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· **point**research

Employer attitudes towards employing disabled people

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Acknowledgements

Disclaimer

All findings and conclusions are those of the authors and are not to be attributed to Ministry of Social Development.

Executive Summary

Background

This research has been commissioned by the Ministry of Social Development to better understand New Zealand employers' attitudes towards employing disabled people.

Method

A total of 106 employers responded, half in interviews and half via an online survey. Respondents came from throughout New Zealand.

Employers were asked a range of questions in order to find out more about the qualities they looked for in potential employees, what they thought were the barriers to the employment of disabled people, about their attitudes towards disabled people, how they thought staff and customers perceived disabled staff and to what extent they were influenced in their employment decisions by the reactions of others.

Findings

- Nine per cent had a disability themselves and two-thirds said they had a disabled person in their life.
- Employers look for staff who are highly productive, skilled enough to do the job and no hassle (76 per cent).
- When picturing disabled people, employers either see someone they know or picture someone 'in a wheelchair.'
- Most employers agree that there is a mismatch between the picture of an ideal employee and their picture of a disabled person.
- Most employers agree that the low employment of disabled staff is a moderate to serious issue (87 per cent).
- Around half (48 per cent) say that they do not have disabled people working in their organisation.
- Those that have employed disabled people have made no or only minimal workplace accommodations and incurred no or only minimal costs.
- One-third (34 per cent) believe that discrimination, perceptions and stereotypes about disabled people are barriers to employment in New Zealand workplaces.
- Over half (59 per cent) thought there were barriers that stopped disabled people being employed in their own workplaces.
- Most employers (97 per cent) felt that disabled people deserved a fair go.
- Only one-quarter (25 per cent) felt that disabled people were well represented in their own organisations.

- Most thought that attitudes towards disabled people, such as the hassle of employing disabled people, lower productivity, higher absentee rates and additional costs, were barriers to employment in their own workplaces. These attitudes do not appear to be mediated by experience. There were no differences between those who had employed disabled people and those who had not.

- Other barriers to the employment of disabled people in their workplace included the concern that it would be a step into the unknown, a health and safety risk, unsettling for existing workers, that disabled people would not fit in, and that they would be different and "not like us."

- Most employers said that they would be unlikely or less likely to employ disabled people if they had a mental illness such as schizophrenia (65 per cent), were moderately intellectually disabled (60 per cent) or had a moderate to high speech impairment (60 per cent).

- Some were less likely to employ people if they had a mental illness such as depression (47 per cent), had a moderate to high sight impairment (41 per cent), had a moderate to high hearing impairment (41 per cent), were severely disfigured in some way (38 per cent) or were in a wheelchair (36 per cent).

- Many felt that staff would not be comfortable working alongside disabled people. Similarly many felt that their customers and clients would not be particularly comfortable dealing with disabled people.

- Two-thirds (67 per cent) said they would be influenced by negative reactions from staff. Similarly, three-quarters (75 per cent) said that they would be influenced by the negative reactions of clients and customers.

- Respondents were asked, based on their experiences, what information or support could be given to employers that might encourage them to hire disabled people. They suggested information explaining the condition or disability, financial support for any changes or accommodations required, and awareness training for staff and employers.

Conclusion

Overall, there appears to be an apparent `hierarchy' of disability where the type and severity of the impairment does appear to have an impact on employers' perception of the employability of disabled people, regardless of whether someone is perceived as being capable of doing a job or not.

It appears that perceptions about how staff, customers and clients might react might be giving employers social permission not to hire disabled people.

Despite New Zealand employers having a belief that disabled people deserve a fair go, and despite the largely positive experiences of those who have employed disabled people, it appears that addressing issues such as the perceived mismatch between an ideal employee and disabled people, and perceptions of others' discomfort may need to be further explored to see whether they offer promise in helping to redress the underemployment of disabled people.

Introduction

Background to the research

This research has been commissioned by the Ministry of Social Development to better understand New Zealand employer attitudes towards employing disabled people. Although there is considerable literature on the practicalities of employing disabled people, there has been little literature on employer attitudes towards employing disabled people, particularly in a New Zealand setting. Studies to date have tended to focus on aspects such as supported employment settings or types of impairment.

In New Zealand, an estimated 17 per cent of the population have a disability. Disability increases with age, and ranges from 10 per cent of children aged 10–14 years, to 45 per cent of people aged 65 years and over.

The unemployment rate for disabled people is higher than for non-disabled. They tend to under-represented in the workforce and are often found working in poorly paid, low-status jobs.[1] Yet respondents to an EEO Trust survey (2005) found they had a higher than average educational level and rated themselves highly on people skills, reliability and trust levels and work ethic.

Australian research has found that they are absent from work 85 per cent less than other people, had one-sixth of the recorded occupational health and safety incidents of employees without a disability and were less expensive to maintain in employment.[2]

Better understanding employer attitudes towards employing disabled people, may help identify opportunities to address their underemployment in New Zealand

Scope of the research

Method

The information was collected in two phases. Firstly an exploratory phase was undertaken, where 35 employers from a wide range of companies were asked a range of questions designed to generally explore why they thought that disabled people might be underrepresented in their company and in the workforce in general.

The exploratory phase of the research suggested that:

■ There was a mismatch for employers between the qualities of an ideal employee, and how they saw disabled people.

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[1] New Zealand Disability Survey, 2006
[2] Graffam, J., Smith, K., Shinkfield, A. and Polzin, U., 2002

- Employers' attitudes towards disabled people were generally positive, despite acknowledging barriers to employing disabled people in their organisation. However, they felt that other employers did not share their positive view and give disabled people a fair go.
- They were concerned about others' attitudes towards disabled people, such as staff, customers, clients and stakeholders.
- There appeared to be a `hierarchy' of disabilities and impairments with employers most concerned about employing people with mental illness.
- Their personal experiences of disability appeared to affect their attitudes towards others with disabilities.

A questionnaire (see Appendix One) based on the responses from the first phase of the project was designed to explore the themes that had emerged with a wider group of employers. These included questions on:

- Their role in the organisation.
- Whether they were disabled themselves.
- Whether others in their lives were disabled.
- The qualities they looked for in potential employees.
- What they pictured when they thought about disabled people.
- Whether they thought there might be a mismatch between the qualities of an `ideal employee' and the way employers think about disabled people.
- Whether they felt that the low employment of disabled people is an issue.
- Whether they employ disabled people.
- Whether there are barriers to employing disabled people.
- What could overcome these barriers.
- Their attitudes towards disabled people.
- How they perceived staff and customer attitudes towards disabled people.
- To what extent they are influenced by the reactions of others.

In addition, employers were asked which information or support they believed could be given to employers from their perspective to encourage them to hire disabled people, and if they were charged with trying to address this underemployment, what they would do.

Data collection

Data collection was undertaken in two parts; by interview and an online survey. In the first phase of the project, interviews were undertaken with a range of employers.

In the second phase of the project, face to face interviews were undertaken with employers in Auckland, Wellington, Tauranga and Hamilton. This was them augmented with information collected online from employers nationally. Companies were identified to ensure a range of areas nationally, sizes and industries. All but five of those approached for interview agreed to be interviewed. The five who refused said they were too busy. Employers registered with an online panel company (Buzz

Channel) were sent an invitation to participate. They were selected to ensure that the respondents were from a range of regions, industries and size.

In an attempt to reduce the effect or responding in a socially desirable way, respondents were assured that their answers would be confidential and anonymous. Moreover, respondents were explicitly asked to provide honest answers, however undesirable these might seem or feel.

The sample was not designed to be representative of employers nationally, rather to explore the views from a wide range of employers across a wide range of industries. The differences between collection methods were significance tested for each questions and differences were not found to be significant.

Data analysis

The data was entered into a single database and analysed using SPSS. Frequency and cross-tabulation tables were run. The open-ended comments were coded and analysed thematically using an induction method.

