benefits is similar to other groups.

The fact that the participants were criticising the processes not the benefits echoes research on other groups of claimants who find claiming hard but appreciate the benefits themselves (Karagiannaki, 2007) This data suggests, therefore, that

¹⁹ Giving this type of information is part of the reciprocal nature of the research, giving back to my participants.

attempts to increase the conditionality of benefits and make them harder to access is deterring people from applying, as reported by Spicker (2011). The general trend identified in the data was that claiming benefits was difficult and available informal is ambiguous. Additionally McKay and Rowlingson (1999) found that the system for benefits is overly complex, this idea also found support in the thesis.

The data suggests that frequently CSOs are filling in a gap left by the welfare state, in terms of benefit information. The research data does support the idea of conditionality of benefits and the responsibility it places on disabled people to be actively engaged in the processes that are in place to help them, and the responsibility they have to help themselves. The empirical research also echoes research that generic Jobcentre personnel have little knowledge of benefits (Lewis et al, 2005) and that the system is overly complex (McKay and Rowlingson, 1999). The data does indicate, however that the Disability Employment Advisors were knowledgeable about the support offered to disabled people.

From the data it was possible to understand the motives behind a benefit claim. Studies of other claimant groups show that claimants assess the costs and benefits of claiming (Warr, 2007). The literature review established two different explanations of why claimants claim. Firstly, the participants must perceive a need to claim, have enough basic knowledge to make a claim, believe they are eligible, think the process is worthwhile, be comfortable to claim irrespective of stigma, believe their condition will last long enough to make claiming worthwhile and then finally they will go through the process of claiming (Spicker, 2011). The second approach suggests claimants weigh the cost of shame and humiliation and the effort of claiming against the level of payment and the needs they hope to meet (Spicker, 2011). The empirical research suggests that the second approach most accurately explains the process the participants go through before they claim. They claim disability related benefits because they know the benefits will help meet needs but they do not like to claim unemployment related benefit because the benefit is not meeting a need – it is not helping them get back into work and they feel that the stigma is too high. This finding indicates that they perceive the stigma of the disability related benefits to be lower

than the stigma of unemployment benefit, with the exception of Val and Beth. This finding also reflects the large amount of literature that shows there is a significant stigma related to being unemployed (Blyton Jenkins, 2013; Turnbull and Wass, 1997).

Another source of variation is entitlement to benefit. The data suggests that if a person is nearer the end of their entitlement period, they may act more instrumentally. However, there are only two cases in the sample, so this claim is speculative. Interestingly, the data shows that impairment is not a source of variation in terms of claiming benefits. In many other chapters, impairment was a source of variation. However, in this instance all participants, with every sort of impairment found the process of claiming benefits difficult, indicating impairment is not a source of variation.

The Jobcentre Plus

The chapter now turns to explore the Jobcentre Plus. The literature review uncovered a wealth of material exploring claimants' experiences of JCP. The central controversy in the literature was whether JCP or CSOs were better at getting people into work. Does the empirical research show those who engaged purely with JCP got more support, or were the CSOs more effective at supporting disabled people? Was JCP only geared up to help those who were most 'job ready'? The literature also showed a preoccupation with targeting benefit fraud, was this felt by the participants? The literature review explored how JCP personnel categorise claimants according to their willingness to job search and treat those who are reluctant to work worse than those who are eager to work (Rosenthal and Peccei, 2007). Does the empirical research, therefore, support the idea that JCP staff treats claimants differently? If so, what impact did this have on the claimants?

During the interviews the participants were asked whether they had engaged with the Jobcentre Plus and how they were treated. The findings show that all of the

participants from the sample encountered JCP at some point during their working lives with the exceptions of Nancy, Philip, Keith, Tom and Val. Nancy and Val did not engage with JCP because they are above working age for women, 60 years old. Keith, Phillip and Tom went straight from university into their jobs and therefore never experienced unemployment.

The majority of the participants found their JCP experiences to be negative. The data indicated the two main reasons for using JCP were to gain access to benefits and to look for work. The four main issues that participants faced were concerns about fraud, being sent to external agencies, lack of knowledge of generic JCP personnel and the low skilled jobs available through the JCP.

Incidentally, the participants felt that the system is so geared up to protect against fraud, that they are unsure how to deal with 'genuine disabled people'.

They are so geared up at protecting against fraudsters that when an honest "aspe" comes in, they are not prepared for that. The whole system is geared for people being able to understand forms and fill them out, you know.

CHARLES

It was felt that gearing up to protect against fraud made it unnecessarily hard for genuine disabled people to apply.

Outsourcing

The second reason participants were unhappy with the JCP was that they were often sent to other organisations for support. It was generally the participants who were least likely to find work that were sent to third party organisations. An example of some of the organisations they were sent to were Quest and Pathways, organisations, which were usually NGOs, which had contracts with the government to get disabled people back into work. The participants who were sent to third party organisations usually received additional training or coaching before they were ready

to find employment. This evidence reflects findings in the literature review that JCP only focuses on the more 'job ready' clients and outsources those who are not suitable for work immediately (Davies, 2008).

Lack of Knowledge

The third criticism of the service was that generic JCP staff were not knowledgeable about how to help the participants into work. Disability Employment Advisors were also generally considered by the participants to lack knowledge about how to support disabled people, but less so than generic JCP personnel. In addition the advice that was received by the participants, from the Disability Employment Advisor, was often unhelpful.

I used them briefly when I couldn't get a teaching job before I started at X and was on JSA briefly but they gave me no help at all!

DOT

The unhelpful support from the DEA can be mainly attributed to their lack of knowledge of how to help the participants into work, or what benefits they were entitled to. This finding points to variation in the data. The DEA that was interviewed was very knowledgeable, yet the DEAs which the participants encountered were not considered knowledgeable. It is possible that this variation can be attributed to the person specific nature of the role and the fact that Alan was considered to be a lead in the field of disability employment within the JCP.

I went to a Disability Employment Adviser when I was 17 because I didn't have a job and even at 17 I knew more than they did and they didn't help. Again deafness, they didn't know where to point you. I never went back because I knew they didn't understand my kind of deafness.

CLAIRE

... to be honest I felt I knew more than they [DEA] did. I guess I would have been in a better position if it was me wanting to go back to work and find a job; I think they may have been more helpful then. Because I wanted to set up my own business as soon as I said I had a foundation degree in business, they were like: "oh right," and I put them on their back foot a little and I think they felt a little out of their depth. They were offering me support I didn't need, like being able to write a business plan, well I didn't need that' they were obviously not sure of what I needed.

LUCY

I saw a DEA and a core one, and again I suppose because my disability is relatively minor, they asked me how it impacted on my work, ... and actually my own experiences of my jobs and what jobs I could go for, I had a frame of reference for myself so they weren't really able to help or guide me, anymore than I could of myself.

ROSE

When the DEA, Alan, was questioned about these issues, he explained that the DEA could not be expected to be a specialist in all areas, but was a portal to refer to other agencies, such as Remploy, who would be able to help. This approach is consistent with the participants' experiences, as those who did engage with Remploy and other state funded NGOs were often happy with the support they received.

As part of the research, a training session provided by Remploy was observed. Remploy offer a plethora of supports for disabled people. The training session was aimed at disabled graduates looking for work. Despite the fact that it was graduates

who attended, the thrust of the session was how to improve your skills to get into work. It could be suggested that Remploy had missed the fact that disabled graduates already possess skills to get into work. The problem is the demand for disabled people to work. However, despite the low skilled focus of the sessions, the participants were still happy with the support they received.

Unsuitable Jobs

A further frequent problem was that participants were advised to take jobs that were low skilled. This caused great frustration among the sample and made the participants feel that the DEA did not understand their situation.

Despite the fact that I had a teaching degree and a lot of experience she was suggesting I get jobs as a canteen lady or a lollypop lady! And she didn't seem to understand that although I know everyone has to work and I shouldn't feel any job is beneath me, I wanted to try first of all to get something that matched my skill set and if there was then absolutely nothing in that area, then I would look at other things..., so that was very frustrating and in the end I found myself a job over the internet on the equality website.

GEORGIA

So I see X and show them my CV and they look at me and say "we can't help you; you know too much". Counting ten didn't even come into it! going away and thinking what they had said came into it and thinking about the fact that disability employment opportunities are absolutely literally tick box, basket weaving related and still are because nothing has changed... they say all the words about getting disabled people back into work and the welfare benefit reform is getting people back to work, but at what level?! What are you going to do with me? Put me into B&Q pushing a trolley, well that is going to work isn't it!! – the job satisfaction is going to be tremendous, but there is another side to it as well. Employers who see me and obviously will have some resume of what I have done would be scared witless because why is this guy taking a lower job than he is capable of doing?

PAUL

I saw a disablement officer, I think, and he went through various job descriptions with me to see what I could do. There was one job that he thought would be suitable and it was working in a factory, doing factory work, which I wasn't interested in at all.

PAM

These quotes show the disgust that the participants felt about being offered low skilled work. Receiving this type of advice from JCP staff increases the likelihood of disabled graduates being underemployed.

Summary

Despite the dominance of negative experiences in the sample there is some variation because some participants found the JCP helpful. For example, Charles and Rebecca found the support helpful yet were the most 'lost' in the labour market. They had no idea what they could do and what support was available to them. The reason they found the support of the JCP helpful was because they were referred to external agencies that provided them with invaluable support such as writing CVs, confidence skills and time management skills.

These research findings point to two significant points of interest. Firstly using the benefit system and employment service is often a route to downward mobility in the labour market which is generic to all JCP users. This finding, therefore, reflects the findings of Turnbull and Wass, (1997) and the underemployment of females and part-time workers, i.e. other marginal groups (Elias, 1999; McDonald, 2009). The data suggests these experiences, therefore, are not specific to disabled graduates. The data also finds support for Lewis (2005) work that the JCP is most helpful to those who are most ready to re-enter the labour market.

There are, however, several points that are distinctive to the disabled graduate experience. Firstly the JCP staff lack knowledge about how to help disabled people because of their impairments. Disabled people may face issues related to their impairment which are potentially unlikely to affect non-disabled job seekers. This finding confirms Heenan's work (2002) that personnel were mistrusted and lacked knowledge. Dickens et al., (2004) also reported staff feeling out of their depth when dealing with the more severe disabilities. In Dickens et al.,'s study, those with mental health were the most difficult to help, as is also the case in this research.

The Benefit-Work Trap

The final area to consider is the benefit-work trap. The literature review established that a benefit-work trap existed for all groups of claimants (Dean and Taylor-Gooby, 1992). Financial reasons are often cited as the reason other groups of claimants do not return to work (McKay and Rowlingson, 1999, Spicker, 2011). Does the data show, therefore, that the benefit work-trap existed for the participants and were financial reasons the main reason the participants did not return to work?

Risk

The data showed that many participants perceived a risk when moving from benefits to work. The data revealed two reasons behind this perception of risk, fear of not knowing what support to ask for in work and financial concerns. These issues were largely attributed to the participants' inexperience in the labour market and being unsure of what they could manage in terms of employment. A common concern was that if they took on work that they could not maintain, could they reclaim their benefits and how long would this take? One manager from a CSO reported that disabled people are unsure of the support they will need in work.

When they [disabled people] come to us, they often don't know what support they need, or even that they are entitled to support. It is our job to help guide them through what is available and how to set things up in work... actually we often talk to their boss to help them set support up.

DEAN, Manager in CSO for disabled people.

The risks of the benefit work trap made Pam take up voluntary work and university education. Paul used a more proactive approach to reduce the risk of employment and avoid the benefit-work trap. While Paul was on Incapacity Benefit it was possible to work for up to 16 hours a week, as long as you were earning under £70 a week²⁰. He used these 16 hours to build up his stamina.

So yes, frankly I started off by not pushing myself too hard, working within the 16 hours allowed and the minimal amount of that.

PAUL

This strategy was successful for Paul because he was working on a self-employed basis. This meant he was able to decide how much money he earned to make sure that it fell within the legal limits.

Joanna, unlike Paul, was not working on a self-employed basis and was earning a relatively high wage in higher education. This fact meant that she would only need to work for one hour to earn the maximum allowed under permitted work rules. As a result her employer had to find alternative ways to 'pay' her.

