



Equal Access to Employment *in Glasgow*

GLASGOW

Employer
Coalition



Part Of The National Employment Panel

Literature review of employers' attitudes towards employability groups

November 2006

Executive Summary

FMR Research was commissioned by Equal Access to Employment in Glasgow and the Glasgow Employer Coalition to undertake a literature review on employer attitudes to recruiting people who are at a distance from the labour market. The objectives of the literature review were to identify any commonality or differences between large and small employers and between different sectors. In addition, the review aims to identify the commonality or differences in attitudes towards barriers to employment of core employability groups. These groups included people with:

- mental health problems;
- drug addictions;
- physical disabilities;
- visual impairments; and
- learning disabilities;

as well as:

- ex-offenders;
- Black and Minority Ethnic groups; and
- lone parents.

This is not an exhaustive list of employability groups around which there appeared to be more research.

FMR undertook a review of around sixty pieces of literature to develop this report. The literature was sourced from web based searches as well as academic databases and included literature produced from key organisations such as Scottish Executive, Scottish Enterprise, and the CIPD, as well as academic sources. FMR used MAXQDA, qualitative analysis software, to assist with the structure of a themed report.

The external factors that affect people's employability include the supply and demand for labour; employers' recruitment procedures; and employers' expectations of employees. It is estimated from various sources that the supply and demand for labour has increased in recent years, albeit with supply increasing faster than demand, particularly at entry level, due to a number of groups entering the labour market in large numbers. These mainly include EU migrants; women returners; students and the retired or semi-retired. This has increased competition for entry level jobs and may have had the impact of further distancing the core employability groups from the labour market.

Employers' recruitment procedures can also have an impact upon employing those at a distance to the labour market. Communication of a vacancy in many companies, particularly SMEs, is through word of mouth which tends to exclude those who are not in employment. In addition, the application process tends to be via CV or application form and requires employment history to be highlighted. The majority of people who have been at a distance from the labour market have experienced many years out of work and, with most employers preferring to recruit either those in work or with work experience, this part of the application form will stand out as a barrier.

Employers' expectations of the characteristics of their employees can also pose a barrier to those core groups who are far from the labour market. Employers' preferred characteristics of employees can sometimes rank above qualifications and include:

- commitment and enthusiasm;
- willingness to learn;
- honesty and trustworthiness; and

-
- timekeeping and dealing with customers.

Employers' perceptions of these key characteristics among the core groups we reviewed can pose a barrier to employment. The key findings section of this report highlights a range of disabilities and employers' perceptions of how easy or difficult it would be to employ people from these groups. This ranges from 92% of employers who would find it difficult or impossible to employ someone with impaired vision to 48% finding it difficult or impossible to employ someone with clinical depression. The core groups section of this report goes on to highlight particular reservations employers have about these groups.

It is important to note that people within these employability groups may well have multiple employability barriers. In this case, it appears, from the employers perspective, the more barriers someone has the further they are from the labour market.

Mental health problems

According to the DWP only around 20% of people in the UK with mental health problems are currently in employment. People with mental health problems are three times more likely to be unemployed than other impairment groups. The Mental Health Foundation found that only around 40% of employers would consider taking on people with mental health problems which compares less favourably with physically disabled and long term unemployed. Employers view those with mental health problems as difficult to employ due to concerns with possible absences from work for treatment as well as the effect on fellow colleagues of accommodating these employees. From an employees' perspective there is a dilemma as to whether to disclose information about their mental health at the application stage. There is a fear of being excluded at the application stage, however, if they are successful in the application and their employer is unaware of their mental health issues they may receive less leeway with their health problems than they otherwise would have if they had chosen to disclose the information. In addition, they also lose benefit entitlement if they become ill and lose their job. Research has shown, however, that in many cases there is a link between employment and improvement in a person's mental health.