Note that not all employers answered all questions, so the totals at the base of the tables may be fewer than the total number of employers participating. Moreover, in some places, employers were allowed to select more than one answer, so the percentages may exceed 100 per cent.

About the respondents

A total of 106 employers responded in the second wave of the project, half from interviews and half via the online survey.

Of these, 45 per cent made the decision to hire people, 9 per cent led the decision to hire people, and 44 per cent influenced the decision to hire people in their organisation, as part of an employment panel or human resources team for example.

The respondents were employed by an organisation (61%), or self-employed directors or business owners (38%).

Most of the respondents were managers or senior administrators (37 per cent) or professionals (27 per cent). Some worked in administration (10 per cent) or technical roles (9 per cent).

Figure 1: Regional breakdown

- Respondents came from across New Zealand and most regions were well represented.
- The majority of the 103 respondents were from the Auckland region (36 per cent).
- Those in Canterbury were slightly under-represented.

n=103

Figure 2: Industry breakdown

- The respondents worked across a wide range of industries.
- The majority of respondents worked in education and training (17 per cent), or healthcare, social assistance services or hospital (14 per cent).
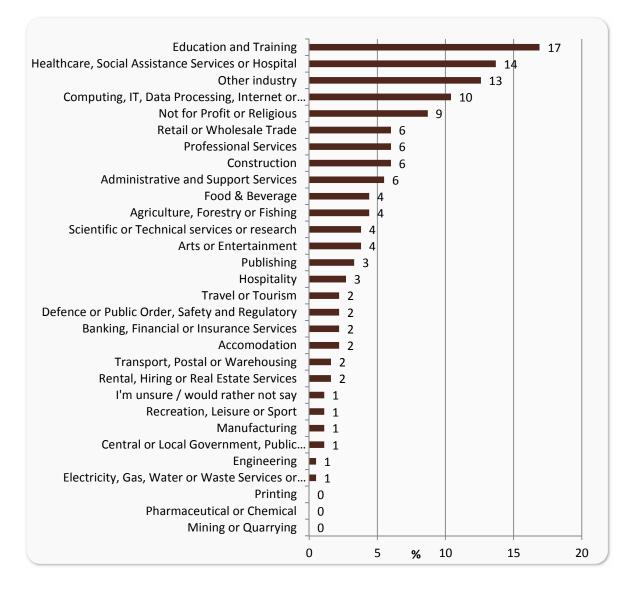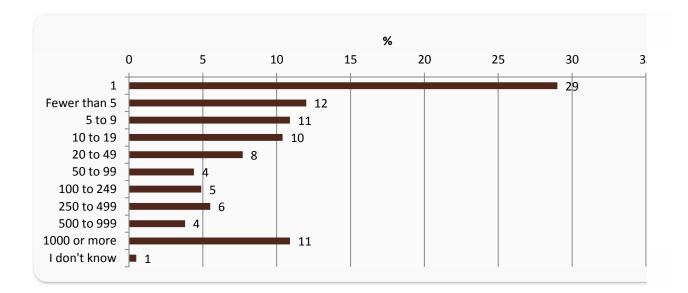- It is noted that differences have not been explored by industry as the numbers are too small to enable robust conclusions to be drawn. Moreover, there are a range of different jobs in each industry, and as some respondents commented, although someone within the construction industry may not be able to undertake a building role, they may be able to undertake a project management position. Similarly, someone with impaired vision may not be able to undertake design work, however may be able to perform associated marketing or IT roles.

Industry	%
Education and Training	17
Healthcare, Social Assistance Services or Hospital	14
Other industry	13
Computing, IT, Data Processing, Internet or…	10
Not for Profit or Religious	9
Retail or Wholesale Trade	6
Professional Services	6
Construction	6
Administrative and Support Services	6
Food & Beverage	4
Agriculture, Forestry or Fishing	4
Scientific or Technical services or research	4
Arts or Entertainment	4
Publishing	3
Hospitality	3
Travel or Tourism	2
Defence or Public Order, Safety and Regulatory	2
Banking, Financial or Insurance Services	2
Accomodation	2
Transport, Postal or Warehousing	2
Rental, Hiring or Real Estate Services	2
I'm unsure / would rather not say	1
Recreation, Leisure or Sport	1
Manufacturing	1
Central or Local Government, Public…	1
Engineering	1
Electricity, Gas, Water or Waste Services or…	1
Printing	0
Pharmaceutical or Chemical	0
Mining or Quarrying	0

n=103

Figure 3: Number of employees

The respondents came from a range of different sized organisations. Most were small to medium sized enterprises. One-quarter (29 per cent) only employed one employee. Half (52 per cent) employed fewer than ten employees. Eleven per cent employed 1000 or more employees.

Number of employees	%
1	29
Fewer than 5	12
5 to 9	11
10 to 19	10
20 to 49	8
50 to 99	4
100 to 249	5
250 to 499	6
500 to 999	4
1000 or more	11
I don't know	1

Results

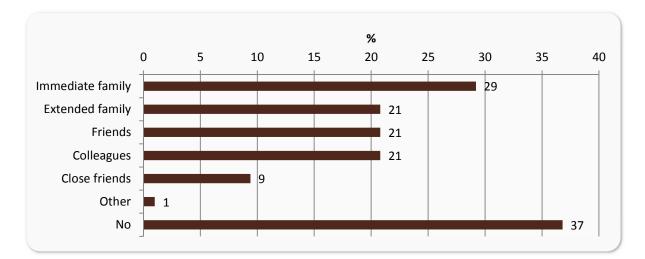## Employers personal experience of disability

Employers were asked about their experience of disability.

Nine per cent were disabled themselves. They described having physical impairments, such as spina bifida and arthritis, and mental impairments such as depression.

Almost two-thirds had a disabled person in their life (63 per cent). These included immediate and extended family members, friends and colleagues. The types of disabilities they described included a range of physical impairments, mental illnesses, head injuries, vision and hearing impairments and conditions such as Asperger's syndrome.

Figure 4: Experience (Disability)

- Nearly two-thirds of employers had a disabled person in their life.
- Employers are most likely to have immediate and extended family members (50 per cent) with a disability (some of this is age related).

n=106

Some of those noted that they had not initially remembered that someone in their life, such as a family member, were "disabled", as the impairment did not have a strong impact on their relationship or "identity". It had "faded into the background."

> "To be honest, I know (the brain injury) has an impact on her life, but it is barely noticeable in our relationship, she is just a bit forgetful sometimes and writes lots of lists – but we don't see so much of that."

> "I suppose my Uncle has a pretty full on mental health issue but it is just part of who he is, and when he is well it is insignificant. And I guess he is usually well."

"Oh – I forgot – my colleague has a hearing impediment that is pretty full on, she wears a hearing aid, we are used to it and it wouldn't actually have jumped to mind as a disability. It more is what it is."

Employer expectations

Employers said they were looking for staff who were highly productive, skilled enough to do the job, and no hassle (76 per cent). Other qualities they looked for in potential employees included:

- Experience and skills (24 per cent)
- Can do, good attitude (23 per cent)
- Good personality – settled, mature, warm, friendly (23 per cent)
- Diligent and hard-working (17 per cent)
- Team players (16 per cent)
- Good communicators (13 per cent)
- Adaptable – able to work in different environment and think outside the box (13 per cent)
- Qualified (12 per cent)

n=103

The ability to work under pressure, enthusiasm, intelligence, a willingness to learn, honesty, helpfulness and loyalty were also mentioned.

How employers picture disabled people

Many of the employers used their personal experiences to frame their images of disabled people. When asked to picture a disabled person, many employers pictured either someone they knew, or described images from a recent picture or event they had seen (e.g. in the media).