... it has to be bang on £20 so they will often re-jig my contract to claim to be something else. So that is how we've got round that one. Because they wanted me to receive the money. It seems ridiculous with incapacity benefit that they don't do it on the amount of time you work as opposed to what you earn, it's just ridiculous. I don't think that helps disabled people with work at all.

JOANNA

The issue of earning too much money under permitted work rules was a concern for Joanna exclusively. This situation was probably as a result of her high level of qualifications which meant she could command a high wage. A more common issue

²⁰ These values have changed over time and as the benefit system has been reformed.

among participants was that moving from benefits to work would mean that they would not receive enough money to live.

Financial Concerns

At the other end of the scale, Peter, who has found it impossible to work since his mental health diagnosis, feels he wants to work. However, Peter is concerned that if he did work, he would not earn enough money.

if I did get a job the money would have 'do' [be enough] at least equal the amount of money I have on social security, if not better it... If I wanted to replace the money that I get from social security it would have to be... I get around £160 a week on benefits plus also I pay negligible rent on my council property which would have to be... it would be full rent if I had a job, obviously. I am happy with the money that I get on social security at the moment, I'm not earning enough to pay back my loans and grants and things but if I did get a job it would be a job that would probably be over the threshold of £15 or £16,000 which would mean that I would have to pay back my grants, so I would have to think long and hard about what I wanted to do.

PETER

This fact, coupled with the risk factors, means that employment is not an option Peter is willing to explore. Vincent also shares these sentiments:

The sort of level of job I am likely to achieve would not cover my living standard, let alone the upset it would cause me to have to go to work.

VINCENT

It is interesting to note, that it is not the participants' lack of desire to work that inhibits them, it is financial fear.

Summary

In summary, this data has shown that the benefit work trap is a real issue for disabled people, which is not uncommon among all those claiming benefits (Blundell, 2000). Despite this similarity the research highlights significant issues for disabled people, which distinguishes their experiences from those of other marginalised groups. Their insecurity and lack of knowledge about what support they will need in work and being unsure whether they can 'cope' with work are issues that are unique to disabled people. Additionally other minority groups do not need advisors with specialist knowledge to help them access jobs.

Another unique feature for the disabled graduates is their instrumental approach to the benefit work trap. These findings suggest that participants are using coping strategies to overcome the pitfalls of benefits. They are making conscious decisions about what is beneficial for themselves and acting on these decisions. The participants are not being victims or passive in the situations they find themselves. This research also calls into question earlier research which states tax credits and reforms of the benefit system will get people back into work (Spicker, 2011). This research shows it is not just financial concerns that keep disabled people from working, but fear they will not be able to cope in work. In addition, the data shows that the disabled graduates are internalising the public view of fraudulent claims, internalising the stigma this gives. This reflects Drake's (2000) work that benefits have been publicised as fraudulent to increase stigma to dissuade people from applying.

Conclusion

This chapter had been concerned with the welfare system, how it operates and the impact this had upon the disabled graduates. The chapter noted difficult experience and dislike to benefits. There were some distinctive experiences for the disabled graduates; they face compounded discrimination from being disabled and unemployed. Another distinct feature of the disabled graduates is their instrumental approach to the benefit work trap. The data hinted that there is variation in orientation to the benefit system which is dependent upon which benefit is claimed.

The next chapter provides a summary of all the result from the thesis and compares these to existing knowledge to ascertain the contribution to knowledge. In addition considerations for future research are presented alongside a final piece on the reciprocity of the research.

Chapter Ten Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The aim of this tenth and final chapter is to conclude the thesis by summarising the findings of the thesis and detailing the contribution to knowledge made by the research. It has been recognised throughout the thesis that little research has been conducted to examine the experience of disabled graduates in the UK labour market and the extant literature on equality has not approached disability with the attention it deserves. Therefore, the findings of this study should make some contribution to bodies of literature, including HRM, Sociology, business management and law literatures.

Firstly, the chapter restates the research problem and reminds the reader of the research methodology. The chapter then proceeds to present a summary of the research, depicted diagrammatically, which illustrates the graduates' journey through the labour market. Next, the main findings from each empirical chapter are recapped and key themes discussed. A separate section is dedicated to explaining variation to expand upon which factors explain the differences in participants' experience. For example, does a graduate's impairment affect their experience at work, or are the results better explained by the type of employer for whom they work? Penultimately the distinctiveness of disabled graduates is discussed in comparison to non-disabled graduates and other minority groups, such as LGBT and migrant workers.

The chapter reflects on the research and how the process of the research has affected both the participants and the researcher. This section is explicitly reflexive and details how it felt to carry out the research and how it challenged the researcher's own unconscious biases. A final purpose of the thesis has been to identify practical lessons from the research. At the end of the chapter therefore there is a discussion of potential policy implications for government, employing organizations and representative bodies. There is also identification of the practical lessons for disabled graduates themselves: what lessons can be learnt from this

study to help those with disability navigate the labour market and the workplace more successfully?

Research Problem

Disability is a common phenomenon with approximately 18.3% of the population reporting a disability that affects their day to day activities (ONS, 2013a). Despite the large number of disabled people in society, a plethora of evidence shows that disabled people are disadvantaged in the labour market; disabled people are less likely to be in employment than their non-disabled peers and those that are in employment are more likely to work in low skilled jobs or part-time (ONS, 2013a).

Combined with these gloomy statistics for disabled people, is the rising number of disabled students graduating from university (Tunnah and Leacy, 2012) who are also found to be less likely than non-disabled graduates to find employment (Burchardt, 2005). The on-going discrimination disabled people face was the impetus to this study, which has examined two key research questions:

- 1) What were the experiences of disabled graduates who were either looking for work or who were in work, post-1995 with regard to:
 - a. Relevant legislation which may support/protect them
 - b. Recruitment and selection
 - c. Management interactions and workplace adjustments
 - d. Benefit and government agencies

- 2) Why experiences varied for different disabled graduates what accounted for variation in terms of :
 - a. Type of impairment
 - b. Type of employer
 - c. Ability to cope with difficult circumstances
 - d. Type and amount of contact with outside agencies
 - e. Presence and use of support networks

Exploring these research questions allowed in-depth insight into the lives of the disabled graduates, which added significantly to the canon of knowledge on disability and work. Particular emphasis was given to the causes for variation in the results, for example how and why disabled people experienced similar phenomena differently. A particular emphasis was placed on providing insight into the lived experiences and individual active agency of disabled graduates, which shed light on how disabled people cope with and resist impairment effects and discrimination. Furthermore, the thesis aimed to uncover the extent and different forms of disadvantage experienced by disabled graduates, considering whether this disadvantage is particular to those who are disabled when compared with the experiences of non-disabled graduates and other minorities. There are very few studies of disability and the workplace and there are no other published studies of disabled graduates. This study, therefore, makes a distinctive contribution, in exposing the labour market and work experiences of disabled graduates to scrutiny for the first time.

The research questions were deliberately broad. This breadth arises from a determination to examine labour market and work experience in its totality, including contact with the benefit system. In order to understand the totality of the lived experiences of the disabled graduates it was important to form an understanding of associated areas of social life. As a result the research is able to produce data that is contextually rich and gives a full picture of the disabled graduates' lives, including how they manage competing aspects of their lives and identities.

The thesis also emphasised the subjectivity and agency of the graduates. All data was reported verbatim and therefore the participants were viewed as the experts in their lives and architects of their situations. Through their words I was able to understand their viewpoint and values, which could then be used to inform the research. The agency of the graduates is seen through-out the research as they mitigate and adapt to their complex circumstances. It was only possible to understand these actions because the graduates were central to and the focus of the research.

Throughout the thesis results are compared with those for other minority groups. This comparison is of great use as it allows us to learn whether the disabled graduate experience is distinctive or is shared with others who experience disadvantage in the labour market. The concern here has been to establish whether those with disability have a distinctive labour market experience or whether that experience is part of a common, shared pattern across all minority groups within the labour *market*. Furthermore, the thesis makes comparisons between the disabled graduates and the generic graduate experience, thereby allowing the distinctiveness of disabled graduates' experiences to emerge. A particular purpose in this regard has been to identify evidence of relative disadvantage of disabled graduates.

Carrying out this research drew on some experiences of myself as a disabled person and a researcher. The thesis therefore has not claimed to be a purely objective piece of work. My personal disability has impacted the research as it has given me access to a shared understanding with many of the participants. This shared understanding and empathetic stance allowed the participants freedom to share their aspirations and their fears without fear of judgement. This factor was central to creating rich data which did justice to these remarkable people's lives.

Methodology

The purpose of this section is to recap the main points of the methodology used in the research. The research took a qualitative inductive approach, which allowed the researcher to explore the disabled graduates' experiences in-depth, identify patterns and furnish explanations for those patterns. Critical realism and feminism were drawn upon to inform the ontological and epistemological approach for the thesis. Critical realism allowed the research to engage with the context of the disabled graduates' lives and pay attention to causal factors. Examining causal factors provided an understanding of context, which impacted upon situations in the disabled graduates' lives and attributed phenomena to their correct cause. Competing interpretations of situations were explored using the critical realist

approach; for example it allowed different graduates to attribute different meanings to the same situation which helped in understanding and recreating their world. Another influence on the research was feminism. This influence was demonstrated through the emphasis of studying a minority group and the need to effect change for a disadvantaged group. Feminism also underlined the sensitivity that was needed in researching disabled graduates. Moreover, because disabled graduates are an oppressed minority group, feminism paid attention to how their status could affect their personal narratives. As a result of these ontological and epistemological choices an inductive, qualitative, exploratory design was used to conduct the research. This design afforded the participants expert status and allowed them room to talk about their lived experiences. The data generated was rich, contextual, biographical data that resulted in deep insights into their lives.

The main tools used in the research were semi structured interviews, supplemented by secondary sources and official statistics. The interviews employed an in-depth, biographical life-history approach, which helped the participants recall their experiences. This approach, as mentioned earlier, maintained the respect and expert status of the participants by allowing them to talk for themselves. The interview schedule was broad and covered numerous areas and while specific topics needed to be covered, there was still space for them to talk about issues they deemed significant.

The sample consisted of 67 participants comprised of disabled graduates, HR managers, careers service advisors, a Member of Parliament, a Disability Employment Advisor, Access to Work personnel and representatives of civil society organisations. The sample was not a representative sample, which means the thesis cannot generalise directly about the situation of all disabled graduates. The study also cannot be used to generate robust comparisons with evidence drawn from representative samples of non-disabled graduates or other minority groups. What the sample design does yield, however, is rich, in depth contextual data which allows inferences to be made about the general experience of disability.

Key Findings

This next section describes the key findings from the thesis and presents them chapter by chapter. Chapter four discussed the findings of the empirical research related to experience of disabled graduates as they tried to enter the labour market. It found that the participants had a lengthy job search and experienced a mixture of informal and formal recruitment methods. The data showed that formal selection methods were considered problematic by a number of the sample. This finding is interesting given that formal selection methods are usually considered fair for minorities (Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Moss and Tilly, 2003). Disabled graduates reported disliking formal recruitment methods because they did not allow them to tell their story and explain their situation. Without being able to explain their situation the graduates felt they would be unable to challenge misconceptions the employer might hold about their abilities and competence. These findings challenge existing research that formal recruitment methods are fairer for minority groups.

Those graduates who were most unhappy with the recruitment and selection procedures they experienced proposed a solution – a job trial. A job trial would involve the graduate performing the role for a short period for one or two days. This process would allow the employer to assess the disabled graduate and give the disabled graduate the chance to persuade the employer that their impairment would not hinder their progress in work. This suggestion is not found in the wider employment literature but does appear in some of the benefit schemes such as WorkStep.

The data shows that different types of recruitment methods were used to access different types of jobs. Formal methods were used, mainly, to access career type jobs, in contrast informal methods were used to locate stop-gap employment. For example, the graduates who wanted to become teachers had standardised, formal entry methods. In contrast, the graduates who took routine administration work experienced more flexible recruitment and selection methods.