Drug addictions

Our study found research which showed that, while many drug users want to work, the route to employment is not necessarily easy for them. Seventy per cent of employers would not employ someone while on a methadone programme which is high compared to other groups with employability issues. Barriers to employment from the employers' perspective for drug users include perceptions of unreliability, absenteeism, poor timekeeping and theft. In addition to these perceptions, there are fundamental issues for an employer who employs a drug user or recovering drug user. Health and safety issues are a requirement if the employee is required to use machinery (particularly if on a methadone programme) and also there may be the need to attend a pharmacy on a daily basis for supervised prescribing of methadone.

Physical disabilities

People with a physical disability make up a large and growing proportion of the working-age population. Figures published by the Scottish Executive suggest that as many as one in five of the population are affected by a form of physical disability. On average the employment rate for disabled people is around 40% and one third of disabled people who do find employment are out of work by the following year. In addition to the high level of unemployment among people with a physical disability, one in six people who became disabled while in work lost their employment within one year of becoming disabled. Many of the views and attitudes held by employers employing disabled people are underpinned by the fact that many of them have never worked with disabled people and therefore do not know what to expect from them.

Employers believe that the workload of other staff will increase as a result of employing a disabled person; they will require additional support and management input; they will require costly adjustments to the working environment; and they are less productive. However, our report highlights research which dispels some of these perceptions.

Visual impairments

According to the RNIB around 27% of blind or partially sighted people are currently in employment, a figure which has not changed significantly since 1991 when 25% were in employment. Our study found that the substantial majority of employers (90%) see blind or partially sighted people as being either difficult or impossible to employ. The RNIB have also found that employers do not take account of the needs of blind and partially sighted people in the recruitment process and almost three-quarters of employers are unaware of one of the most effective interventions that can help blind and partially sighted people in work – the Access to Work scheme. Further barriers to employment include employers' concerns about insurance and health and safety fears, additional costs for workplace adjustments, as well as extra time incurred in training. However, on a positive note, it was found that once an employer had experience of employing someone who was deaf, blind or partially sighted and understood the support they and the employee could access, they were willing to take on further staff with such impairments. It was also noted that statutory agencies were not necessarily better informed or more willing to take on staff with visual impairments because e.g. some local government departments and NHS websites are incompatible with IT software for blind and partially sighted people.

Learning difficulties

Employers' perceptions of people with learning difficulties is that they tend to lack confidence which may well reduce their opportunity during the recruitment process. Less than 32% of those with learning difficulties are employed. From an employer's perspective, deciding to employ someone with a learning difficulty was influenced by issues such as labour shortages, difficulties with filling posts and the professionalism of the 'supported employment' service.

Black and minority ethnics

Our study also found that the unemployment rate is twice the average for ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities face multiple barriers towards effective labour market participation. Some recent migrants' skills and qualifications are not recognised in the UK and there are also language barriers to contend with. It is suggested that institutional racism has an impact on the experiences of ethnic minorities looking for employment which include examples of recruitment agencies not promoting a BME candidate to their client because they anticipate rejection.

Lone parents

Employers' views on lone parents are varied. Their views specifically centre around limited flexibility, the need for additional time off and unpredictable availability for work. However, other literature highlighted that some employers felt that employing lone parents would present no problems. Other employers, however, did state that they present some problems in terms of level of commitment, flexible working and child care issues.

Ex-offenders

In terms of employers' views on employing ex-offenders, in a study undertaken by the CIPD, 40% stated that they would always consider an application from an individual with a criminal record. However, only 28% had any experience of employing people with a criminal record. The nature of the conviction was a key factor for 31% in

making a decision relating to the recruitment of ex-offenders. Interestingly, the experiences of HR managers who have employed ex-offenders have generally been positive. It was also highlighted that the disclosure of information regarding previous offences could deter individuals from applying for a position.

Employment sector

Generally speaking the public and voluntary sector are more likely to employ people within those groups who are at a distance from the labour market. Organisations in this sector are more likely to employ a disabled person (59% compared to 35% in the private sector). These organisations are also more likely to make workplace adjustments and encourage applications from disabled people. Despite these figures, however, there are good examples of private sector employers employing those groups who are far removed from the labour market. These mainly tend to be larger employers. SMEs are less likely to employ these core groups and tend to hold more negative views on employing disabled people. However, it is recognised that small employers are at a disadvantage due to lack of internal HR support to undertake employment of hard to reach employability groups.