"Down syndrome because a family member is a Down syndrome child"

"The first image that came to mind was a young man with a prosthetic leg - probably because that   guy who lost a leg on Ruapehu was in the paper recently with a photo"

Those without personal experience of disabled people, however, were more likely, unprompted, to see an image of a disabled person as someone in a wheelchair.

Over one-third of employers (38 per cent) said they first pictured a person in a wheel chair across a range of ages and both genders.

"Young person in a wheel chair."

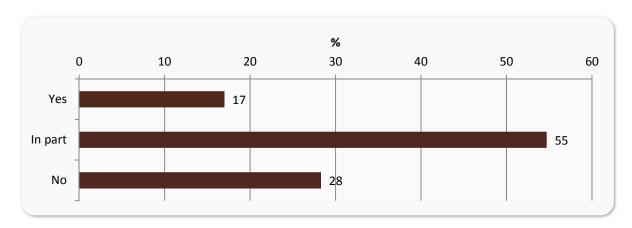"Perhaps someone in a wheelchair. Mostly male for some reason!"

"Typically see a physical disability because it's the most obvious."

Mismatch

Over half of those interviewed (83 per cent) agreed that there is difference, at least in part, between what they believe makes an ideal employee and how they picture disabled people.

Figure 5: Mismatch

■ When asked to think whether the picture of an ideal employee and the picture of disabled people matched up, only 17 per cent said that they did.

■ A further 55 per cent agreed that the pictures matched in part.

n=106

Employers with a disability or who knew someone disabled were just as likely to think there was a mismatch between an ideal employee and a disabled person as those who did not know someone disabled. There was also little difference between those who had employed someone with a disability and those who had not. [3]

Employers were then asked about this mismatch, in particular what matched and what did not. Of the 98 who commented, almost half (40 per cent) acknowledged that it depended on the type of job and impairment.

One in five (19 per cent) noted that disabled people can work hard and fit in to a workplace.

The mismatch between the `ideal employee' and their vision of disabled people centred around four main themes:

■ **Freedom of movement and access (18 per cent)**

Some employers, even those who had not pictured disabled people as using a wheelchair, were concerned that disabled people would not have the freedom of movement to access the workplace, visit clients or get around.

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[3] Note that the numbers involved are small and not necessarily representative of employers' views.

"The vision of a wheelchair - implies difficulty with mobility and access. Unfortunately also puts the employer in the position of making their workplace "fit" the mobility requirements which can be impossible or economically unviable."

"Access is a problem with a disabled person - we are on the first floor with no lift. Bench heights and using the guillotine and (other equipment) are also a problem."

■ **The requirement to be physically fit and able (11 per cent)**

Again, even those who had not pictured disabled people as having a physical impairment saw a mismatch between the physical requirements of the job and those who have a physical impairment.

"Physical work doesn't match physical disability."

■ **The hassle and effort (10 per cent)**

Some just felt it was easier to employ someone who did not have an impairment, and pointed out that the high unemployment rate meant that there were sufficient people to be able to choose people who were not `a hassle'.

"Suspect that it will be a hassle to employ someone with a disability"

"Worried about the hassle part - want it to be easy."

■ **Extra considerations required to accommodate people with impairments (10 per cent)**

For some the cost factor and the accommodations required were seen as off-putting.

"Whilst a person with a disability may have most of the personal qualities that are necessary to perform the job, there are other factors that do not match - there is the cost factor for example of adapting the work environment (our office is on the first floor so there are stairs but NO elevator)"

"Flexibility -this could be a requirement of the disabled person as it is for my (relative) who could work on many days, but on many others he cannot and because there is no knowledge or ability for him to predict what he will be able to do the next day, the flexibility of a prospective employer for my (relative) would be too much to ask."

"Vision of a wheelchair - implies difficulty with mobility and access. Unfortunately also puts the employer in the position of making their workplace "fit" the mobility requirements which can be impossible or economically unviable.

Other comments indicated concerns regarding disabled peoples' performance, their ability to work independently, their need for medical visits and time off work, and the effects of their impairments on work output and productivity and safety.

"Often one thinks that if people have a disability they won't be able to do the job as well as someone without a disability."
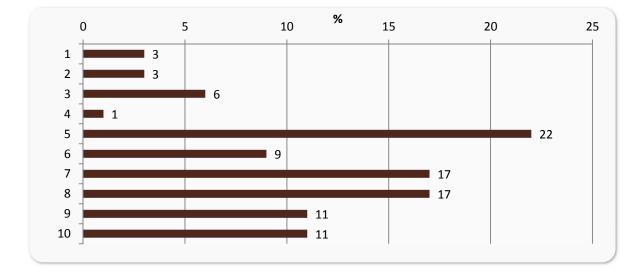
Issue of underemployment

Respondents were asked to rate on a scale of 1-10 to what extent that they thought the low employment of disabled people was an issue, where `1' was not an issue, and `10' was a serious issue.

Most employers considered the low employment of disabled people to be a moderately serious to serious issue. Those disabled or who knew someone disabled were as likely to see it as an issue as those without a disability or who didn't know someone disabled. Similarly, those who had employed disabled staff were as likely to see it as an issue as those who had not.

Figure 6: Extent low employment is an issue (%)

■ 13 per cent did not consider it to be a serious issue (rated 1–4)
■ 48 per cent considered it to be a moderately serious issue (rated 5–7)
■ 39 per cent considered it to be a serious issue (rated 8–10)

n=104
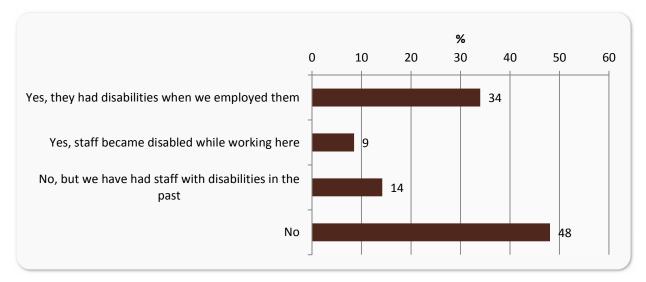
Staff with disabilities

Employers were given the government definition of disability, and asked if they had disabled staff in their workplace.[4] Almost half of the respondents said they do not currently have disabled people in their organisation (48 per cent). One-third said that they had employed a disabled person at some point, and nine per cent said that they had staff members who had become disabled while working

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[4] The government definition of disability is "A person with a disability is someone who has been assessed as having a physical, psychiatric, intellectual, sensory, or age related disability (or a combination of these) which is likely to continue for a minimum of six months and result in a reduction of independent function to the extent that on-going support is required"

for their organisation. Some (fourteen per cent) said that they had employed staff with disabilities in the past.[5]

The percentage of disabled staff employed ranged between one and 33 per cent. The average (mean) was nine per cent of the workforce.

Figure 7: Employing disabled staff

n=106

Likelihood of employing disabled people

It appears that those who have disabled people in their lives are much more likely to have employed disabled staff. Employers who had close friends (70 per cent), immediate family (55 per cent) or extended family (36 per cent) with disabilities were much more likely to have employed disabled staff than those who said that they did not have disabled people in their lives (15 per cent).

Type of disability and accommodations

Those that employed disabled staff (52 per cent) were asked if the employee was disabled at the time of employment, if anything needed to be done differently to accommodate the impairments and if there were costs associated with any accommodations that had been made.

It appeared that many employers had made accommodations for those they employed, but for the most part these appear to have been fairly minor. Most incurred only minimal or no costs.

The responses and types of accommodations required varied according to the impairment of the person they had employed as well as other factors.

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[5] Note that the totals can add up to more than 100 per cent as employers could choose more than one option.

■ **Physical**

Some who had employed people with physical impairments said that they had not needed to make any accommodations at all.

> "Past employee had hindrance walking but this was from birth and did not affect his role whatsoever."

> "Limb disabilities. Nothing was required to be done as our place of work was already set up with access and facilities to allow access."