The research identified several factors that made looking for work easier for the disabled graduates. One factor was having access to a network, a form of social capital. The data showed that networks of disabled professionals, family and friends were an important source to locate skilled employment. This finding questions existing literature along two dimensions. Firstly, the literature indicates that networks are not very useful for minority group to access work (Mahuteau and Junankar, 2008). Secondly, existing literature reports that networks usually result in low skilled employment (see; Fernandez and Fernandez-Mateo, 2006; Try, 2005; Saks and Ashforth, 2000). In contrast to the extant literature, the data shows that networks resulted in employment and high skilled work. This finding points to the active agency of disabled graduates, exploiting social capital to secure employment.

The second factor that facilitated work was attending a placement while at university. Several graduates who had a placement year at university found work either with their placement organisation or in the same industry. This finding reflects earlier work by Purcell et al., (2005) about the benefits of work placements. A twist to the tale was found with disabled graduates, that the benefit of placement was derived from the ability to “test the waters” of their chosen industry, and ascertain whether it was possible to find support for their impairment. This type of finding is not reported in the wider literature.

While several factors helped the disabled graduates locate work, there were also several factors that hindered their job search. One factor that hindered securing employment was the use of assessment centres. A common feature of assessment centres is that the tasks are confidential. As result, the graduates were unable to know what support to ask for to complete the tasks and therefore were hindered in obtaining the reasonable adjustments they needed. This finding adds another dimension to the work of Kirton and Healy (2009) who reported assessment centres were fairer than other selection techniques to minority groups, when competency based HR practices were used. It would be interesting to ascertain how reasonable adjustment requests can be combined with competency based HR assessment centres. The second factor that deterred graduates from securing work was positive

action and concerns about disclosure. The data showed that participants reported negative feelings of self-worth when positive action was used, which is consistent with the literature on positive action by Noon, (2010). The main example of positive action in the research was the guaranteed interview scheme, in which the participants were interviewed as a result of meeting minimum criteria. Those who use this scheme reported that they felt devalued and believed the scheme was tokenistic. As a result, many failed to disclose their disability on their application and take advantage of support that was on offer. In general disclosure was viewed negatively because the graduates felt if they disclosed they would be discriminated against: a finding reported also in the wider literature (see: Bishop and Allen, 2001; Lucas, 2008). While supporting the work by Noon (2010) the findings add to work by earlier literature by showing that positive action will also affect whether an applicant discloses, not just the perceived disability friendliness of organisations, the nature of a person's disability and the likelihood that they will need adjustments (see: Lucas (2008), Vickers (1997) and Jans (2012)).

Chapter five explored the nature of the jobs performed by the sample. The central concern of this chapter was to explore the extent and nature of graduate underemployment and to understand the impact of underemployment, along with the disadvantages of working. Several key findings emerged. First, the participants who were employed in graduate work were happy because they were using their skills. However, underemployment was a key theme and the data showed that some of the sample was underemployed. A minority were happy to be underemployed because they could balance their work-life and their impairment. Others were dissatisfied and wanted more challenging, skilled work. Those who were unhappy engaged in active agency to improve their situation and used one of two strategies to improve their position, job enrichment or job enlargement. The participants who used enrichment methods were the most successful at securing higher skilled employment. The job growth strategy has not been reported in existing disability employment literature, however it is found, in the psychology literature (see; Duffield et al., (2013) and Parker (1998). Therefore this finding points to disabled graduates acting in largely similar ways to non-disabled workers.

The chapter concluded by considering the benefits and disadvantages of paid employment from the perspectives of disabled graduates. Working was seen to provide a number of benefits, such as improved confidence, a sense of self-worth and social contact. The positive experience of work reported by the disabled graduates reflects the findings of earlier work by Bain (2005) and by Blyton and Jenkins (2012).

Chapter six focused on the experience of being in a job, with a particular emphasis on aspects of job experience that are central to the work lives of disabled graduates, such as absence, discrimination and bullying and harassment. It was in this area that perhaps the most negative set of experiences were recorded in the study; many of the participants had had difficult working lives or very difficult periods in work.

The data showed that the majority of the sample had negative experiences of long term sickness absence which, in some cases, resulted in job losses. Inflexible absence policies and unsupportive managers were central causes of the negative experiences of absence; this conclusion is found in the wider literature on absence (see: Avery et al. (2007); Cunningham and James, 2001 and Simkiss, 2005). A key theme was that many managers had a 'laissez faire' attitude to absence. They were happy to apply the standard policies but when they needed to be proactive about managing absence or empathy was required, they failed to deliver. In contrast, some participants reported positive experiences of absence management, all of whom worked in the education sector because sickness absence is viewed as commonplace in education. These findings about absence reflect the extant literature on absence (see; Avery et al., 2007, Cunningham and James (2001), and Hoegelund and Holm, (2006). The absence findings also reflected work by Simkiss (2005) that disability leave was rare and many managers failed to see its importance

The chapter then turned to explore which types of organisation were most suitable for the disabled graduate to work. Unsurprisingly, the disability sector was seen as the most supportive area to work in because the needs of the disabled members of

staff were not seen as 'out of the ordinary', which reflects earlier research by Roberts et al., (2004). The research hinted that working in an organisation that reflected a personal impairment was also beneficial for the disabled graduates and this point potentially extends the work of Roberts et al., (2004). The graduates who worked in less supportive environments also reported suffering from presenteeism. They turned up for work when they were not well enough because they felt they had to prove themselves to their employers and did not want to appear weak. These findings reflect work by Caverley et al., 2007; Demerouti et al., 2009, however they add to the existnig literature because they show that for dsiabled graduates extra concerns result in preseenteeism- the desire not to feel weak.

The second theme in the chapter was colleague relationships, which in many cases were reported to be difficult and problematic and was the source of much stigma and discrimination. Several of the sample gave examples of how they had been stigmatized, with work colleagues making negative judgements about their capability, motivation and commitment. Such stigmatizing was often the prelude to bullying and harassment. Bullying was carried out by managers and colleagues and often went unchallenged by the participants. It was common to report feeling very isolated and in some cases the participants left jobs to escape their difficult situation. The majority of the sample was unwilling to challenge bullying and harassment because they felt that the law protected employers rather than employees and were unsure how they would prove the discrimination against them in 'grey areas'. These findings reflect work by Fevre et al., (2010) that being disabled makes a person susceptible to be bullied. The evidence on all the negative impacts of bullying reported here also corresponds with that found in the wider literature (see: Naime and Naime 2000; Shields and Wheatley Price 2002; Vega and Comer 2005)

Chapter seven shifted emphasis to the role of managers in the workplace and, in particular, examined the extent to which they were successful in meeting the needs of disabled graduates. The key findings presented indicated that managers had little knowledge about reasonable adjustments and often failed to support disabled graduates in their work lives, particularly in dealing with problems. The literature

review established competing positions regarding the successful devolution of line manager responsibilities. The research indicates that equality and diversity was often given second priority to other issues, as reported by Gonas (2004) and Colling and Dickens (1998), and that line managers often lacked knowledge. In conclusion it can be stated that the data suggests more support for the theory that devolution of responsibility for HR to the line has resulted in poorer outcomes for equality.

The literature review also established that diversity champions were central to equality and were often highly visible and effective (Healy and Oikelome, 2007). In contrast chapter 7 showed that equality champions were rarely found in the organisations interviewed and hardly visible, more closely reflecting the work of EUFAR (2009). This point is of particular relevance given that those participants who had access to a specialist HR manager for E&D had better experiences in work than those who did not.

The second topic, that of support, yielded similarity pessimistic findings. A central theme of the chapter was that management failed to support the graduates and external government agencies were also of little help. The general pattern was that line managers had little knowledge of reasonable adjustments and they were hard to secure, as reported by Roberts et al., (2004), Cunningham et al., (2004) and Foster (2007), despite this fact, eventually many participants were able to secure some form of adjustment. The data showed various ways to achieve adjustments and termed the various methods; formal, informal and extra-organisational. The most successful method of achieving adjustments was via the formal method that incorporated communication between line managers and Access to Work personnel. Another source of variation was the type of adjustment requested; the most popular request was adjustments to working time and the least popular request was for physical adjustments and personal assistants. Many participants reported delays in securing these adjustments and again management failed to address these concerns in the majority of cases, which reflects the extant literature on reasonable adjustments.

The final theme in the chapter was Access to Work and again there was variable success related to A2W involvement. Some participants received the adjustments they needed relatively quickly and this was usually because the employee had been particularly proactive and enlisted A2W prior to starting work. The problems reported about A2W stemmed from several common problems; slow support –which supports earlier research by Cunningham et al., (2004). There was also a lack of employer cooperation, as found by James et al., (2002), as a result A2W were powerless to force employers to comply with their suggestions, a situation the graduates found particularly confusing and frustrating. Finally, the whole process was heavily dependent on A2W advisor knowledge. Knowledge was highly person specific and the centralisation of A2W did not improve its staff's knowledge. The graduates found it particularly unusual that an organisation such as A2W would have little knowledge about reasonable adjustment protocol and availability.

Chapter eight shifted the focus of the research again, this time onto non-governmental bodies. It was at this point the experiences of disabled graduates began to become more positive. Despite the mainly negative reasons for needing to contact an external body, the general feel of this chapter was positive because of the good experiences the participants had with external bodies. The main thrust of the data showed that many participants had interacted with external bodies, namely CSOs and trade unions. Trade unions were usually contacted for advice about concrete and common workplace problems, such as disciplinary action. In these instances participants were happy with the support they received and felt the representatives were knowledgeable. These results support the body of literature that feels trade unions are positive for equality (see: Bradley et al., 2000; Colgan and Ledwith, 2002). Moreover, some participants became involved with the activities of trade unions, eg, attending meetings as equality representatives and being involved in demonstrations and protests.

The data showed that CSOs were contacted more frequently than trade unions and about a greater range of issues than trade unions. CSOs were usually contacted about broad labour market problems. Again, like trade unions, participants were

happy with the support and advice they received from CSOs and, in fact judgements tended to be more positive in this case. Some of the participants volunteered in CSOs which led to employment for some. Finally, the research explored the issue of partnership or alliance between CSOs and trade unions. The data found no cases where trade unions and CSOs were working collaboratively, but simultaneously no antagonism was found between the two types of organisations. Rather, the relationship appeared to be one of 'indifference' (see: Heery et al., 2012), which arose essentially because the two types of organization represented disabled graduates on different issues and in distinct spheres that did not overlap, which was also a finding of Abbott (2004b). The findings in relation to CSOs feed into the debate on industrial relations actors. Firstly, the findings show that CSOs are worthy of a title of new industrial relations actor, which reflects work by (Korczynski, 2002 and Osterman et al., 2001). As a result Dunlop's tripartite theory of workplace actors is called into question because a new actor has been identified as significant in the disabled graduates' labour market experience. Osterman et al., (2001) categorised three types of new employment relations actors: 'job matching organisations, lifelong learning and training organisations and advocacy organisations. The activity of the CSOs used by the disabled graduates most closely reflects the work of the advocacy organisations but also adds an additional element to the work of Osterman et al., 2001 because the data is replete with examples of non-work advocacy, such as benefit support.

The final empirical chapter, chapter nine, focused on the welfare system. The evidence in this chapter marked a return to negative experiences but with shining examples of the participants' active agency and determination. The general pattern in the data was of a mixed orientation to benefits, and the least favoured benefits were those that were received in lieu of work, such as the Job Seeker's Allowance. Common problems associated with claiming benefits were the arduous process of claiming, which left many participants disheartened which reflects wider work by Spicker, (2011) and McKay and Rowlingson, (1999). Complexity around 'permitted work' and returning to benefits when it was impossible to negotiate work and impairment were common sources of anxiety for participants (see also DWP 2004b). Some participants orientated themselves instrumentally towards benefits and were

able to make these rules work for themselves, though most chose to avoid benefits altogether where possible.