Hierarchy of employment

After reviewing over sixty pieces of literature, we would conclude that there is a hierarchy of employment among the groups that are at a distance from the labour market. Some are more disadvantaged due to multiple barriers. There is a need to emphasise the reality of these groups' position and abilities rather than a pre-conceived perception. This may well be best undertaken using a series of case studies. While public and voluntary sector organisations are more receptive to employing these groups, it may be worthwhile targeting private sector companies known to have corporate social responsibility policies as well. The merit of an HR advisor/support worker to be made available to a cluster of SMEs merits investigation, should this business sector be a target for future endeavour.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

FMR Research was commissioned jointly by Equal Access to Employment in Glasgow and the Glasgow Employer Coalition to undertake a literature review on employer attitudes to recruiting people who are at a distance from the labour market.

This work will provide the background and context for the work of the Embracing Diversity Project, the Dispelling the Myths Project, the work of the Coalition, the Glasgow East Strategic Employability Group, as well as any further joint pieces of work between the two organisations or the partners.

1.2 Objectives

The main objectives of the literature review as provided in the brief were:

- to identify literature which relates to employers' attitudes to recruiting people who are at a distance from the labour market;
- to identify any commonality or differences in attitudes between large and small employers and between different sectors, i.e. private, public, voluntary sectors or manufacturing, retails etc; and
- to identify any commonality or differences in attitudes towards barriers to employment including drug addiction issues, mental health, visual impairments and physical disabilities.

2 Method

2.1 Research method

The methodology was as follows.

2.1.1 Review of key literature and secondary data

FMR undertook a review of approximately sixty pieces of literature from which over 500 pieces of information and data were analysed and interpreted to develop this report. The literature reviewed for this study is contained in the Bibliography section and was sourced through web based searches as well as through academic databases (such as Athens and the Economic and Social Data Service database). The literature covers academic literature as well as literature produced by relevant organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), CBI, Scottish Enterprise and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

Literature from national organisations such as the CIPD was reviewed to gain a national perspective on core joblessness and diversity in business, while more local literature sourced from Drumchapel Opportunities and Scottish Enterprise Glasgow was reviewed to apply a more local impact of employer attitudes to recruiting people who are at a distance from the labour market. The search strategy started looking at literature based on the East End of Glasgow and widened out to the whole of Glasgow and then Scottish and UK literature. A snowball approach was taken to widen the literature search using references from key pieces of literature to further the search. The literature is a mix of both primary and secondary data with each source touching on average another ten sources.

2.1.2 Core groups

The views of employers were reviewed in relation to recruiting employees from core groups identified by the steering group and where possible some views of employees have been incorporated too. The core groups that were focused upon included those with particular issues to overcome in order to break into the labour market, such as:

- mental health problems;
- drug addictions;
- physical disabilities;
- visual impairments; and
- learning disabilities;

as well as:

- ex-offenders;
- Black and Minority Ethnic groups; and
- lone parents.

Where possible comparisons between public/voluntary and the private sectors have been made, however, it has not always been possible to split data between the public and voluntary sector due to the sources of data.

2.1.3 Analysis and reporting

FMR undertook a review of the key literature highlighted in 2.1.1 above and used MAXQDA in the analysis of this literature to assist with the structure of a themed report. MAXQDA is a specialist software package designed to help with the handling

and analysis of qualitative data from a range of sources. MAXQDA facilitates the coding of and memoing from data from a range of word-based sources.

Each data source has a unique identity within MAXQDA and the content of the codes/memos that form part of the analysis of qualitative data all have a clear link to their source. In this way, insight is genuinely grounded on the relative density and quality of data within each of the codes.

Outputs from MAXQDA analysis formed the core data on which the report is based, incorporating around 60 pieces of literature and over 500 coded segments from this literature.

It is our opinion that this represents a robust analysis of the literature on the subject of employers' attitudes towards recruiting those who are at a distance from the labour market, and specifically on the core groups highlighted above. Care, however, should be taken when interpreting some of the statistics from the literature as different sources have undertaken different methodologies when researching employers' attitudes.