> "Physical and intellectual - no costs involved."

Others had made adjustments to cars, car parking or offices. For the most part, employers felt that the costs incurred were fairly small. Others said that costs were subsidised or covered by Ministry of Education or ACC.

> "They had the disability when they were employed. Car parking provided, and office design rearranged."

> "Mobility and physical function issues secondary to a car accident / stroke. Had disability when employed. Steering wheel adaptor on work vehicle. Cost to service minimal."

> "Ramps provided by MoE and changes made to office layout. Also remote opening gate provided by ACC."

> "Need crutches or wheelchair to get around. Yes they had the disability when employed. Just   had to check the toilets were wheelchair friendly in each location."

A few had made accommodations to hours and sick leave provisions or to accommodate differences in productivity.

> "They have restricted range of movements and may be slower."

> "Serious bone problem, developed after 9 years employment. Flexibility required, extended sick leave for surgery, on-going problem with walking and pain. Offered reduced hours, may not be able to continue work for much longer but will be supported as long as possible. Excellent employee."

■ **Hearing**

Again, it appears that most employers who had employed someone with a hearing impairment had to make no or minimal accommodations.

> "She has hearing loss, she had it when she was employed but I didn't know it at the time, it has no effect on her work and nothing needed to be changed to accommodate, so no impact on myself or the business."

"A colleague is partially deaf and as far as I know, no monetary costs are associated with her partial deafness, again only tolerance and acceptance."

Some had put plans or a sound system in place to assist the employee.

"We had to spend money getting a sound field system put in so that the students and teacher could communicate better. There are some rooms that the teacher can't work in because the echo is too great and therefore they can't hear properly."

Partial deafness purchased new phone, adjustments to air conditioning unit as too noisy."

"Two staff are completely deaf... put plans put into action to assist."

"Had to provide a headset with a magnifying noise facility for someone with a hearing impediment."

Only one employer said that the hearing had been an issue but noted that they had coped.

"Two staff members with hearing impairment, nature of one job meant it had no ill effect on role, one position did have an impact as she was required to listen to conversations, so was sometimes problematic but we coped."

- **Mental health**

Most of those who had employed people who had experienced a mental illness appeared to have made minimal or no accommodations.

"Have one employee with a mental disability for which she takes medication. This was an existing disability when I hired her and there are no issues as long as she takes her medication."

"Mental health issues and a brain injury had before employment and no extra cost involved."

Some mentioned that they needed to a little more flexible, or do things a little differently but mostly it was already accommodated by existing sick leave provisions.

"Mental health issues required us to be flexible when they are having a 'down'"

"He has a mental or intellectual disability. He had it when he was employed. We do need to do things a little bit different to accommodate him, just to make sure he doesn't hurt himself and there is somebody there who can keep an eye on him. There are no real costs associated with this I think."

"Mental health issues - depression/ anxiety and also musculoskeletal disabilities. Some disabilities were prior to employment and some during. Cost would have been covered by the person using sick leave and annual leave and then negotiating more leave."

One employer had assistance from occupational specialists when required.

> "Long-term psychiatric illness. Had disability when employed. Wellness at work plans in place for psychiatric disorders. Regular reviews with manager. Occ health input as required. Willingness to accommodate changes in hours (e.g. no nightshifts etc.) when a person experiencing early warning signs."

One employer had made additional pay accommodations to relieve financial stress on the employee.

> "One staff member came to us with manic depression. This has proved difficult at times as he isolates himself from the rest of the staff and becomes 'touchy' when he goes through his seasonal bouts of depression (usually during the winter). He has had quite a bit of time off work with counselling appointments along with his wife - we have continued to keep him on full pay at these times to help alleviate further stress that might be caused by financial hardship."

Another noted that absences had meant that they needed to employ a replacement and implement a return to work procedure when the employee was able to return.

> "Mental disabilities which has meant employing others to service needs of clients while staff member off indefinitely and then through the return to work procedure."

■ Learning, concentrating or remembering

Those employers who employed people with brain injuries had either not made accommodations or allowed the employee a little extra time to undertake the work.

> "I had an employee in the past who suffered with epilepsy, again, not an issue as this was a medicated condition."

> "Brain injuries, just need more time to process tasks and good communication."

One employer felt that a dyslexic staff member required more supervision and this was more costly in terms of the additional time required to check written work.

> "One staff member is dyslexic, this has been more problematic as I have to check/edit all her work before it goes outside the **organisation**. Her written work is extremely poor so this is somewhat costly in terms of my time."

■ Unspecified

Those employers who did not specify the type of impairment of their employees had made either minimal chances in training and supervision, or no additional accommodations.

> "Yes, had disabilities when employed, but nothing was needed to be done differently. A little more supervision to begin with, but he was, in my opinion a better worker than most as always wanted to find more roles for himself within the business."

> "If they are able to communicate, then that's all that matters to me. I work in a very accepting area. We don't treat anyone differently, nothing is done to accommodate the disability, usually not seen as a disability anyway. That's just the way it is."

"Job coach needed for some, on-going supervision"

"To the best of my knowledge the people with disabilities are working at the same level of productivity as others. Maybe a slightly longer training period."

"We have not incurred costs."

Barriers to employment in New Zealand workplaces

One-third (34 per cent) of respondents believed that discrimination, perceptions and stereotypes about disabled people are barriers to employment in New Zealand workplaces.

"Stereotypes from employers are the biggest problem."

"Social stigma plus an impression that they can only do menial jobs."

"General ignorance of disabilities"

One in six (17 per cent) felt that accessibility and mobility was a barrier.

"If a disabled person is in a wheelchair there are obvious barriers and restrictions and they are not able to get about as freely as a non-disabled person."

Similarly, one in six (16 per cent) were concerned with a need for extra facilities and provisions.

"Access to the bathroom in this place would be very difficult. We did not think of that when we had the building done. The next one we are doing takes that into account."
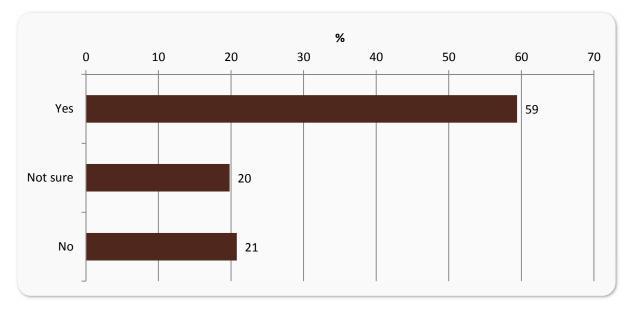
Other barriers mentioned included:

- The extra time and effort required to support disabled people (13 per cent)
- Disabled people being less able (12 per cent)
- A lack of understanding about their capabilities (11 per cent)
- A lack of understanding and support (10 per cent)
- Having a choice to employ someone without a disability (9 per cent)
- The additional expense (8 per cent)

Barriers to employment in their workplace

The respondents were asked if there were any barriers that they thought might stop disabled people from being employed in their own workplace.

The majority of respondents (59 per cent) felt that there were, with only one in five (21 per cent) believing that this was not the case.

Figure 8: Barriers to employment in workplace

n=106

When asked about the barriers to employment, the comments fell into 7 main categories: (n=81)

■ **Physical access to the workplace (38 per cent)**

Most of these comments concerned access to the workplace for people with physical impairments, such as an absence of lifts or ramps.

"There are physical barriers (we have stairs and no lifts)."

"Climbing stairs would be the main barrier the others would depend on the individual's disabilities."

"Access to the bathroom. We could cope with entry and exit with ramps if required."

Some commented that it might be difficult for those with a physical impairment calling on clients.

"They are required to call on clients in homes or offices which may not have good access."

■ **The ability of the potential employee to do the job (39 per cent)**

These barriers tended to be specific to the type of work required. Again, most comments related to people who had physical impairments.