Chapter nine also examined the Jobcentre and the general thrust of these findings was depressing with many negative experiences reported. The Jobcentre Plus advisors were criticized for being unknowledgeable, unhelpful and prejudiced towards disabled claimants. Another criticism was that the Jobcentre only offered low-skilled work and participants reported that staff did not really understand work related limitations. The data showed that participants suffered the effects of the benefit work trap, which was a problem because it made working less profitable than staying on benefits. There were variations in response to the benefit work trap; some of the participants avoided work while others wanted to work so badly they were happy to be poorly paid. This data allowed the thesis to address the question in the literature about whether the Jobcentre Plus was effective at getting disabled people back into work, as proposed by Karagiannaki (2007) and Noakes, (2005), or whether external bodies were better, as proposed by Heenan, (2002) and Davies (2008). The data supported the argument that external agencies were better at helping those least ready to work, but agreement is found with Davies (2008) that if the same amount of funding was available to the JCP as external agencies, then different results may occur.

Key Themes

This concluding chapter now examines the key themes arising from the data, running across each of the chapters of the thesis. Each theme is presented in turn. In each theme the variation in the results between the graduates experiences will be mapped out, this structure will lead to the next section which will account for this variation. These themes are presented in order of importance.

Impairment

A central theme of the research is that impairments play an important role in the disabled graduates' experience of the labour market. The data was replete with evidence for impairment being a central factor in disabled graduates' lives; for example impairment impacted which career path some graduates chose. Some participants, for example, found that it was impossible to make the necessary arrangements in their chosen industry and as a result changed their career path. The data showed that it was impossible to divorce impairment from the participant's experience of disability.

The data from the thesis made it possible to distinguish between two types of impairment effect; those effects that arose because of the constraints of a person's impairment and those that arose because of stigma and discrimination.

Firstly, some participants made adjustments to their lives because of the physical constraints of their impairment. For example, one participant returned to work by pacing himself and others took lower skilled jobs so that they could regulate their fatigue. These examples show how the participants have adjusted their work lives voluntarily to constraints of their impairment. The ability of participants to manage impairments was central to their life and working life and even the participants with the most positive work experiences, in supportive organizations still had to manage and adapt to the physical constraints of their impairment.

The second type of impairment effect occurred because of discrimination. For example, impairments affected how seriously a person was taken when applying for a job and whether the employer would be prejudiced against them. As a result the participants were very aware of their impairment and the impact it had on their lives. Nevertheless the majority of the sample was determined that they would overcome their impairment effects by making changes to avoid discrimination and wanted to be successful. This impairment effect is not pure disablism, as proposed by Thomas (2007) but shows how different types of impairments result in different types of disablism.

However, this theme, finds broad support for Thomas's (2007) impairment effects theory. Thomas (2007) stated that in order to understand disability, consideration should be given to how impairment affects a person's life, a statement backed by the evidence in this thesis. In order to understand a person's subjective and other experiences, impairments need to be taken into consideration (Thomas, 2007). The idea of considering impairments has wide support in the disability literature and this thesis is another supporter; (see Shakespeare and Watson 2001, Abberley 1986, Hughes and Patterson 1997). Thomas (2007) makes the distinction between impairment effects and disablism and states that impairment effects are non-discriminatory but when they are used to determine the form of a disabled person's life, disablism occurs. While this thesis finds evidence for this theory, it potentially takes the theory further by illustrating the type of impairment effect that are most likely to result in discrimination, for example mental health impairments.

Impact of Discrimination and Disablism

The second important theme is the impact of discrimination and disablism. The research shows that the disabled graduates faced difficult working lives; for example the problematic nature of careers for those with impairments and the difficulty of maintaining full-time employment. On top of this established difficulty, incidents of discrimination added to and exacerbated problems for the disabled graduates. Below is a table of some of the key experiences of discrimination faced by participants.

Table 10-1: Types of Discrimination Experienced by the Sample and Key Examples

Institutional	Direct	Indirect	Victimisation	Stigmatising	Harassment
The benefit system assumes disabled people are there to "milk the system"	Not giving challenging work to a member of staff because she had a hearing impairment.	Not allowing a participant to interview for a job because he could not drive.	Participants fearing that if they took action against their employer they would be treated badly in work.	Making sexual advances on a disabled person and saying this was appropriate because the person was disabled and therefore would be glad of attention.	Deliberately obscuring one's mouth so that a person with a hearing impairment could not lip read.

Table 10.1 provides some examples of discrimination experienced by the sample and the impact of this discrimination was vast, with responses varying from worsening of health to losing or giving up one's job. Within this list there are incidents of direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, stigmatising, harassment and forms of institutional discrimination. The fact that all these different forms of discrimination are experienced by disabled graduates points to a very negative experience of the labour market. Some participants only experienced some of these types of discrimination, others experienced all. This point is of particular concern given that equality legislation has improved with the introduction of the DDA and the Equality Act 2010. What this negative experience indicates is that legislation is failing disabled people and there are flaws not only in the legislation itself but also in the implementation of legislation, as suggested by Dickens (2012b). Extant literature has identified types of discrimination and who receives it, what this thesis has done is gone further and identified the multiple experience of disability. Existing literature review intersectionality, where multiple disadvantages are compounded, for example being black, female and disabled (see; Danieli (2006); Holgate et al., (2006)). Despite the relatively large number of gay, female disabled people in the research, the research did not find any reports of compounded discrimination. This finding suggests that intersectionality may not be as important as reported in the literature (see; Hancock, (2007)).

The data also showed that the experience of stigma can be subdivided into stigma experienced by the disabled graduates because of the opinions of others and the stigmatising attitudes the disabled graduates held about themselves. Sophie's situation, described earlier, is an example of stigma held by other people about disabled people. In contrast, an example of the stigma the disabled graduates held about themselves is how they felt their self-worth would reduce if they claimed job-related benefits; which reflects work by Moffit (1983) that stigma lowers take up rates, as people want to avoid being stigmatised. Despite the divergence in origin of stigma the impact was the same – leading to a distressing situation for the participants.

Given that lack of knowledge and stigma were the drivers of discrimination in the lives of the disabled graduates, is this a phenomena found elsewhere? Work by Grosu (1997) found that gender inequality and discrimination were the result of poor socialisation in family, school, & culture. In contrast, the root of disability discrimination is reported as being incorrect beliefs about a person's ability based on the medicalization of disability (Swain et al., 2004; Barnes et al., 2005). This stance reflects work by Parson in 1951 that illness or disability was a form of social deviance, albeit it 'permitted' for a time while the person played their role in recovery (Barnes et al., 2005). In contrast then, the results from the thesis suggest something other than medicalisation and social deviance play a part in causing discrimination – a lack of knowledge about disability. As a result theory about discrimination needs to include a knowledge dimension.

Existing literature notes types of discrimination, who experiences it and that it can be compounded, what this thesis shows is the experience of this discrimination and who receives what type of discrimination, why and how they respond and therefore it potentially adds to existing knowledge. The thesis has illustrated how incidences of discrimination were almost always preceded by stigma. For example, Sophie was discriminated in work because her employers stigmatised her impairment, epilepsy. In numerous cases in the empirical chapters we could see that stigma was rooted in lack of knowledge of disability, which perpetuated disadvantage.

Pockets of Positive Experience

Despite the gloomy overall findings there were pockets of good experience, indicating variation in the results. One example of positive experiences of work is when the participants reported work giving them self-esteem and a sense of confidence, which reflects earlier work by Bain (2005) and Green (2005). Another positive experience of work was when participants took on volunteering positions and these were made into full time jobs. Some started their volunteering role with this outcome in mind, while others 'accidentally' benefited from being taken on full time. This finding reflects work by Purcell et al., (2004) that placements increase employability after graduation. The twist here is that the graduates were not on

'traditional' placements but volunteering. What lessons can be learnt is that any type of work is refining a person's skills and making them more favourable to employers. Furthermore by undertaking volunteering the disabled graduates were able to build up relationships with employers and overcome the concerns employers had about employing disabled graduates.

Disabled Graduate as Active Agents.

An additional positive theme is that there are numerous examples throughout the research findings of the disabled graduates being active agents in their life. They have displayed characteristics of active agents when they have a 'second best' plan, they make personal choices to cope with difficult situations to achieve their goals. Two key examples stand out from the research, firstly, when graduates chose to downshift to balance their impairment and work. This finding adds knowledge to the literature on the choice to downshift. Guest (2008) and Goulding and Reed (2008) report that employees choose to downshift to balance work and life. This thesis adds to this literature because it shows that people do not only downshift to improve work family life, but to also balance impairment and work, which is a motivation specific to disabled people. A second example is, how some participants chose to become self-employed because they could not manage in a 'traditional' workplace. Taking on self-employment was risky and scary but they were determined they would achieve their potential. These examples prove that disabled people are active, rational labour market actors and not victims of an unfortunate fate. This finding is in contrast to existing literature which does not portray disabled graduates as active, rational economic actors.

The ability of the participants to engage with active agency and coping resulted in much more positive outcomes. According to wider literature, other workers in marginal, although not necessarily disadvantaged, roles also display coping actions. Korczynski (2003) reported that service workers turn to each other to deal with difficult customers and form informal communities of coping. This behaviour was seen among the disabled graduates when they faced discrimination where they turned to members of staff for support and as a result they had greater ability to build

a community of coping. Korczynski (2002) reported that access to communities of coping effectively supports management functions because they allow employees to deal with stressful situations instead of management eradicating the origin of the stress. This point was seen among the disabled participants, by coping with the discriminating and stigmatising situations they found themselves in, the disabled graduates gave the employers less impetus to change. The thesis also extends Korczynski's (2002) work because it shows disabled graduates developed communities of coping with people outside their places of work, not just within their workplace.

The behaviour of the disabled graduates' active agency also reflects that of migrant workers. Migrants locate to areas that are popular among others of a similar ethnic origin because this strategy provides them with a sense of identity and security (Jiang, 2013). As a consequence of this active agency response by migrant workers they ensured a more positive experience of life. Similarities between disabled graduates and LGBT employees are also seen because of coping strategies. Research shows two type of coping strategies for LGBT workers, vocational choice, which refers to where they choose to work and work adjustments which is how a person copes with discrimination when applying for work or in work (Chung, 2001). Levine and Leonard (1984) suggested that self-employment and working in 'gay friendly' organisations are the two most common strategies employed by LGBT workers. Disabled graduates also engaged in vocational choice and work adjustment behaviour, suggesting symmetry between the actions of disabled graduates and LGBT workers. This thesis, therefore, extends the work on vocational choice and work adjustment to incorporate the experience of disabled graduates.

Agency is not always viewed as positive, in a lot of critical management literature agency refers to forms of organisational misbehaviour, escaping and subverting control (Huczynski & Buchanan, 2004). In this thesis, however, agency is mainly seen in the form of coping strategies, although there are a few occurrences of agency as resistance, such as Dot involving her trade union to combat unfair disciplinary procedures. Therefore, this thesis provides evidence of the positive effects of agency.

Variation

This concluding chapter now turns to explore reasons for variation in the themes presented in the thesis. Through-out the research it has been clear that there is considerable variation in the experiences of disabled graduates. What underpins or explains this variation? Four factors seemed to be predominant; firstly the nature of the participants' impairment, e.g. when type of impairment hinders the provision of reasonable adjustments, sector of employer, organisational policies and the availability and use of social capital.

Firstly, the presence of an impairment resulting in the identification of a minority status has a direct impact on the experience of work. The thesis has numerous examples of disabled graduates being bullied or discriminated against on account of their impairment and hence minority status. This variation reflects the wider literature that being disabled, and therefore belonging to a visible minority group makes a person more likely to be bullied (Fevre et al., 2010). What the data from the thesis suggests, is that this fact can be extended. There is variation in the experience of work by type of impairment, for example those participants with mental health impairments had a particular negative experience of work, which reflects earlier work by Run Ren et al., (2010). This finding, therefore suggests that not only the presence of an impairment is a source of variation but also the type of an impairment is a source of variation in the experience of work.

The second reason for the variation in the sample is the sector of the employer. Employees of disability related organisations reported more positive working experiences, in comparison with participants employed by non-disability organisations. Having said this, there was a wider satisfaction with work amongst those who worked in equality roles, in non-disability organisations. Contrary to the literature, by Roberts et al., (2004) the empirical findings did not indicate that the public sector was a model employer but rather disability organisations were model employers. In addition the industry in which the graduated worked was an important source of variation. All those who worked in the education industry had positive

experiences of sick leave because sick leave was common among all staff. What this point indicates is that industry can be a source of variation but also that where requests or actions of disabled members of staff are not that distinct from non-disabled staff, then experiences of work are likely to be better.