3 Key findings

3.1 Context

This literature review captures the key findings from over sixty reports, papers and pieces of research on employers' attitudes towards recruiting people who are at a distance from the labour market. The focus of this report is on a core set of employability groups, in particular those with mental health problems, drug addictions, physical disabilities, and visual impairments. Other groups have also been included in the review and they are ex-offenders, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, lone parents, and those who experience learning difficulties.

We feel that this literature review is robust in terms of capturing the key issues on this subject, although it is worth highlighting a number of caveats to this review. Firstly, there are a number of statistics referenced in this report that relate to surveys of employers as well as employees. It is important to note that these surveys are, in the main, from different sources and use different survey methods, and therefore are not readily comparable with each other. Secondly, definitions for the employability groups may well conflict between different sources. This may have an impact on the findings of different pieces of research, particularly where employers' own perceptions of what constitutes someone from an employability group is concerned. Thirdly, some of the literature is taken from campaign groups and these have a particular agenda to promote. Finally, when referencing general issues with the labour market the focus of this review has been mainly on entry level jobs due to the fact that this is where the majority of those at a distance from the labour market are likely to find employment.

3.1.1 External factors affecting employability

As this study is concerned with those that are far from the labour market, it is important to understand what determines closeness to the labour market for groups who require access to entry level jobs. Essentially this is determined by a combination of factors.¹

These comprise external factors such as:

- supply and demand for labour;
- employers' recruitment procedures; and
- employers' expectations of employees;

and individual factors such as:

- motivation and willingness to work; and
- skills, qualifications and work experience.

As this study is concentrating on employer attitudes the rest of this section highlights some of the findings on the external factors identified above.

Supply and demand for labour

If the supply of labour stays constant and demand for labour increases then employers would be more likely consider those groups who are far removed from the labour market i.e. these groups would actually move closer to the labour market due to the tightness of labour supply in relation to demand. However, should demand contract then these groups will become further from the labour market as competition for jobs

¹ Effective Interventions Unit, 2003, *Moving on Update – employment for recovering drug users*, Scottish Executive.

increases. Similarly, should the supply of labour increase significantly with demand staying constant these groups will likely become more remote from the labour market with new groups entering the labour market above these core groups in terms of pecking order.

It would appear that, over the last few years (nationally and in the Glasgow economy), both the demand for labour and the supply of labour has increased^{2 3 4}, albeit that supply is likely to have outstripped demand, particularly in entry level occupations. This is evidenced by the fact that although there are more people in work in Glasgow now than for the last 25 years⁵, there have been a number of groups entering the labour market at entry level jobs in large numbers^{6 7 8 9 10}. These groups are:

- EU migrants;
- women returners;
- students; and
- retired/semi-retired.

These groups have increased the competition at entry level and tend to come before the employability groups we are monitoring in terms of employers' preference.

Employers' recruitment procedures

A number of reports highlighted that employers' recruitment processes are a barrier/potential barrier to employing those far from the labour market. The communication of a vacancy at entry level tends to be through word of mouth and through existing employees, this would tend to exclude those who are not currently in employment¹¹ as "*Informal recruitment channels are a barrier to the recruitment of disabled people*". Small employers in particular use these channels'.¹²

In terms of short-listing candidates, most employers use an application form or CV to assess basic reading and writing skills of potential employees and, as part of this, employment history and relevant experience require to be highlighted also. This will, in effect, highlight periods of inactivity for those who are at a distance from the labour market. Given that around a quarter of benefit claimants in Glasgow have been on benefits for 10 years or more, a fifth have been on benefits for between 5-10 years and a further fifth for between 2-5 years¹³ this part of an application form will stand out in a negative light from an employers' viewpoint as most employers prefer those already in work or with relevant recent experience.^{14 15}

² Future Skills Scotland, Labour Market Report, 2006

³ SE Glasgow and Glasgow City Council's Glasgow Economic Review June 2006

⁴ Future Jobs and Skills in Glasgow (2005-2010), SE Glasgow, 2005

⁵ SE Glasgow and Glasgow City Council's Glasgow Economic Review June 2006

⁶ Accession Monitoring Report, May 2004 – June 2006, Home Office

⁷ The Scotsman 'Scots suffer as more Poles need services' 26 October 2006

⁸ *Fair enough? Central & Eastern European migrants in low paid employment in the UK* 2006, Compas.