"A person with a severe intellectual disability would not be suited to teaching, but most other disabilities would easily be accommodated."

"Blindness - we are print oriented."

"Someone would have to be physically and mentally able to cope on a building site."

"It is a physical job. Some of the tasks are lifting, packing, picking and carrying boxes. Our product is heavy."

"The installation of (the product) is very physical often requiring staff to work up ladders and at height. We could not employ someone who was not physically able to do this."

"Need ability to drive, need to be out in community in a variety of situations, e.g. access of locations where people live, ability to be able to carry equipment."

Discrimination or prejudice (4 per cent)

Some felt that the biggest barrier to employment would be the attitude of others.

"Narrow-mindedness, being judgmental, same as it would be for non-disabled. Some branches may be less wheelchair friendly but most are OK."

"Suspect that clients would not perceive a disabled person as having the same credibility as able bodied people."

- **A lack of productivity (3 per cent)**

A few employers were concerned about the impact of the person's impairment on productivity.

"Suspect they will not be as productive as able bodied people and therefore that would impact our profitability as a consulting business."

- **Additional support required (3 per cent)**

A few employers were concerned about the need for additional support or supervision.

"If the staff member with a disability needed extra support or supervision - this may be problematic as we are a small team."

- **Health and safety concerns (3 per cent)**

Several employers mentioned health and safety concerns.

- **Cost of making changes (1 per cent)**

One employer was cited concerns about the costs of providing equipment.

"We are unlikely to be able to afford any special equipment required"

Overcoming barriers to employment

Most employers felt that the barriers were either difficult to address or insurmountable.

Those that said that access as an issue identified specific ways in which the access could be improved, however many were concerned about the costs of upgrading access.

"Capital expenditure for building upgrades."

"Widen the doors and the toilet facilities."

"Not at present as we are only renting one of our premises and the cost involved if we wanted to do it ourselves is to great but in our other work places we only looked for venues where there was a great disability access."

Those concerned with the ability of the employee to do the job did not think the barriers could be overcome.

"It's not an excuse not to hire them it's a genuine belief they can't do the job AND sometimes they can't."

"Some barriers could not be overcome (e.g. someone who is blind - it is just the nature of the work). Most barriers could be overcome, but generally at my expense as the employer, which is a barrier in itself in the current economic climate."

Some did feel that there could be possible changes, but would like to see some financial support in place.

"Don't know. Physical disabilities are a problem at my work place, but we could probably accommodate people with intellectual disabilities. I only don't know who would pay for that as they are 'more expensive' than an able person."
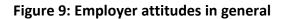
"If a person is suffering from a mental disability, there should be some provision whereby their wages can be subsidised so the employer is not having to pay full wages when the staff member is only operating at half pace."

Attitudes towards disabled people in general

Most employers (97 per cent) agreed that disabled people deserve a fair go. Only one-quarter (25 per cent) however felt that disabled people were well represented in their organisation.

Feelings were divided as to why that might be. Although one-quarter (27 per cent) believed that disabled people did not apply for jobs, 31 per cent disagreed that this was the case.

Three-quarters (78 per cent) believed that disabled people were discriminated against, and agreed that disabled people were untapped resource (74 per cent).

Figure 9: Employer attitudes in general

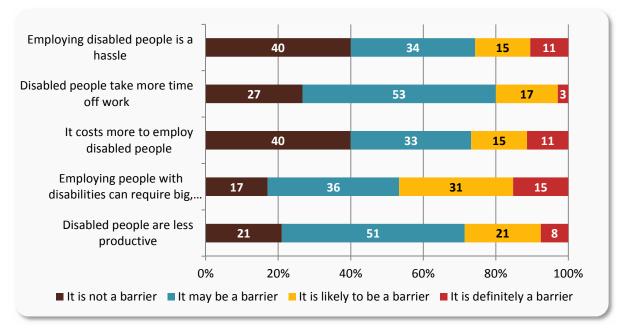|	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Agree strongly	Don't know
People with disabilities are an untapped resource	1	1	15	44	30	9
People with disabilities are discriminated against	1	9	11	61	16	3
People with disabilities don't apply for jobs	6	35	13	21	6	19
People with disabilities are well represented in our organisation	7	25	37	16	9	7
People with disabilities deserve a fair go			2	27	70	1

n=105

Attitudes towards disabled people in their own workplaces

Employers were given a number of common reasons that international studies have found employers commonly give for not employing people disabled people. They were then were asked whether they thought these attitudes were a barriers to employing disabled people in their workplace. Most thought that the following attitudes could be a barrier to employment in their workplace:

- Employing disabled people is a hassle (60 per cent)
- Disabled people take more time off work (73 per cent)
- It costs more to employ disabled people (60 per cent)
- Employing disabled people can require big, disruptive or expensive changes to the workplace (83 per cent)
- Disabled people are less productive (79 per cent).

There was no difference between those who have employed disabled people and those who have not.
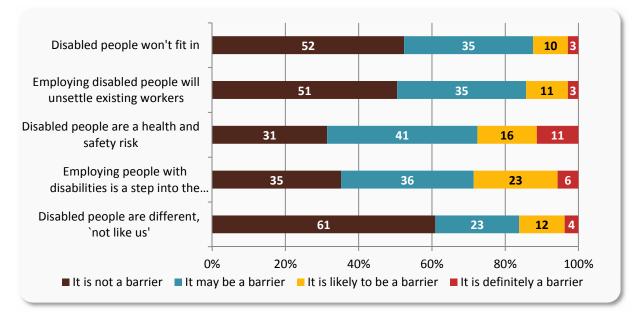
Figure 10: Barriers to employment in their own organisation

n=105

Similarly employers saw the following as barriers to the employment of disabled people in their workplace:

- Disabled people won't fit in (48 per cent)
- Employing disabled people will unsettle existing workers (50 per cent)
- Disabled people are a health and safety risk (69 per cent)
- Employing disabled people is a step into the `unknown' or scary (65 per cent)
- Disabled people are different, `not like us' (39 per cent).

Figure 11: Barriers to employment

n=105

Skills and qualities

The respondents were asked if there was a vacancy and a disabled person with the right skills and qualities applied, how likely their organisation would be to employ them.

Half (52%) felt that they would be just as likely to employ someone with a severe disfigurement as if they were not disabled.

Some employers felt that employees could not do the work if they:

- Had a moderate to high sight impairment (26 per cent)
- Were in a wheelchair (21 per cent)
- Were moderately intellectually disabled (19 per cent)
- Had a moderate to high hearing impairment (11 per cent).

However, where employers indicated that employees could do the work, many said that they would be unlikely or be less likely to employ disabled people if they:

- Had a mental illness such as schizophrenia (65 per cent)
- Were moderately intellectually disabled (60 per cent)
- Had a moderate to high speech impairment (60 per cent)
- Had a mental illness such as depression (47 per cent)
- Had a moderate to high sight impairment (41 per cent)
- Had a moderate to high hearing impairment (41 per cent)
- Were severely disfigured in some way (38 per cent)
- Were in a wheelchair (36 per cent).

Many (25 per cent) felt it would depend on the type of job and impairment. A further 50 per cent felt that it would depend on their ability to do the job. For example:

> "Telephone assistance to customers is an important part of our work. Someone with hearing or speech impediment would be unlikely to be able to do this work."

One in five (19 per cent), however felt that a disability would be hard for others to cope with. A further eleven per cent felt that disabled people would not be accepted, and six per cent believed that appearance was important.

> "Because our company works in the design and image sector, it is an unspoken assumption that staff will 'look the part' as well."

> "Mental illness scares most staff members, the look of a severely handicapped person to customers can be a problem."

> "Severe disfigurement might lead to person being ridiculed by students, or cause distress to students."

Others felt that it was easier to employ non-disabled people, that it would just be a hassle, and that the best person was less likely to be a disabled person.