The third source of variation was the type of management present in an organisation. Some organisations had hard HRM while other exhibited softer HRM policies. For example, the data shows that organisations that included senior management in the reasonable adjustments process led to better outcomes for disabled employees. Formal policies were seen as positive in all aspects of work life, apart from sick leave where those organisations that gave discretion and flexibility to managers resulted in better experiences for the disabled graduates. Flexibility was also seen as central in the recruitment; those organisations which could alter recruitment and selection methods to suit the graduates were more likely to offer graduates a better experience. Formal versus informal recruitment methods have received considerable attention in the literature. The debate centres on formal methods being fairer for minorities (Brown and Hesketh, 2004; Moss and Tilly, 2003). The data indicates this position holds some validity but there is a twist to the tale for disabled graduates. While formal methods were seen to be fair in some instances the disabled graduates felt that formal methods did not allow them to tell their story and showcase their skills. As a result this finding potentially adds another dimension to existing research on recruitment methods.

Organisational policies also include how an organisation manages equality and diversity. The literature shows that employers vary in terms of their approach to equality and diversity some employ equal opportunities or managing diversity approach, while others combine both approaches (See: Colling and Dickens 1998; Kandola and Fullerton, 1994 and Liff, 1999). As a result of these approaches there is varying commitment to equality and diversity. This varying commitment to ED was reflected in the data in the thesis. For example, the data showed that some of the HR managers had specific disability advisors, whereas others had responsibility for all 9 protected characteristics and as a result disability was marginalised; reflecting less

commitment to E&D. This source of variation is supported by evidence from the disabled graduates who reported that organisations who had a specific member of staff for disability support had more positive experiences of work. According to the literature organisations with softer HRM are more likely to provide better experiences for disabled people (Cunningham et al., 2004). There are many different types of employer represented in the sample but several key points emerge. Disabled graduates are likely to have better experiences with regard to line managers if they have had training about equality and diversity as suggested by Foster (2007). This finding relates to the debate about the existence of a hollow shell. Hoque and Noon (2004) reported a hollow shell in many organisations where policies are not implemented in practice. This position is supported in the research where disabled graduates reported many instances of line managers not following policies and when reasonable adjustments were not put in place despite plentiful detailed guidelines and support.

Thirdly, the sector of employment has been reported in the literature as an impacting factor on the experience of work. For many years the public sector has been regarded as a model employer on account of its highly unionised status and good employer tradition (Roberts et al., 2004; Morgan and Allington, 2002), although this status has been questioned in recent years. What the thesis shows is that the public sector does not emerge as a strong employer for disabled people. Instead disability related CSOs are found to be the most supportive for disabled workers. This finding therefore challenges the current literature on the notion of the state as a model employer and feeds into the debate about which organisations are most likely to be E&D aware.

A final source of variation is the availability of social capital to the disabled graduate and their ability to make use of that capital. Social capital, in this thesis is taken to mean the existence of socially useful relationships, using the network definition of social capital (Paldam, 2000). The thesis discussed how people such as Keith used their contacts to secure them suitable work. In contrast, other participants did not use their social capital to obtain work; this was either because they did not have social

capital, such as Mary or they were unwilling to exploit opportunities through networks. In particular, the thesis found that a particular type of social capital was important for disabled people – links to other people who either have a disability themselves or people working in their field of disability; this finding hints at a distinctive type of social capital for disabled people.

Is the Disabled Graduate Experience a Distinctive One?

Now that sources of variation have been detailed it is important to consider whether the experience of disabled graduates is distinctive. The purpose of this section is to discuss how distinctive the disabled graduates experience is compared to non-disabled graduates and other minority groups. Instead of restating all of the ways in which the experience is distinct, the main examples will be recapped and implications explored.

The results indicate that disabled graduates shared many of the same experiences as non-disabled graduates such as taking a long time to secure graduate level employment (see; Purcell et al., 2004; Teichler, 2007). Despite the similarities there are distinctive aspects of the disabled experience. Potentially the main example of the distinctive experience of disabled graduates, in relation to non-disabled graduates, is the continued discrimination they face in the workplace, despite improvements in content and scope of legislation. For example, being removed from a position because it is assumed your impairment makes you unsafe to carry out your role that you have been doing successfully for 20 years (Sophie).

Another source of distinctiveness is the outcome of many situations the disabled graduates encountered. One such example is the outcome of networks for disabled graduates. Research shows that non-disabled graduates usually locate low skilled work through networks (Mahuteau and Junankar, 2008; Try, 2005; Saks and Ashforth, 2000). In contrast, the research data shows jobs located through networks result in high skilled work for disabled graduates. A second example is that non-

disabled workers are interested in achieving a work-life balance (Noon and Blyton, 1997), in contrast the data indicates disabled graduates are more interested in obtaining a work-impairment balance.

The final key source of distinction between disabled and non-disabled graduates is the determination in which disabled graduates fought for their dreams. In many instances they had a second and third plan in mind to ensure they reached their goals. For example when Lucy and Paul turned to self-employment because they could not manage in the traditional employment setting.

Given the established distinctiveness between disabled and non-disabled graduates, how distinctive are the experiences of disabled graduates compared to other minority groups? It is in this comparison that the majority of similarities are seen. For example, there are some similarities in their experiences such as disabled people choosing to work in organisations where they will face less discrimination which is similar to women choosing to work in sectors where they will face less discrimination (Colgan and Ledwith, 2002). A second example is related to disclosure. Research shows that 'invisibility' of a minority status resulted in gay and lesbian workers hiding their sexual orientation. Hiding part of their identity led to stress and anxiety (Day and Schoenrade, 2000; Neely-Martinez, 1993). This phenomenon was also apparent in studies of disability and disclosure (Bishop and Allen, 2001; Jans, 2012; Lucas, 2008) and was seen in the thesis. It is suggested that these similarities exist because of the shared oppression faced by many minority groups.

Despite these similarities, the research shows there are distinct differences between disabled graduates and other minorities, shown in the research, however they are not always obvious distinctions. The first example is in relation to the job centre. The literature states that that JCP staff are unhelpful for all claimants (Spicker, 2011), which was reported by the disabled graduates. What is distinct to disabled people is why the personnel are unhelpful. Other job seekers do not have impairments therefore they are unlikely to face lack of knowledge about disability in the JCP.

Other minority groups do not need advisors to have specialist knowledge to be able to help them access jobs. A second example of the distinctiveness of disabled graduates to other minority groups is the way in which disabled graduates respond to the benefit work trap. The literature reports that the benefit work trap prevents claimants from returning to work (McKay and Rowlingson, 1999, Spicker, 2011). In contrast, this thesis showed that it was no financial concerns, primarily, that prevented disabled graduates from returning to work, instead it was the fear that they would not be able to manage in work or that the organisation would not put the correct adjustments in place to enable them to work.

In conclusion there are more differences between disabled and non-disabled graduates than disabled graduates and other minority workers. The implication of this finding is that if one is to argue from analogy, the analogy should be with other minority workers rather than other graduates.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Despite the vast numbers of disabled people and their continued experience of discrimination, disability research remains, for the most part, an under-researched topic. Thus, in adding to a growing body of literature on disability and employment, one of the main practical contributions made by this thesis is to further highlight the extent to which employment experiences can be improved for disabled people through improved policy and practice. In order to present the implications for policy in a meaningful manner the implications have been split up into four sections; implications for organisations; implications for legislation and the benefit system; implications for disabled graduates; and implications for other actors in the employment relationship.

Implications for organisations

This first section discusses the implications for organisations and suggests ways they can move forward to eliminate discrimination in the workplace. Given the work focus of the research it is unsurprising that there are numerous implications for

employing organisations. The first implication is that organisations need to address issues of equality more proactively. I advocate that organisations move from an equal opportunities approach to embrace positive action and positive discrimination. For example, the research showed that many organisations do not use the concept of disability leave. As a result, many employees on long term sick are missing the chance to return to work successfully. Joining organisations such as the RNIB who set up disability leave would provide the organisation with much needed advice and support about how to deal with disabled employees and the best way to manage difference. This recommendation points to the importance of employer organisations for companies. Employer organisations such as the Business Disability Forum provide help and support for employers. The Business Disability Forum has a Gold Standard benchmarking test that can allow an organisation to assess and plan its equality provision. Given the established business benefits of proper diversity management (Kandola and Fullerton, 1994) it is clearly in the best interests of the organisation to join such organisations, as reported in chapter seven. While many of the participants reported that joining is cost prohibitive, consideration should be paid to long term goals, rather than focusing on short term business need, as discussed by Dickens (1999).

In addition the data showed the importance of diversity champions and HR equality specialists, but these personnel need to be accessible and available to managers and employers. The research reported that line managers and disabled graduates had poor access to such individuals and often they had low visibility in the organisation. Improving access to these specialist staff with support line managers when dealing with equality and allow disabled graduates a point of contact should problems occur in the workplace.

Furthermore, organisations need to address their recruitment and selection strategies. The data clearly showed that disclosure was problematic for the participants. Improvements could be made in this area by introducing simple measures; for example, on application forms organisations should allow more than a tick box to indicate someone is disabled. They should have a section where the

applicant can write as much detail as they want. Moreover, introducing job trials would be beneficial for organisations and disabled graduates, which could be viewed as a radical approach to E&D. While it is understood that due to the vast number of applicants this can be an arduous and time consuming task, it is suggested that the scheme is rolled out just for disabled applicants. This suggestion would have the impact of improving disclosure rates and would be justifiable under the Equality Act 2010.

Improving disclosure would also benefit participants. Organisations need to assess and address their disclosure policy- when do they ask applicants to disclose, how and what support is available? Improving support and access to key staff to give advice on disclosure would improve disclosure rates and give confidence to those who do disclose, that they will not be discriminated against, as reported in the thesis.

For disabled employees the data shows that it is imperative for organisations to have structured and clear reasonable adjustment policies. The data highlighted that formal policies are most suitable for meeting the needs of employees who are then equipped to meet the needs of the business. This process can be achieved by having a key, easily contactable, member of staff whose responsibility is to co-ordinate reasonable adjustments. They would be responsible for liaising with employees, Access to Work, who should always be involved because of their specialist knowledge, and line managers. The key member of staff would be greatly assisted by a central fund, earmarked for reasonable adjustments for staff. This would mean that managers are less likely to find adjustments cost prohibitive because their funds are not being diverted from their departmental budget, as reported in the thesis and found in the wider literature (see Schur, 2003). In addition, adjustments should be reviewed annually. A good method of doing this is via the 'disability passport' which has been introduced by the Business Disability Forum. This document facilitates communication between line managers and employees and makes dialogue about adjustments priority and frequent. This point would address employees concerns that they do not want to ask for too much support or do not know how to address their needs with line managers or HR.

There needs to be an increase in mandatory equality training for line managers. Training is important given that research shows negative attitudes of non-disabled people results in the social exclusion of disabled people (Becket and Wrighton, 2000). Equality training aims to reevaluate the manner in which people interact with disabled people (Priestley, 1999; Walker, 2004). The research was inundated with examples of poor line management knowledge of disability and as a result employee experience was poor. In order to address this issue, promoting compulsory training for managers could overcome managerial ambivalence towards disability and increase knowledge within the organisation. It is imperative; however, that post training an assessment is made to ascertain if learning has taken place. This training could also help standardise provision across departments, which will also improve employee experience.

Line managers also need to be proactive in eliminating bullying and harassment. The data showed that often a lack of knowledge led to bullying and therefore one way to reduce senior management bullying would be to hold disability awareness days. Another method of eradicating bullying by colleagues and senior staff would be to have a peer listening scheme as was successful in the Royal Mail (Vega and Comer, 2005). This scheme could be carried out by another disabled member of staff. As a result, employees who are bullied would be more likely to approach a member of staff that shares a personal characteristic, reflecting the communities of coping work by Korczynski (2002, 2003). Reducing bullying and harassment is likely to reduce staff turnover and will also improve productivity (Hoel et al., 2003).