⁹ Ernst and Young, Item Club Special Report – September 2006

¹⁰ Devlins, D and Hogarth, T. February 2005. Employing the unemployed: Case study evidence on the Role and Practice of Employers, *Urban Studies Journal*, Feb. 2005

¹¹ Devlins, D and Hogarth, T. February 2005. Employing the unemployed: Case study evidence on the Role and Practice of Employers, *Urban Studies Journal*, Feb. 2005

¹² Opinion Research Business, 2004

¹³ McGregor, A, McDougall, L, Glass, A. 2003. '*The Glasgow Challenge: Realising the potential of Glasgow's hidden unemployed*' TERU, The University of Glasgow

¹⁴ Devlins, D and Hogarth, T. February 2005. Employing the unemployed: Case study evidence on the Role and Practice of Employers, *Urban Studies Journal*, Feb. 2005

¹⁵ Effective Interventions Unit, 2003, *Moving on Update – employment for recovering drug users*, Scottish Executive

Employers' expectations of employees

A number of articles highlighted employers' preferred characteristics of potential employees. The Scottish Executive's *Moving on Update*, highlighted preferred characteristics or qualities that rank higher than qualifications, these are:

- commitment and enthusiasm;
- willingness to learn;
- honesty and trustworthiness;
- timekeeping; and
- dealing with customers.

Similarly, Future Skills Scotland¹⁶ found that job applicants' motivation, attitude and personality can result in vacancies remaining unfilled. The same report highlighted the fact that migrants from Eastern Europe were more willing to work for relatively low pay, and long, unpredictable and anti-social hours compared to local workers, which gives them a higher status among employers.

A recent Department of Work and Pensions research report¹⁷ highlighted that:

- for two-thirds of employers, their chief concern in employing disabled people is the cost of potential adjustments;
- around 15%-20% of employers also feel that disabled people:
 - are less productive;
 - have higher absence rates and are less punctual;
 - will increase the workload of colleagues; and
 - may raise a discrimination case; and
- employers believe that some impairments exclude a disabled person from certain jobs because of the very nature of the work.

From the same study the proportion of employers who believe it would be easy/difficult/impossible to employ a disabled person, by type of impairment is shown in the table below:

Table 1 Employability by type of impairment

	Easy	Difficult	Impossible	Don't know
Impaired vision	8%	62%	30%	1%
Wheelchair user	31%	39%	29%	1%
Schizophrenia	18%	58%	15%	9%
Profound deafness	24%	62%	13%	1%
Arthritis	42%	48%	9%	2%
Epilepsy	52%	36%	9%	4%
Parkinson's disease	29%	53%	8%	10%
Learning difficulties	38%	51%	8%	3%
Clinical depression	47%	44%	4%	4%
Severe stammer	52%	43%	3%	2%
Facial scarring	90%	9%	1%	1%

These data suggest that there is a hierarchy of employability and this theme exists throughout the report. This issue will be re-visited in the Conclusions section of the report.

¹⁶Labour Market Report, Future Skills Scotland 2006

¹⁷ Department of Work and Pensions (September 2006) *Findings from the wider desk research to inform the employers' campaign* Presentation

3.2 Core groups

As part of this study the steering group identified core groups who are at a distance from the labour market on which they would like to focus. These core groups included those with particular issues to overcome in order to break into the labour market, such as:

- mental health problems;
- drug addictions;
- physical disabilities;
- visual impairments;
- ex-offenders;
- learning disabilities;
- Black and Minority Ethnic groups; and
- lone parents.