Figure 12: Likelihood of employing people with the right skills and qualities

Figure 12: Likelihood of employing people with the right skills and qualities

	Not at all likely	Less likely than if they were not disabled	Just as likely as if they were not disabled	More likely than if they were not disabled	N/A eg they couldn't do the work
A moderate to high speech impairment (eg from a stroke)	28	32	26	6	9
Were severely disfigured in some way	11	27	52	7	3
Had a mental illness such as schizophrenia	31	35	22	4	9
Had a mental illness, such as depression	12	34	45	5	4
Were moderately intellectually disabled	25	35	16	5	19
Had a moderate to high hearing impairment	15	26	45	3	11
Had a moderate to high sight impairment	14	28	29	4	26
Were in a wheelchair	16	19	39	4	21

n=105

Comfort employing disabled people

The respondents were asked how comfortable staff in their organisation would be working alongside other staff members who have a disability.

Fewer than half of the respondents felt that their staff would be completely comfortable working alongside people with any of the impairments or conditions listed, apart from working with someone in a wheelchair (53 per cent).
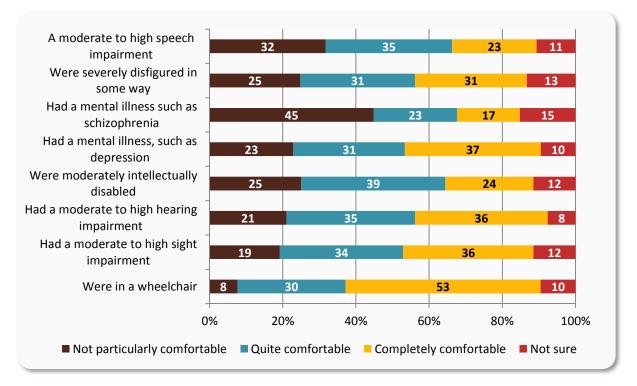
Some felt that staff would not be particularly comfortable working alongside people who:

- Had a mental illness such as schizophrenia (45 per cent)
- Had a moderate to high speech impairment (32 per cent)
- Were severely disfigured in some way (25 per cent)
- Were moderately intellectually disabled (25 per cent)
- Had a mental illness such as depression (23 per cent)
- Had a moderate to high hearing impairment (21 per cent)
- Had a moderate to high sight impairment (19 per cent)
- Had a mental illness such as depression (23 per cent)
- Were in a wheelchair (8 per cent).

Again, although employers acknowledged that it would depend on the nature of the impairment, many felt that their staff would be uncomfortable around difference (10 per cent).

Some felt that that their staff would be unsure how to approach disabled people (10 per cent.)

One in five (21 per cent) felt that their staff would be accepting and tolerant, and a further 3 per cent felt that they were used to working with a range of people and would not treat disabled people any differently than other staff members (14 per cent). Some felt that staff wanted to work with people like themselves (3 per cent) and felt it would take a little time for staff to adjust and accept someone with impairments (6 per cent).

Figure 13: Perceptions of staff comfort working alongside staff people with disabilities

n=105

Similarly, fewer than half felt that their clients or customers would feel completely comfortable dealing with disabled staff members.

Many felt that their said that their customers and clients would *not* be particularly comfortable dealing with a person who:

- Had a moderate to high speech impairment (53 per cent)
- Were severely disfigured in some way (48 per cent)
- Were moderately intellectually disabled (48 per cent)
- Had a mental illness such as schizophrenia (45 per cent)
- Had a moderate to high hearing impairment (42 per cent)
- Had a moderate to high sight impairment (31 per cent)
- Had a mental illness such as depression (47 per cent)
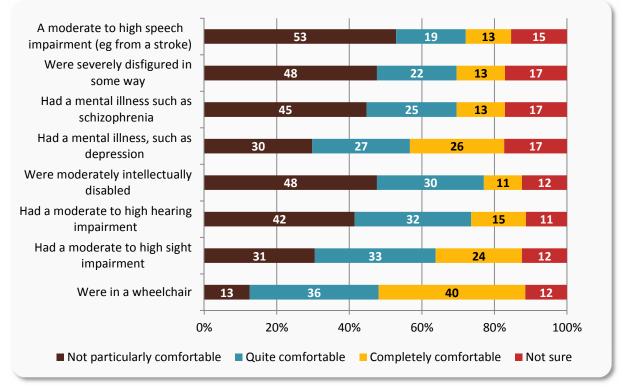- Were in a wheelchair (13 per cent).

Some felt that customers and clients may not feel comfortable around disabled people (13 per cent) and again felt that looks and presentation matter (11 per cent).

> "They may feel uncomfortable about any outward signs of the persons disability."

> "Generally I think customers and clients would find some people with disabilities challenging and confronting. But as most contact with a client is through email and phone conversations, it is unlikely to be a big issue for us."

Consumer confidence, how customers might feel about approaching disabled people, and intolerance were also considered reasons why they may feel uncomfortable.

One-quarter, however, said that most customers and clients were tolerant, accepting and would not have an issue.

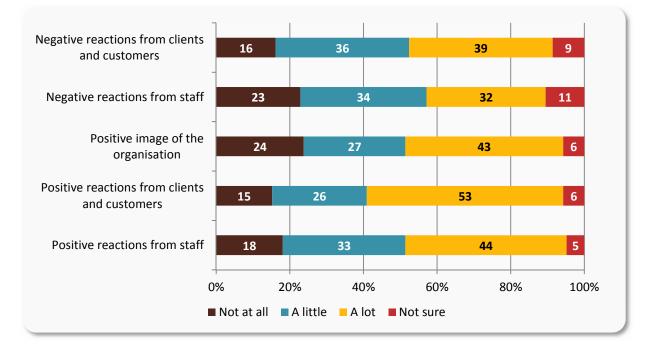**Figure 14: Perceptions of customers' comfort working alongside disabled staff**

n=106

Influence of others

Respondents were asked to what extent the reactions of others might influence their decision to employ disabled people.

It appears that employers are influenced by the reactions of others. Two-thirds (67 per cent) said they would be influenced by negative reactions from staff. Similarly, three-quarters (75 per cent) said that they would be influenced by the negative reactions of clients and customers.

They indicated, however, they are also influenced by the positive reactions of others. Three-quarters said they were influenced by the positive reactions from staff (77 per cent) and customers and clients (79 per cent).

Moreover 70 per cent indicated that they would be influenced if it contributed towards a positive image of their organisation.

Figure 15: Influence of others

n=105

Information needs

n=88

Respondents were asked, based on their experiences, what information or support could be given to employers to encourage them to hire disabled people.

■ **Explanation of the condition and disability (20 per cent)**

One in five people believed that it would be useful to get more information on disabilities and impairments to have a better understanding of skills and needs. In particular they were

interested in information about specific issues that could be mitigated before a person starts work, such as access, adaptive technology or about their condition. They also suggested having people to contact to talk issues through if employers had questions.

> "Just to know kind of exactly what a person is able to do. Not focus on the disability but on the ability."

■ **Financial help for extra provisions and changes (19 per cent)**

One in five suggested financial support such as a tax break or employers subsidy. Small businesses in particular were particularly concerned about costs. Some pointed out that it was difficult to afford employment costs when you could just hire someone without impairments or a disability.

> "For small businesses the cost of putting in ramps and widening doors and toilet facilities could be shared (tax break perhaps)."

> "Financial support to help with physical changes/improvements to the work place would make employing a person with a physical disability easier and more likely."

> "So perhaps the government needs to encourage businesses to employ someone with a disability by giving the business a subsidy for perhaps 3 months after which point if the person is proving capable they employ them fully without the subsidy."

■ **Clarity on their abilities (13 per cent)**

Respondents suggested that it would be helpful to know what employees could do.

> "Look at the abilities first. If the abilities fit the job, then find a way to manage the disability."