Another area that organisations need to address is equality monitoring. The research found that many organisations did not survey their minority staff and therefore were unaware of their experiences in the organisation; this finding is in line with (Forth & Rincon-Aznar, 2008). In addition, the data showed that those HR managers who were exemplary in their field did carry out equality audits – highlighting the activity as best practice. This finding therefore reflects work that effective equality and diversity policy is more likely if equality monitoring is in place (Walsh, 2007). Therefore, it is suggested that organisations carry out annual equality audits to ascertain weak and

strong areas and create action plans. While this activity is a standard part of the Public Sector Equality Duties, it is not a practice that is common in the private sector. This suggestion therefore advocates expanding the scope of legislation to include the private sector in the equality duties.

In conclusion, these various strategies for organisations broadly reflect the radical approach to equal opportunities which focuses on equal outcomes over equal access. In order to achieve this end some positive discrimination has been advocated, such as job trials for disabled applicants.

Implications for Public Policy

This section addresses the implications for public policy. The first implication for public policy is closely related to implications for organisations. The main finding from the research was that disability legislation is poorly implemented in the workplace and that inequality and discrimination still exists. There have been various methods suggested to improve implementation of legal provision in the workplace (see Dickens, 2007; Liff, 1999), and this thesis adds another dimension.

Like Dickens (1999) the thesis advocates strengthening of implementation through the tripod of employers, legal and social regulation. A central finding of this thesis was that stronger law will not necessarily lead to improved outcomes for minorities. Instead what is needed is improved enforcement mechanisms. The first recommendation relates to improved education and enforcement through improved employer provision. Employees need to be more educated about their rights and be supported to take action where necessary. The research provided much data that showed the graduates were often ignorant of their rights and unaware of where to locate appropriate support. Giving HR the responsibility of educating employees about their rights is one way to address this problem and could be achieved by strengthening and expanding the equality duties. Another role of employers could be the provision of employee networks in organisations. The data found that when there were networks for disabled members of staff these were usually, although not always

helpful. They gave the staff an opportunity to speak about problems and seek advice and support from colleagues. In addition, HR managers reported being happy with the work that their network groups carried out. Using these network groups as a source of information and support could therefore be another way to help mediate the employment rights of disabled people.

The second leg of the tripod is enforcement through social organisations such as trade unions and employee voice organisations or to build in employee networks that would support minority groups. This point will be discussed later in the section about policy implications for trade unions.

The third leg of the tripod is improved legislation. The Equality Act 2010 needs to be improved so that there are fewer 'grey' areas in terms of recruitment and selection of minorities. This improvement will only be achieved as case law is amassed. The research showed recruitment and selection was a considerable area of concern because employees did not know how to prove they had been discriminated against. While the employee no longer has to prove the discrimination occurred and instead the employer has to prove they were not discriminatory (Dickens, 1999) this legislative change does not go far enough to help employees. What is proposed is a more radical approach; the legislation should set out specific parameters that the employer has to meet. For example, when hiring a disabled worker it is proposed that it would compulsory to give them an interview, as suggested under the guaranteed interview scheme. This approach suggests the inclusion of more positive discrimination in legislation.

Additionally the Public Sector Equality Duty should be expanded to the private sector. The data shows that those employees who worked in the private sector had worse experiences than those in the public or third sector. If the PSED was put in place in the private sector then it is likely experiences would improve as by law organisations would have to monitor and improve equality.

Combining improved voluntary action from employers alongside increased input from employee voice organisations and more robust legislation should result in less discrimination in the workplace.

Implications for Benefit System

The data provided many examples of negative experiences of the benefit system. It was not the benefits themselves that were criticised, but the system. The first set of implications relate to the Jobcentre Plus. Firstly, Jobcentre Plus personnel need to improve their knowledge of disability and the support available to disabled people. Despite the presence of specialist Disability Employment Advisors, disabled people initially have to visit a standard JCP staff member. The initial contact person should receive mandatory training about how to deal with disabled claimants. Furthermore, the DEA should also receive greater training to understand support available. Part of this training should include time spent with the NGO outsourced partners, so they gain an insight into what happens to the claimants when their provision is outsourced.

The personnel also need to change their attitudes to disabled people. The research was replete with examples of negative attitudes held by JCP personnel, which resonates with earlier research (Pecci and Rosenthal, 2007). While it is known it is difficult to change attitudes and behaviours (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001) training would be the first place to start. In addition, some shadowing of disabled people would be useful for the JCP personnel to understand the issues they face in finding employment. Disability awareness training has found to be beneficial when links to practice are made (Charles, 2005) and therefore this recommendation carries weight, although there were no examples of disability awareness training in the data.

The government also has a role in reducing the negative perception held by JCP personnel. JCP employees are conveying the negative images that are constantly

portrayed in society by the media and government as they try to justify spending cuts on benefits. If the government were to pay attention to different parts of the HMRC revenue, instead on focusing on benefit cheats, which account for marginal amount of spend – 2.1% of benefit cost (DWP, 2013b) then potentially perception of disabled people in society would change. This change could then be reflected in the attitudes of JCP personnel.

The government has made it more difficult to claim benefits through increased access requirements and assessments in a bid to reduce claimants (Spicker, 2011). While this aim has negatively impacted genuine claimants, who already felt stigmatised. What the data shows is that claiming benefits is a difficult and arduous process and this deterred some claimants. Therefore, while it should not be too easy to claim benefits, to reduce fraud, there should be good support and advice for genuine claimants. The government needs to provide access to specialists who can help fill-out claim forms. This would increase the trust of claimants in the government and also make forms easier to process as there would be some degree of standardisation in the completed forms. There should also be advertising campaigns about the CSO organisations that already exist and can help claimants fill in forms, such as the CAB. In addition, social workers and GPs should be educated about the benefits system so that they can advise potential claimants. Knowledge dissemination is the key to addressing many concerns with the benefit system.

The final implication of the research for the benefit system is that it should encourage disabled people to try work through flexibility in the 'permitted work rules'. The current permitted work rules allow only a low salary for 16 hours work; therefore it hinders any highly skilled disabled individual from working. This point reflects the government's assumption that disabled people are low skilled. If a time related cap was placed on 16 hours instead of a time and wage cap, more highly skilled disabled people would be more likely to try and return to work.

Additionally, the complex process of returning to benefits if one cannot manage in work, resulted in participants' being wary about returning to work. What is proposed is a 'hold system'. This would be a system where your benefits went on hold for a period of 3 -6 months. In this time you would be able to test work. If you were unable to manage work and your impairment, you would simply return to the benefits you were on previously. Not only would this make the system much less complicated to administer but it would improve the claimant experience.

Implications for Trade Unions and CSOs

Trade unions and CSO were a central theme in the research and reflect the third leg of the tripod to improve legislation enforcement. Firstly, a plethora of data was generated about the positive work both organisations carry-out with disabled graduates. Moreover, the data implied that many of the workplace problems that occurred resulted in individual action, rather than collective action. Individual action over collection action was common because many problems were individual in nature and therefore hard to collectivise around a common cause. This finding reflects work by Abbot (2004b) where the individualistic nature of employment problems made collectivising to enforce statutory entitlements problematic. What is suggested, therefore, is that mutual alliances are built between trade unions and CSOs to improve the support on offer. This suggestion is of particular value given that they often operate in different spheres. Working together would provide cross validation and fertilisation of support and potentially funding, as suggested by Abbott (2004b), Heery et al., (2012a, 2012b). Unions working together with communities and organisations also reflects the turn to community unionism where unions forge links and share agendas with communities, as advocated by Wills (2001). This strategy has been reported to be more welcoming of minority groups (Wills, 2001) and therefore could provide an avenue to improve the workplace experience of disabled workers.

Furthermore TUs and CSOs should engage in more advertising about the services they offer to improve awareness, this suggestion links to the union renewal literature that gives insight into how unions may increase their membership to improve their

position in employment relations. The participants who used the services were happy with the support they provided, but few participants knew of the services they offered, especially CSOs. Increased dissemination of information could result in increased membership of trade unions, which could potentially address the decline in trade union power seen in recent years (Williams and Adam-Smith, 2006) and improve representation for minority groups (Kirton and Healy 1999). This debate links into the wider literature on the role of trade unions to organise or service its members (Heery and Salmon, 2000).

Implications for Disabled Graduates.

The implications for disabled graduates are somewhat more subjective. Firstly, the research was full of examples of disabled graduates executing coping strategies to deal with their situations. It is proposed, therefore, that graduates learn to cope with difficult situations by educating themselves about their rights, locating sources of support – such as friends and family, and join disability or equality related organisations to improve their access to social capital and hence increase their communities of coping (Korczynski 2002). Creating this type of support network will allow them to access information and support when challenging situations arise. This recommendation is no way suggesting that disabled graduates should accept the difficulties that come their way. In contrast it is suggesting that they equip themselves with the necessary social capital and skills to fight stigma and discrimination when they do occur.

Another key implication from the research is the importance of volunteering. Volunteering helped participants keep their skills up to date during periods of unemployment. Volunteering improving employability is reflected in some research, but the evidence is inconsistent (Hirst, 2001). The research had examples of people who volunteered because they were bored at home and wanted something to do; as a result they were more employable because their skills were up-to-date and they were less likely to be seen as having a 'gap on their CV'. Volunteering also allowed the graduates to “test the waters” with regard to how they would manage their impairment and employment simultaneously. As a result some grew in confidence in

their ability to manage in the world of work. Therefore, suggesting disabled graduates engage in volunteering offers all of these benefits for those who choose to follow this advice.

Importantly, proactivity and assertiveness are essential skills to develop for disabled graduates. Those graduates who portrayed these skills fared the best in the labour market. For example, some participants were able to 'grow their job', either through job enlargement or enrichment. This skill led to improved experiences of work which benefited the employee and the employer alike. The ability to cope and be assertive can be developed while at university through extra-curricular activities or through involvement in organisations such as CSOs. CSO organisations and Trade Union involvement would also give disabled graduates access to vital sources of information should they encounter discrimination in work. These types of skills can be best inculcated through improved career services provision at university, a benefit system that support work, rather than makes support so complex it deters disabled people from trying out work and finally through contact with CSOs and other employee voice organisations.

Reflections and Future Work

The final section of the chapter addresses the issue of reciprocity. Engaging in socially sensitive research can be a challenging process for the researcher. The process can raise unanticipated emotions because of boundary concerns and attachment formed with participants. As a result, it is important to remain reflexive throughout the research, as suggested in the methodology chapter above. One manner of achieving this reflexivity is to address three questions at the end of the research to assess whether the research has been reciprocal and allow the researcher to deal with unanticipated emotions (Barton, 1996).

1. How have I used my knowledge and skills to challenge the forms of oppression disabled people experience and thereby help to empower them? My knowledge and skills have given disabled graduates a chance to talk about their experiences of the labour market. Through interaction in the

interview they became aware of their rights and new opportunities available to them. They also challenged some of their own taken for granted perceptions. As a direct result of the interview at least two participants challenged employers and improved their labour market position. They received confidence in their abilities and felt empowered to change their situation.

2. Does my writing and speaking reproduce a system of domination or challenge that system?

I gave priority to the words of the disabled graduates by using verbatim quotes. This challenges the domination of the researcher-participant discourse. The interviews allowed the participants time and space to tell their story, the interviews lasted as long as the participants were comfortable. The participants often returned to topics when they thought of additional information, this fact ensured that the totality of their experiences was captured, in their own words.

3. Have I shown respect to the disabled people I have worked with? Respect has been shown through-out the research via frequent communication with the participants, information sharing and allocating them expert status. They were kept informed of every stage of the research and received a report at the end summarising findings.

In conclusion it can be stated that the research has been reciprocal and has not objectified disabled people. Given the sensitive nature of the research, how did it feel to carry out the research?

The research process was enlightening and at the same time challenging. I found it difficult listening to some of the stories the participants recounted because they were, in some cases, harrowing and I felt a huge sense of injustice. It was difficult to control this sense of injustice in the interview and not pass comment on what was being recounted. This impartial stance actually helped the research process because

it allowed me to give voice to the participants because they had space to tell their story. I found many of the participants inspiring and applaud them all in how they have overcome adversity to strive to be the best they can be.