Before we look at these groups individually it is important to recognise that a proportion of people in these groups experience multiple barriers to employment. As expected the more disadvantages faced by an individual, the more likely they are to be non-employed.¹⁸

3.2.1 Mental health

Facts

A definition provided by Merriam-Webster defines mental health as 'A state of emotional and psychological well-being in which an individual is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capabilities, function in society, and meet the ordinary demands of everyday life.'¹⁹ Examples of mental health problems that can affect people's ability to undertake work effectively include depression, schizophrenia and obsessive compulsive disorders.

According a study carried out in 2006, by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), 699,000 people in the UK have mental health problems and only 20% of these are currently in employment. In fact, according to the DWP, those with mental health problems are three times more likely to be unemployed than other impairment groups²⁰. It is evident from research carried out by the Mental Health Foundation, 2002, that people with mental health problems make a major contribution to society with one in five doing voluntary work²¹. Overall, the Mental Health Foundation found that around one sixth of respondents (17%) to their survey described themselves as neither in employment nor doing voluntary work and men (24%) were more likely to be unemployed than women (14%). In 2002, 117,000 people in Scotland who have mental health problems were currently unemployed but wanted to work²², and only 15% of long term mental health service users were in employment²³.

¹⁸ Berthoud, R. March 2003 *Multiple disadvantage in employment – a quantitative analysis*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_health

²⁰ Department of Work and Pensions (September 2006) *Findings from the wider desk research to inform the employers' campaign* Presentation.

²¹ Thornicroft, G (2006) *Tackling discrimination against people with mental illness*, Mental Health Foundation

²² *With Health in Mind: Improving mental health and wellbeing in Scotland*, Scottish Public Mental Health Alliance April 2002, cited in See Me campaign website

²³ Scottish Public Mental Health Alliance (2002) *With Health in Mind: Improving mental health and wellbeing in Scotland, A document to support discussion and action*.

Employers' perspective

The Mental Health Foundation (2006) found that in Britain only 40% of employers said that they would take on people with mental illness. This compares less favourably with the 60% of employers who would take on physically disabled people and 80% who would employ long term unemployed²⁴. People with mental health problems are viewed as less employable than people with physical disabilities or illnesses and some employers do not recognise mental illness as an impairment which can be debilitating²⁵.

It is evident from research that employers tend to view those with mental health problems, such as depression or schizophrenia, as difficult to employ due to concerns with possible absences for treatment and the effects that this will have on fellow colleagues. This is particularly relevant in smaller organisations²⁶. Accommodating employees with mental health problems, for example by providing more supervision/feedback, absences etc. may seem unfair to other employees as they cannot enjoy the same terms and conditions applicable to those with mental health problems²⁷.

Employees' perspective

There are a number of barriers faced by people with mental health problems when seeking employment and when securing employment; however the barriers tend to reduce with the latter. For many people with mental health problems, it is a struggle to enter employment in the first place. They often feel excluded and discriminated against because of their situation and often would rather not disclose information about their mental health at the application stage in fear of being excluded at this stage. The dilemma, however, for those with mental health issues that are seeking employment is that if they do not disclose their health problems then this could cause problems with their employer should they get the job but then fall ill during employment. If they lose their job then this could have an impact upon their benefits.

According to, MindOut for Mental Health, 2001:

"64% of young people say that they would be embarrassed to disclose a mental health problem to a prospective employer²⁸."

In addition, they fear losing their benefit entitlement by returning to work. In the event that they become ill and lose their job, this has implications for their benefit entitlement. According to research carried out by the Social Exclusion Unit, 2004 and Thornicroft 2006, people with mental health problems are particularly sensitive to loss of benefits and are more likely to fear the impact of benefit rules on returning to employment^{29 30}.

²⁴ Department of Work and Pensions (September 2006) *Findings from the wider desk research to inform the employers' campaign* Presentation.

²⁵ Department of Work and Pensions (September 2006) *Findings from the wider desk research to inform the employers' campaign* Presentation.

²⁶ Department of Work and Pensions (September 2006) *Findings from the wider desk research to inform the employers' campaign* Presentation.