■ **Awareness training for employers (11 per cent)**

Respondents suggested that it would help to provide free training for staff and employers in educating them around disability and what it means. It was also suggested that research on customer perceptions is undertaken and disseminated, in particular whether there is an impact of disability on sales.

Employers also expressed interest in how to coach staff to be comfortable around a wide range of disabilities.

■ **Opportunities and equality (11 per cent)**

Some just suggested that employers be encouraged to give disabled people a go.

> "Be open minded. Put yourself in their shoes."

Other suggestions included:

- Help with knowing how to break the ice and behave appropriately, i.e. knowing how to approach disabled people (7 per cent)
- Education about any health and safety issues (7 per cent)

- Finding a way to manage the disability in the workplace (7 per cent)
- Trial period to see how it could work (6 per cent)
- Learning from the experiences of other businesses (5 per cent)

Turning around underemployment

Respondents were asked, based on their experiences, what information or support could be given to employers that might encourage them to hire disabled people.

■ **Education and awareness campaign (20 per cent)**

One in five employers suggested undertaking an awareness campaign to educate staff and employers. Some felt that this could be underpinned by incentives and trial periods.

■ **Encourage disabled people to apply (19 per cent)**

One in five suggested that disabled people needed to be encouraged to apply for positions.

"Try to push the capable people out there to be seen and heard."

"Encourage people with disabilities to apply for positions. Encourage people with disabilities to get qualifications."

■ **Attitude of disabled (20 per cent)**

Some employers felt that it was important for disabled people to have a positive attitude.

"In an interview it is off-putting having someone tell you that they are discriminated against and that it is not fair that no one will appoint them. In this case it is more likely to be their attitude rather that disability that is holding them back."

■ **Describe workplace changes (11 per cent)**

Some suggested that it would be helpful to understand the workplace changes that are required and what it would involve to make them.

■ **Equal opportunities (11 per cent)**

Some suggested that people just needed to be given a chance, and employers should be encouraged to support equal opportunities.

Other suggestions included having trial periods for employees, hearing success stories from other businesses, and offering employers incentives and subsidies to employ disabled employees.

Other comments

Employers were asked if they had any other comments that they would like to make.

Many of the employers felt that it was disappointing or `disgraceful' that disabled people are under-represented in employment.

"It is a national disgrace really."

Some suggested that working on stereotypes might help overcome discrimination.

"Try and take the stereotypical ideas away that people have of a disability. My experience is that the general population have no idea of what a certain disability does to someone as one disability can have a very different effect on people. But at the same time keeping it simple and not too frightening to a new employer. Fear of the unknown and ignorance has lost many a disabled person a job.

Others commented that the focus needed to be on the abilities of the applicants.

"I would just reiterate that I believe we need to always look at the whole person and if the job requirement is something they can do without any trouble then they should be given that opportunity."

Some felt that there just needed to be flexibility in the approach.

"Employers need to be prepared to be flexible, allow for and celebrate differences"

"For someone with a disability, finding a job they can do and be productive and enjoy can be so great that everyone around shares that good feeling."

Conclusion

Employers are largely positive in their attitudes towards disabled people. Most (87 per cent) consider that the low employment of disabled people is an issue. Most (97 per cent) also believed disabled people deserve a fair go. Three-quarters (74 per cent) agreed that disabled people were an untapped resource.

Three quarters of employers agree that they are looking for staff who are productive, skilled enough to do the job and no hassle. Most (83 per cent) however, agree that there is a mismatch, at least in part, between the picture of ideal staff and disabled people.

There was widespread recognition that disabled people are under-employed. Although one-quarter felt that disabled people did not apply for jobs, three-quarters believed that they were discriminated against.

Most acknowledged that disabled people were not well represented in their organisation. Although many believe that discrimination underpins underemployment, they were considerably less likely, however, to believe that discrimination was a barrier to employment in their organisation. They were more likely to suggest that barriers to employment in their own workplaces were genuine, insurmountable or more difficult to address than in other workplaces.

However, when asked for frank and honest feedback they acknowledged that the costs of employing disabled people (60 per cent), the costs of making changes to the workplace (83 per cent), concerns about productivity (60 per cent) and concerns that they might need more time off work (73 per cent) could be barriers to employment in their own workplaces. Other barriers they acknowledged were concerns that employing people was scary (65 per cent), concerns that employment could pose a health and safety risk (69 per cent) and that it could unsettle other staff (50 per cent).

There does not appear to be an association between the type of industry and a willingness to employ disabled people. In part this is due to the wide range of jobs in each industry.

Despite widespread evidence in the literature that many of the perceived barriers to disabled people doing a particular job can be readily addressed, it is difficult to judge in a survey whether or not the `nature of the job' posed barriers that were in fact insurmountable. Employers, therefore, were asked how likely they would be to employ disabled people compared with non-disabled people and they were given the option to specify whether they believed that the person with that type of impairment would be unable to do the job. For the purposes of the research this was taken at face value.

Nonetheless, even when the cases where employers felt that someone was incapable of doing a job *were taken out*, respondents said they would *still* be less likely to employ disabled people. Over half of the respondents said they would still be less likely to employ someone if they had a mental illness such as schizophrenia, were moderately intellectually disabled or had a moderate speech impediment.

They also believed both staff and clients may be uncomfortable working alongside people with schizophrenia, speech impediments and those severely disfigured or with an intellectual disability.

This reflects an apparent `hierarchy' of disability where the type and severity of the impairment does appear to have an impact on employers' perception of the employability of disabled people, regardless of whether someone is perceived as being capable of doing a job or not.

Despite the positive attitudes employers expressed towards disabled people, it appears that they are still unlikely to employ disabled people if there are options to hire those without impairments. Although literature suggests a correlation between prior contact with disabled people and hiring, this study found only limited evidence of this. Employers tend to hold stereotypical views about disabled people that are not mediated by direct experience.

It appears that perceptions about how staff, customers and clients might react might be giving employers social permission not to hire them.[6] There were concerns that staff would not be particularly comfortable working alongside disabled people. Similarly they were concerned that customers and clients would not be particularly comfortable. This is important as two-thirds (67 per cent) said they would be influenced by the negative reactions of staff, and three-quarters felt that they would be influenced by the negative reactions of clients and customers. Hence employers are not only using their own knowledge and stereotypes about disabled people in making hiring decisions, but their beliefs about the negative perceptions of others.

Those organisations which already employed disabled people had, for the most part, made no or only minimal accommodations. The comments suggest that these employees have posed very little, if any, `hassle' or disruption. Yet despite seemingly positive experiences amongst employers, this does not appear to be influencing hiring decisions, even in organisations which already employ disabled staff. Even those who employ disabled people raised concerns about productivity and hassle of employing *other* disabled people.

Employers suggested a range of ways to turn the underemployment of disabled people around. These largely centred on awareness campaigns, encouraging disabled people to apply for jobs, encouraging disabled people to have a positive attitude, introducing subsidies and trial periods, and describing any workplace changes required to employ people with different types of impairments.

The solutions to the underemployment of disabled people, however, are likely to be more complex. It would appear from this study that some employers currently see a mismatch between the ideal employee and disabled people and consider employing disabled people a hassle and an economic risk. This does not appear to be mediated by knowing disabled people or by positive experiences employing disabled people. It seems, however, to be compounded by perceptions that staff and

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[6] Social permission refers to the permission we give ourselves to do things when others are doing it. For example, if we believe staff and customers are uncomfortable around disabled people, we may give ourselves `permission' not to consider disabled people for a job even if we see the low employment of disabled people as an issue.

customers are uncomfortable working with disabled people, which appear to be influencing employment decisions.

Despite New Zealand employers having a belief that disabled people deserve a fair go, and despite the largely positive experiences of those who have employed disabled people, it appears that addressing issues such as the perceived mismatch between an ideal employee and disabled people, and perceptions of others' discomfort may need to be further explored to see whether they offer promise in helping to redress this underemployment.