The fact that I am a disabled graduate myself allowed me to closely identify with the participants. This process involved sharing some of my own personal story with the participants. Sharing not only helped the participants feel at ease during the interview but it enabled me to justify my position as a researcher. Given the vast number of articles that discuss disability research by disabled or non-disabled researchers (see Stone and Priestley, 1996) I felt I had to justify my position as a researcher. This process changed during the course of the research because my own impairment fluctuates between invisibility and visibility. As a result, in some interviews, when my impairment was less obvious, I felt compelled to tell the participants more about my personal story. I was surprised that I felt I needed to justify myself in this manner. I soon began to realise that I too had internalised many criticisms that disabled people in society face and as a result felt I needed to justify myself more to the disabled graduates when I appeared outwardly 'healthy'. Sharing my story prevented me from being considered an outsider by the participants and in many instances I was asked more about my own personal story. In these cases I left answering the questions until the end of the research interview as I wanted to focus on the participant's story. Despite my vast experience of impairment and discrimination I am not in the position to say that I have experienced every facet of disability; I was however in the position to empathise with the participants and provide a channel for their voice to be heard. I carried out the role of being interested in their story for the purpose of the research but also for the purposes of helping them improve their situation in work and to learn from each other.

I did not anticipate being so drawn into some of the participants' stories. As a researcher examining a socially sensitive topic I should have been aware that I was taking on emotionally heavy research and as a result burdens and challenges would result. During the graduate interview phase I often felt emotionally exhausted. I was challenged by the unjust systems and people the participants had encountered. In

addition, I also felt somewhat relieved that I was not the only person to have experienced discrimination that is overtly outlawed. This process taught me just how ineffective legislation is, in particular how people are unwilling to fight for their rights because of the dominance of stigma and prejudice. In order to help me deal with this emotional involvement I took advice leaflets and contact details of personnel who I knew would be able to deal with the participant's situation more effectively. I avoided giving advice to the participants about what they should do in specific situations and instead just listened to what they had to say. I did not feel it was my role as a researcher to advise them and I made this clear. Instead presenting them with information to find more useful sources of support was a better solution for themselves and allowed me to avoid becoming overly involved with their situation.

Some participants kept in touch during the research and emailed me updates as to how they were doing. I did not include this information in the data collection as it occurred after the interviews. It was, however, great to hear from the participants and greatly heart-warming when they had improved their situation. I heard only last week that one lady I interviewed and discussed the possibility of carrying out a Ph.D is now just a few months away from submission.

Carrying out this research has taught me a lot about academia. I have learnt that qualitative research is non-linear which is contrary to what I naively imagined at the start of my Ph.D. I have learnt how to challenge taken for granted norms and systems of oppression. This process has given me freedom of expression and great privilege.

Finally, given the broad nature of the findings there are numerous avenues for future research. Of particular interest is to undertake a larger scale investigation into disabled graduates, involving interviewing more disabled graduates and potentially a survey sample. Additional future work could investigate in greater depth the use of CSO and TUs by disabled graduates. This avenue is of particular interest given the increasing individualisation of employment rights in the UK.

Conclusion

Based upon the conclusions of the research and the key arguments delineated in the section above, this thesis adds new knowledge regarding disabled graduates experiences in the UK labour market. This final chapter ended the thesis by drawing the different themes together. The principle arguments made through the empirical study were reiterated, in order to provide the background for a discussion of the theoretical, empirical and practical contributions of the study.

This research has found that discrimination and disadvantage is a large feature of disabled graduates' workplace and labour market experiences, despite improved legislation. The contribution this thesis makes to existing knowledge is that it has identified the key aspects of the disabled graduates' experiences and advanced understanding of equality and diversity for disabled graduates. This achievement is particularly poignant given the paucity of disability research, in particular disabled graduate research.

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Appendix I: Interview Schedule

Biographical details: Age, gender, disability (type of disability – visible/ invisible? When became disabled) what qualifications do they have?

Occupation: current occupation and any past occupations of relevance to disability. Define occupational group (e.g. manual, non-manual, professional). If relevant, explore past occupations.

Higher Education

University Attended: were they disabled in uni?

What careers advice did they have at university?

Do they feel their qualifications helped them get a job? If so why?

Job Seeking

Type of employment they are looking for?

1. Hours
2. Flexibility
3. Location
4. Areas of interest – voluntary sector? What motivates this?
5. Anything else?

Have they ever applied for graduate training scheme, why/why not?

How long were they looking for work?

Where did they find vacancy information? Local press? Disability specific websites? University careers office? Did they use any organisations to help them? If so what ones? Were they any use? What were the outcomes?

How do you evaluate whether you want to do a job? What characteristics do you look for? How important in org size, 'positive about disabled people' etc?

What selection processes have they experienced?

1. Interview

2. Assessment centre

Are they currently working in a job that they feel matches their abilities?

Are they using the skills that they learnt at university?

Have they ever been underemployed or unemployed?

What are their concerns about entering the labour market?

Benefits

Experiences of job centre / DWP

Advice given by jobcentre / DWP?

Employment

Length of time worked for employer? Did they have a disability when they started working for the employer, or did they develop a disability while already in employment?

Is current job advertised as graduate level?

Do you consider your job to be graduate level?

Company / organisational attitude towards people with disabilities?

Do they require any **adjustments** in work? If so what are they? How did they go about achieving them? how these requests were made? Informally or formally? Individually through line manager? Via Personnel or a trade union etc.? How difficult was it for the employee to establish HOW to go about requesting such adjustments? And, how long did the process take?

What type of adjustments were made

1. role
2. physical

What are their experiences of **Access to Work**?

Have they ever had to give up a job because they have felt unable to do it because of their disability? If so, Could they have continued with this job if appropriate adjustments had been made?

Do you find working hinders or helps ability to manage the condition?

If you had to put your inability to find work down to one factor what would it be?

Reflections

What do they see happening in their future career wise? What are their aspirations?

Do they see their qualifications as essential in the labour market? Do they believe they need them to put them on an equal level to non-disabled graduates?

Are they aware of the legislation that is there to protect them? Are you aware of the DDA?

dis-Ability

- Have you achieved a degree-level qualification?
- Do you have a physical or mental impairment and consider yourself to be disabled?
- Would you be willing to participate in research that aims to ‘give voice’ to disabled graduates in/outside work by documenting their experience?
 - **For further details, please contact**
 - **Laura Williams in confidence on**
williamsLC@cf.ac.uk

Appendix III: Consent Form

Cardiff Business School

ETHICAL CONSENT FORM

I understand that taking part in this research will include participation in individual interviews regarding my experiences as an employee at BBC, in my diversity role.

My identity and that of the organisation will be kept confidential at all times and any identifying data will be made anonymous.

I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time prior to the submission of the thesis (September 2012) and no reasons need to be given for my withdrawal.

The data held can only be traced back to me by the researcher, Laura Williams, and in line with the Data protection Act I can access my information at any time or ask for it to be destroyed.

I understand that at the end of the study I will be entitled to receive a summary of the findings of the research and notification of any research publications arising from the research.

I agree/disagree to the interview being recorded.

I have read and understood the above terms and agree to participate in the research undertaken by Laura Williams, of Cardiff Business School, under the supervision of Prof E Heery.

Signed (participant).....

Date

Signed (researcher).....

Date.....

Appendix IV: Participant Pen Profiles

Rebecca is a 28 year old lady who has experienced poor mental health since her teenage years. She has a 2:1 MA in Linguistics and a Speech Therapy Diploma. Rebecca has recently secured work for the mental health charity she volunteered at. Prior to this she was living off benefits, in particular; DLA, Income Support and Housing Benefit. Rebecca is worried, in particular, about the gap in her CV, which was caused by her impairment. In addition she is concerned about stigma arising out of disclosure. Rebecca is actively looking for work and has been job searching for the past 6 months.

Dr Joanna is 45 years old and has experienced visible physical impairments since birth. She has recently finished her PhD in the disability arena and is looking for work at a university. Joanna is a Chemistry graduate, from a prestigious university, graduating with a 1st Class (honours) degree. She had a thriving career in the computer industry before turning to further study of various diplomas and a MA in Disability Studies before settling to a PhD. Joanna has encountered numerous experiences of discrimination, and is anxious about her ability to work in the labour market after a 10 year break. She is unsure of her adjustment requirements and fears she will be viewed as inferior.

Paul, a 63 year old MBE, is a freelance disability consultant and experiences various physical impairments, some of which are visible, while others are invisible. Paul's impairment occurred as a result of an accident while working abroad; a job from which he was fired. Paul found sanctuary in higher education, completing a Media and Communications degree with 1st Class Honours. He has since forged himself a successful freelance career, consulting on disability related contracts country wide. He is passionate about equality and sees himself working "until the day he finds himself in the obituary page"!

Tom is 25 and experiences an invisible learning impairment. He graduated with a 1st Class (honours) degree in Politics and applied directly for many graduate training schemes. He was offered numerous jobs and accepted a 5 year training scheme with one of the 'Big Four'. As part of his training he is completing a MBA through distance learning. He has experienced some bullying at work because of his impairment but is very happy with his job and has high career aspirations.

Duncan is 25 and has dyslexia and was diagnosed in primary school. He remembers being told that dyslexic students were lazy. Duncan has a third class honours degree in physics but feels that his dyslexia impaired him from getting a higher grade. He became despondent when his job applications were rejected, until a friend suggested he worked in a role they had heard about. He was successful in securing this position, working in a lab. He has had a few issues with his dyslexia and management in terms of their poor understanding of his condition. Duncan does not know what he wants to do in the future.

Rose is 25 and graduated with a first class honours degree in psychology. In addition, she has a Masters in Occupational Psychology. She is currently working for an American HR consultancy. Rose does not feel that her dyslexia impacts her a great deal at work, but would like some more technological support. In the future she plans to move to a more secure job with better benefits.

Sandra became ill while working in information services. She gained her degree prior to the onset of her illness. Sandra had to give up her position as she was unable to manage her condition and work. This led her to doing voluntary work to keep her skills up to date. After she had recovered enough to return to work she found it very difficult to return to her original field of work, so she found a job working in equalities. She felt she was able to do this as she could make a virtue out of her impairment related experiences.

Amelia is a 53 year old retired music teacher. She experiences a visible physical impairment along with some invisible impairments. She had a successful private teaching career, with 35 students a week. Amelia was self-employed and as a result of her impairments she has been forced to give up teaching. Amelia has a love for bike riding and has taken up further study at various points since retiring. Amelia first graduated with 2:1 in Music back in 1976 and has since studied French at the Open University and gained various diplomas. Public transport is currently Amelia's main impairment related problem.

Phillip was diagnosed at primary school with dyslexia and went on to study a Chemistry degree at university, which he graduated with a 2:2 honours degree. Initially he wanted to be a pilot but because of his dyslexia it was not possible. Now he works in a lab, using his Chemistry skills. He does not have any reasonable adjustments as he reports that he does not need any. He has got over his disappointment at not being a pilot and is now happy in his Chemistry career.

Sophie is a qualified nurse in her 50s and when I met her she was amidst difficult troubles with her employer. Sophie is diagnosed with dyslexia and epilepsy and has been removed from her role on the ward by her employer. She has been relocated to a non-patient facing role because of her impairments, which she is very unhappy about. She is having difficulty getting the reasonable adjustments she requires and the stress of the situation has caused her to be on sick leave for some months. She is not optimistic that the situation will be sorted out positively.

Pam is 38 and has multiple impairments and went to a special school until she was 17. Her parents were told that it probably was not worth educating her as she would not achieve anything. She has conquered these misconceptions and has a degree in Social Work. Pam had lots of problems negotiating reasonable adjustments because of line manager relations. This resulted in her moving from her chosen field into disability related work. Pam now works as a disability advisor for students at a

university. This is a job she enjoys as she feels she can pass her experience onto the students, although her workplace support is not good.

Jessica a 36 year old who has a law degree and a masters in legal practice. Jessica decided to attend university after an accident which left her paralysed from the neck down. She was motivated to do her degree to test herself, after the accident. She wanted to establish if she was emotionally and intellectually able to complete the degree. After obtaining her qualifications she found it difficult to enter the labour market for geographical reasons and failure to be called for interview. As a result she had decided to study for a Ph.D.