²⁷ Thornicroft, G (2006) *Tackling discrimination against people with mental illness*, Mental Health Foundation

²⁸ MindOut for Mental Health, 2001

²⁹ Social Exclusion Unit (2004) *Mental Health and Social Exclusion*, ODPM

³⁰ Thornicroft, G (2006) *Tackling discrimination against people with mental illness*, Mental Health Foundation

Seeking employment

The Mental Health Foundation, 2002, surveyed people with mental health disabilities and found that participants experienced more unfair treatment when trying to find a job, than when they were actually in a job. It is evident from research³¹ that people with mental health problems felt that this was the contributing factor in them being turned down for a job. In addition, very few people with poor mental health felt confident disclosing their experience of mental health problems on an application form for potential employment. This may be a result of feeling excluded from employment or stigmatised when in employment because of their mental health problems. Often those with mental health problems experience not being short listed for jobs or turned down for jobs because of their situation not on ability.

In the workplace

Research carried out by the “See Me” mental health campaign, found that 43% of people with mental health problems, who have experienced mental ill health when in work, felt encouraged to leave and not return³². In addition according to the research carried out by Mental Health Foundation:

“A survey of 778 users of mental health services found that 34% had reported being dismissed or forced to resign from their jobs. A further 39% felt that their diagnosis was used as grounds for being denied a job. Understandable again, over half (52%) did not reveal that psychiatric history for fear of losing their job, and 69% feared discrimination to the extent of being unwilling to apply for work.”³³

People with mental health issues tend to leave their employment for the following reasons: they choose to leave; they are encouraged to resign; they are sacked; they are too embarrassed to return; or they are made redundant³⁴. However, research carried out by the Mental Health Foundation also highlighted that when in employment those with mental health problems felt supported when they disclosed their situation to their employer or work colleagues³⁵:

“Of those who had been open about their mental health problems in the workplace, over half always or often had support when they needed it, with another one in five sometimes getting support. Around two-thirds reported that people at work were always or often very accepting.”

Nevertheless, it is evident that in the workplace people felt that sometimes there was too much account taken of their mental health problems. In some cases they felt more patronised or monitored than other colleagues; that they had been passed over for promotion because of their mental health problem; they believed that colleagues made sarcastic remarks or that colleagues avoided them; and that bullying at work had caused or added to their mental health³⁶. It could be suggested that people with mental health problems are passed over for promotion because they are over protected and shielded from taking on more responsibility, which in some cases may

³¹ Warner,L (2002) *Out at Work: A survey of the experiences of people with mental health problems within the workplace* Mental Health Foundation

³² Warner,L (2002) *Out at Work: A survey of the experiences of people with mental health problems within the workplace* Mental Health Foundation

³³ Warner,L (2002) *Out at Work: A survey of the experiences of people with mental health problems within the workplace* Mental Health Foundation

³⁴ Warner,L (2002) *Out at Work: A survey of the experiences of people with mental health problems within the workplace* Mental Health Foundation

³⁵ Warner,L (2002) *Out at Work: A survey of the experiences of people with mental health problems within the workplace* Mental Health Foundation

³⁶ Warner,L (2002) *Out at Work: A survey of the experiences of people with mental health problems within the workplace* Mental Health Foundation

be done with supportive intentions. Those with mental health problems are more likely to face workplace discrimination; however on the other hand, research has shown that employment can have a positive effect on a person's mental state, particularly if they have returned from long-term unemployment. Despite employment opportunities improving in Scotland over the last few years, unemployment is still fairly high in deprived areas, particularly amongst young men³⁷. Research has shown that there is a link between length of unemployment and deterioration in mental health and wellbeing. In addition, it is noted that there is a link between employment and improvement in a person's mental health.

3.2.2 Drug addictions

Facts

Addiction can be described as a '*chronic relapsing condition characterised by compulsive drug-seeking and abuse and by long-lasting chemical changes in the brain. Addiction is the same irrespective of whether the drug is alcohol, amphetamines, cocaine, heroin, marijuana or nicotine.*'³⁸ The term addict is '*to cause (someone or oneself) to become dependent (on something especially a narcotic drug)*'.