Appendix One

Note that logic has been removed from this version of the survey

Firstly can you tell us whether you currently ...

1. Make the decision to hire people
2. Lead the decision to hire people
3. Influence the decision to hire people
4. None of the above

Thanks for that. And are you ...

1. A paid employee
2. An unpaid worker, such as a volunteer
3. Self-employed
4. Other (Please specify):

Can you tell us what sort of organisation you work for? (Please note that we do *not* want the name of your workplace - we would just like to know whether it is a clothes shop, cafe, school, public hospital etc.)

Do you have a disability yourself?

1. Yes
2. No

(If yes) Can you tell us a little about this?

Are there other people in your life that have a disability?

1. No
2. Immediate family
3. Extended family
4. Close friends
5. Friends
6. Colleagues
7. Other (Please specify):

Can you tell us a little about them - e.g. what type of disability, how it affects them, whether they are working etc.

To start off - without thinking too much about this - can you tell us what qualities you or your organisation look for in potential employees that make them an ideal fit ...

Now once again - top of mind - could you begin by picturing a person with a disability and tell us what that you see?

We are after first impressions here. What type of disability first springs to mind, do you see a particular age, sex, type of person ...

Some research suggests that when we picture someone with a disability - the first thing we picture is someone in a wheelchair. Is that what you picture?

(We are aware that we are talking about generalisations and stereotypes here - but there is evidence that people with disabilities could be disadvantaged by these stereotypes ... so please bear with us.)

    1. Yes
    2. In part
    3. No

Research suggests that employers, on the whole, are looking for highly productive people who are skilled enough to do the job they are required to do - and are no hassle. Do you agree with that?

    1. Yes
    2. In part
    3. No

We are trying to understand if there is a difference between what people believe makes an `ideal employee' and how we picture people with disabilities.  Research suggests that there may be a *mismatch* between the qualities of `ideal employees' and the way (in general) we think about people with disabilities.

When you think about these two things - (an ideal employee and our picture of someone with a disability) do they match up?

    1. Yes

2. In part
3. No

Can you tell us about more about this? What matches - what doesn't match?

To what extent do you think that the low employment of people with disabilities is an issue

Sliding Scale Matrix

We know that 17% of New Zealanders report that they have a disability. Do you currently have staff with disabilities at your workplace? This could be physical, intellectual or mental.

(The government definition of disability is "A person with a disability is someone who has been assessed as having a physical, psychiatric, intellectual, sensory, or age related disability (or a combination of these) which is likely to continue for a minimum of six months and result in a reduction of independent function to the extent that ongoing support is required")

1. Yes, they had disabilities when we employed them
2. Yes, staff became disabled while working here
3. No, but we have had staff with disabilities in the past
4. No

Could you tell us approximately what percentage of your workforce have a disability?

Could you tell us a little more about this?
What types of disabilities do the employees have? Did they have disabilities when they were employed? Did anything need to be done differently to accommodate the disabilities? If so, were there costs associated with that?

We also know that nearly half (40%) of people aged 15-64 who have a disability are unemployed. What barriers, if any, are there that you think stop more people with disabilities from being employed in NZ workplaces?

Are there any barriers that you think would stop people with disabilities being employed in your workplace?

1. Yes

2. Not sure
3. No

What are the barriers that you think would stop people with disabilities from being employed in your workplace?

What if anything could be done to overcome these barriers?

To what extent do you agree with these statements?
Matrix (Radio Buttons)

Top Options

1. Disagree strongly
2. Disagree
3. Neither
4. Agree
5. Agree strongly
6. Don't know

Side Options

1. People with disabilities deserve a fair go
2. People with disabilities are well represented in our organisation
3. People with disabilities don't apply for jobs
4. People with disabilities are discriminated against
5. People with disabilities are an untapped resource

Thanks for that - can you tell us why you felt that way?

We are going to ask you some very frank questions about employing people with disabilities next. Please answer them honestly. We want to understand what is really happening (rather than what we might like to happen).

Remember this survey is confidential, and neither you nor your workplace will be identified.

Here are some of the most common reasons that research has found employers give for not employing people with disabilities.

Again, we know that we are talking about stereotypes here, but do you think that these attitudes are a barrier to employment in your workplace?
Matrix (Radio Buttons)

Top Options

1. It is not a barrier
2. It may be a barrier
3. It is likely to be a barrier
4. It is definitely a barrier

Side Options

1. Disabled people are less productive
2. Employing people with disabilities can require big, disruptive or expensive changes to the workplace
3. It costs more to employ disabled people
4. Disabled people take more time off work
5. Employing disabled people is a hassle

Here are some more common reasons that employers have given for not employing people with a disability. Do you think that these attitudes are a barrier to employment in your workplace?
Matrix (Radio Buttons)

Top Options

1. It is not a barrier
2. It may be a barrier
3. It is likely to be a barrier
4. It is definitely a barrier

Side Options

1. Disabled people are different, `not like us'
2. Employing people with disabilities is a step into the `unknown' or scary 3. Disabled people are a health and safety risk
4. Employing disabled people will unsettle existing workers
5. Disabled people won't fit in

If there was a vacancy in your organisation, and a disabled person with the *right skills and qualities* applied, how likely would your organisation be to employ them if they ...
Matrix (Radio Buttons)

Top Options

1. Not at all likely
2. Less likely than if they were not disabled
3. Just as likely as if they were not disabled
4. More likely than if they were not disabled
5. N/A eg they couldn't do the work

Side Options

1. Were in a wheelchair
2. Had a moderate to high sight impairment
3. Had a moderate to high hearing impairment
4. Were moderately intellectually disabled
5. Had a mental illness, such as depression (61895)
6. Had a mental illness such as schizophrenia
7. Were severely disfigured in some way
8. A moderate to high speech impairment (eg from a stroke)

Can you tell us why you felt this way?

How comfortable do you think your staff would be working alongside other staff who ...
Matrix (Radio Buttons)

Top Options

1. Not particularly comfortable
2. Quite comfortable
3. Completely comfortable
4. Not sure

Side Options

1. Were in a wheelchair
2. Had a moderate to high sight impairment
3. Had a moderate to high hearing impairment
4. Were moderately intellectually disabled
5. Had a mental illness, such as depression (61895)
6. Had a mental illness such as schizophrenia
7. Were severely disfigured in some way
8. A moderate to high speech impairment (eg from a stroke)

Do you have any comments about how staff might feel and why?

And how comfortable do you think your customers and clients would be dealing with staff who ...
Matrix (Radio Buttons)

Top Options

1. Not particularly comfortable
2. Quite comfortable
3. Completely comfortable
4. Not sure

Side Options

1. Were in a wheelchair
2. Had a moderate to high sight impairment
3. Had a moderate to high hearing impairment
4. Were moderately intellectually disabled
5. Had a mental illness, such as depression (61895)
6. Had a mental illness such as schizophrenia
7. Were severely disfigured in some way
8. A moderate to high speech impairment (eg from a stroke)

Do you have any comments about how clients/customers might feel, and why?
Large Text Area

To what extent might the reactions of others influence your decision to employ disabled staff?
Matrix (Radio Buttons)

Top Options

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. A lot
4. Not sure

Side Options

1. Positive reactions from staff
2. Positive reactions from clients and customers
3. Positive image of the organisation
4. Negative reactions from staff
5. Negative reactions from clients and customers

Based on your experience, what information or support could be given to employers that might encourage them to hire people with disabilities?

If you were charged with trying to turn the underemployment of people with disabilities around - what would you do? Do you have any suggestions?

Do you have any last comments that you would like to make about people with disabilities and employment?

(If you have remembered something about another answer as you have gone through the survey - feel free to add it in here).

Lastly could you tell us the town or city in which your workplace is based?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.