Charles is 54 year old former teacher. Charles has Asperger's Syndrome and left teaching as he was unable to cope with the demands of the job and his impairment. Charles also has hearing difficulties, which are the result of an industrial injury when he was employed in the armed forces. Currently unemployed, Charles is doing voluntary work, through a government back-to-work scheme. This work is with special needs children, where he believes his future is. He is finding it very hard to secure interviews, however, and finds application forms very difficult.

Nancy has a degree in Social Work and a Masters in Social Policy and Administration. Nancy is 61 years old and currently working as an office administrator for a disability organisation, part time. Prior to her stroke in 2003 Nancy was not disabled and held many high level positions in an executive role. Now Nancy feels disillusioned that she has a low skilled job but as she found it very difficult to get any work, she took this job as she needed to work.

Claire is a 28 year old participant on the Scope Graduate Leadership Training Scheme. Claire experiences an invisible physical impairment. She graduated with a 2:1 (honours) degree in Deaf Studies in 2003. Currently she is working as a civil servant on a 12 month placement, which is due to end shortly. Claire has had some

excellent placements through the Scope scheme which have stretched her mentally. At the moment, however, she is left completing easy work that does not utilise her skills, which has knocked her confidence. Claire is anxious about applying for jobs and feels that she would like to work in the disability arena in the future.

Lucy is 28 and is setting up her own business. She experiences a fluid physical impairment that varies between visibility and invisibility. Lucy has a Foundation Business degree that she is using to set up her own company in shoe wear for disabled customers. Previously, Lucy was employed in a doctor's surgery but could not carry on her position due to her impairment. She left the organisation, took up studying and is now carrying out herself employment venture. Currently she is facing a lack of support from government agencies and is concerned about the problems of self-employment when she is too ill to work.

Joe is 27 and is currently working for the government. Joe experiences two physical impairments and has experienced 'special education'. Joe specialised in History and graduated with a 2:1 (honours) degree. The Scope Graduate Leadership Scheme has been instrumental in Joe's life. As a result of a placement on the scheme, his contract was extended and he is now an official employee of the government. Joe is very happy with his experience of Scope and recommends the scheme to others. He does feel, however, that it is ironic that despite numerous applications his only success came from a disability specific scheme. Joe is contracted to his current position for a fixed term but has planned out his potential career routes up the career ladder and is positive about his prospects and is considering further study.

Lisa is 26 and is working in the third sector. Lisa has an invisible and a visible physical impairment. She graduated in 2003 with a 2:1 (honours) in Social Policy and Administration. In addition Lisa has an MA in Disability Studies that was completed via distance learning, while working part time. Lisa then participated in the Scope Graduate Leadership Training Scheme. Two placements were attended, one in the private sector and another in the third sector. Now Lisa is settling into a new job in

the third sector around disability and is positive about the new role and the difference she can make to disabled people's lives.

Mary is 35 years old and has experienced poor mental health in recent years. She has undertaken a degree in Criminal and Community and received a BA (honours) 2:2. Mary is currently unemployed and living on benefits and desperately unhappy. Job hunting is proving stressful and unsuccessful, which further exacerbates Mary's condition. Mary does get involved in voluntary work for the third sector. Mary is uneasy about disclosing her condition on job applications and is aware of her need for reasonable adjustments but lacks confidence and knowledge to know what to ask for. Incidentally, Mary was encouraged to take on her university degree by a government agency but is now being told to participate in shop work to earn money; an idea she does not want to entertain.

Sally is 35 and has a sensory impairment. Sally is a high achiever and attended a prestigious university, from which she was forced to leave during her second year due to the onset of her impairment. She was, however, granted an honorary degree. After this, Sally spent time rehabilitating at a specialised college and then progressed to a university for further study. She graduated with a 1st Class (honours) degree in Psychology. Following this, with employment a feared activity, she undertook various diplomas and a Msc in Psychotherapy. Sally has been working in a college for 2 years and is at present on her third promotion; however, she does experience difficulties educating colleagues about her needs.

Keith is 28 and works as a fitness instructor. Keith had an accident during his years at university and as a result has an invisible physical impairment, which is improving. Keith graduated with a 2:2 (honours) Business Studies degree but faced huge hurdles when he tried to enter the labour market. As a result he obtained a job through a personal contact and now works in fitness. His career in fitness has not been without incident as he has experienced an episode of distinctive discrimination.

Keith would like to take his career further but lacks the confidence; feeling he does not match his CV.

Gwen is a 55 year old who is in the process of studying Law. Gwen experiences various physical impairments, the majority are invisible. Gwen has had a vast and varied employment history, ranging from nursing to taxi driving. Gwen's first qualification was, as a mature student, in Business Enterprise, for which she received a BA without honours. In addition Gwen has undertaken various diplomas, RSA qualifications and has run her own business. At this time Gwen is looking forward to being able to participate in the labour market when she graduates and feels that a legal career will accommodate her impairments.

Beth is 25 years old and is currently recuperating after an accident which resulted in various invisible and visible physical impairments. Beth graduated from a Maths degree with a 2:2 (honours) and is now taking part in government schemes to rehabilitate and, thus, is currently not employed. Beth has not been dismissed from her previous job, despite being on sick leave for 18 months. Presently, Beth is focusing on her health and not looking for work, but is aware that her career goals have changed as a result of her impairment. She does not, however, expect to face discrimination or any other issues in her future employment.

Dr. David is 32 years old and looking to move from his current academic post in higher education. David experiences a visible physical impairment which manifested itself in recent years. David graduated initially with a BA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics; he then moved to further study to a MA in Political Philosophy. These qualifications were followed by a PhD in Sociology. David's main concern is that his previous employment has been on the basis of short term contracts and he perceives his future lies in that direction. He believes this will cause problems with job security and pensions. He is currently in an accommodating workplace but is unsure of how to negotiate his impairment in new surroundings.

Val is a 60 year old female who has had a chronic degenerative illness for 23 years. Val was a teacher when her illness started and after a year on sick leave she was medically retired. It was at this stage that Val decided she would enrol and study for a Ph.D. After finishing her Ph.D she moved on to teaching English as a second language and has done a lot of work with children with dyslexia. Val kept gaining qualifications as she felt there was nothing else to do and wanted to alleviate the boredom.

Dot is 30 years old and is a qualified teacher. She is currently working for an insurance company but is off sick at the moment and is unsure if she will go back to work. Dot's impairment is related to mobility and fatigue and commenced after she completed her degree. In the insurance company she is having a lot of problems around disciplinary action because of her protracted sick leave. In order to fight this she has engaged the union for support. Dot's decision not to pursue a career in teaching was because of personal reasons, becoming pregnant and the stress levels involved in teaching.

Georgia is 31 years old and also a qualified teacher. She began teaching and soon after her physical disability commenced. This resulted in her having to leave her teaching position as she did not have the energy to continue. As she started to recover and learnt how to juggle her impairment and work, she wanted to return to teaching, on a gradual part time basis. The college she worked for, however, were unable to accommodate her as they did not understand the DDA. As a result, Georgia decided she needed a new vocation, so started looking into doing disability equality training. This led her to undertake a Masters in disability and now she is hoping to start a Ph.D in the near future.

Hayley, 35, has a Bsc and a Masters in Chemistry and has a hearing impairment. After she completed her studies Hayley could not decide what she wanted to do and felt that she would not be able to get a job easily, so she decided to study for a Ph.D. Her Ph.D. led her to suffer a lot of discrimination, as did her role as a civil servant.

These experiences led her to work in a trade union position in an equality role. Hayley now hopes that the work she does helps other people to become better informed about discrimination, but she is concerned about the low level of pay her type of role attracts.

Vincent is 51 years old and had a troubled childhood. He grew up in care and left school with no qualifications. In 1991 he had an accident that meant he could no longer carry out the physical work he had become skilled in and became physically disabled. In 1995 Vincent decided to return to education and completed a Bachelors and a Master's degree. He intended to carry on to complete a Ph.D but his finances meant he was unable to enrol for the Ph.D. Vincent is currently out of work and is doing volunteer work to give himself something to do.

Emma is 29 years old and has a physical disability meaning she needs to use a wheelchair. She graduated from a specialist education degree but found it difficult to find work in this field. She attributes this difficult to the attitudes of potential employers who could not conceive employing a disabled kindergarten teacher. While Emma could not find work she did volunteer work at afterschool clubs and applied for over 200 jobs. She was eventually successful in a disability related user led organisation working in policy development.

Peter is 41 years old and does not currently take part in the labour market. He has recently graduated with a Media Communication with Film Studies 2:2 BA (honours). Peter experiences poor mental health and undertook the degree course as a way of managing and maintaining his health. In the past Peter's deterioration in health has been a direct result of involvement in the labour market, therefore Peter prefers to live on benefits rather than expose himself to potential difficulties. If he were to re-enter the labour market he is concerned that he would find himself in financial difficulties because his benefits afford him a comfortable lifestyle. In addition Peter is concerned about the stigma surrounding his condition.

Appendix V

Name	Gender	Age	Impairment	Status	Subject	Grade	University Type	Postgraduate Qualification	Sector
Joanna*	F	45	Physical	Unemployed	Chemistry	1	Old	MA, Ph.D	N/A
Gwen*	F	55	Physical	Student	Business Enterprise	Without honours	Old	N/A	N/A
Duncan*	M	25	Learning	Employed	Physics	3	Old	N/A	Science and Technology
Rose	F	25	Learning	Employed	Psychology	1	Old	Msc	Administration
Tom*	M	25	Learning	Employed	Politics	1	Old	MBA	Banking & Finance
Sally	F	33	Sensory	Employed	Psychology	1	Old	Msc	Disability
Amelia	F	53	Physical	Retired	Music	2:1	Old	PGCE	N/A
David	M	32	Physical	Employed	PPE	1	Old	Msc, Ph.D	Academia
Mary	F	38	Mental	Unemployed	Criminal & Community Justice	2:2	New	N/A	N/A
Peter	M	41	Mental	Unemployed	Media Communications with Film Studies	2:2	New	N/A	N/A
Sandra	F	34	Physical	Employed	English Literature	2:1	Old	PG Diploma	Disability
Beth	F	25	Physical	Unemployed	Maths	2:2	New	NA	N/A
Phillip	M	25	Learning	Employed	Chemistry 377	2:2	Old	NA	Science and Technology

Sophie	F	48	Multiple	Employed	Nursing		Old	N/A	Health
Rebecca*	F	28	Mental	Employed	Linguistics (MA) ²¹	2:1	Old	PG Diploma	Disability
Pam	F	38	Multiple	Employed	Social Work		Old	NA	Disability
Claire*	F	28	Sensory	Employed	Deaf Studies	2:1	Old	NA	Disability
Lisa	F	26	Physical	Employed	Social Policy	2:1	New	MA	Disability
Keith*	M	28	Physical	Employed	Business Studies	2:2	Old	NA	Health
Lucy*	F	28	Physical	Unemployed	Business	Pass	New	N/A	
Joe*	M	29	Sensory	Employed	History	2:1	Old	N/A	Disability
Paul*	M	62	Physical	Employed	Media Communication	1	New	N/A	Disability
Jessica	F	36	Physical	Unemployed	Law	1	New	PG Diploma	N/A
Charles	M	54	Mental	Unemployed	Science & Maths	Pass	unknown	NA	N/A
Nancy	F	61	Physical	Employed	N/A	N/A	unknown	Msc	Disability
Val	F	60	Physical	Employed	English Law	1 1	unknown	Ph.D PGCE	Disability
Dot	F	30	Physical	Employed	Psychology	unknown	New	PGCE	Administration
Georgia	F	31	Physical	Student	English	2:1	Old	MA	N/A

Hayley	F	35	Sensory	Employed	Chemistry	1	Old	Msc, PhD	Disability
Vincent	M	49	Physical	Unemployed	Politics & Government	2:1	Old	Msc	N/A
Emma	F	29	Physical	Employed	Education Studies	2:2	Old	N/A	Disability

All the participants with a * have been interviewed more than once and in this instance their most recent occupation has been recorded.