Maintaining employment can be especially difficult for those who misuse substances, however, there is evidence that employment can aid drug users' recovery. Through employment, drug users can occupy themselves with activities other than drug taking and have different peers to associate with³⁹. The Drug Outcome Research in Scotland (DORIS) study shows that out of 559 drug users: 4% had a job; 13% were in paid legal employment in the last six months; and 21% had not seen anyone about employment, training or education in the last 6 months⁴⁰.

Employers' perspective

Many employers are reluctant to employ recovering drug users, albeit that some companies may not be aware that they are employing drug users. According to Scott and Sillars (2003), 70% of employers were absolutely certain that they would not employ someone on a methadone programme – a relatively high percentage particularly when compared to other groups with employability issues. Barriers to employment from the perspective of the employer according to Scott & Sillars, 2003, are fears that recovering drug users may relapse, not be telling the truth or have a negative effects on customers. In addition, employers are less inclined to employ people with a history of drug misuse due to unreliability, absenteeism, poor time keeping and theft, offending history and the fear that they will re-offend, health and safety through use of methadone, and lack of work experience and the work environment⁴¹.

Employees' perspective

Research has identified that many drug users want to work, however, the route to employment is not necessarily easy for them. Drug users tend to experience low educational qualifications, lack of work experience, low levels of confidence and find

³⁷ Scottish Public Mental Health Alliance (2002) *With Health in Mind: Improving mental health and wellbeing in Scotland, A document to support discussion and action.*

³⁸ <http://www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=10177>

³⁹ Effective Interventions Unit (2003) *Moving on update: education, training and employment for recovering drug users.* Scottish Executive

⁴⁰ Kemp, P., Neale, J., (2005) 'Employability and problem drug users'. *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 25(1): 28-46.

⁴¹ Scott G. and Sillars K. (2003) *Employers' attitudes to hard-to-employ groups.* Report prepared for Westworking Partnership. Scottish Poverty Information Unit, School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University.

themselves caught in the 'benefit trap'. Low levels of qualifications, basic skills, and literacy and a lack of work experience can be detrimental to drug users when creating a Curriculum Vitae and applying for positions when in competition with those with an employment history. In addition, the interview process can be intimidating for drug users and/or recovering drug users, especially those with low confidence levels and self esteem. Other barriers tend to be institutional barriers for example supervised prescribing of methadone, and the need to attend a pharmacy on a daily basis can impede employment opportunities. It is possible that there may be issues with health and safety, for example, operating heavy machinery could be a problem if on medication such as methadone⁴². This can lead to a lack of availability of suitable jobs for drug users due to the requirement of a specific skills set. The Effective Interventions Unit (EIU) 2001, through focus group research, found that participants thought that they would have to enter the market at relatively low level areas such as cleaning, retail and manual labour. It may be the case that drug users do not feel ready to enter the labour market without education or training and even if they have completed a treatment programme there could be issues with housing or family⁴³.

3.2.3 Physical disability

Facts

The definition of a disabled person by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Physical disability can arise as a result of accident, illness or congenital disorder and may be caused by a range of health conditions such as neurological, circulatory, respiratory and musculo-skeletal disorders.⁴⁴

People with a physical disability make up a large and growing proportion of the working-age population. Figures published by the Scottish Executive suggest that as many as one in five⁴⁵ of the population are affected by a form of physical disability.

Despite economic growth and general improvements in the health of the population, the number of people claiming disability related benefits continues to increase while the employment rate of disabled people remains low with employment and equality legislation having only a modest impact on overall employment rates. While the employment rate of disabled people varies across Scotland, the approximate average rate is just 40%⁴⁶. Programmes to improve the employment rates of disabled people and measures to boost the civil rights of disabled people appear to have had only a modest impact.

The Glasgow area has the highest incidence of disability, the lowest levels of employment of disabled people and the highest levels of incapacity benefit receipt. Just over 90,000 jobless working age adults in Glasgow are claiming a non-JSA key benefit, including 71,000 sick and disabled people⁴⁷

⁴² McIntosh, J. and McKeganey, N (2001) *Identity and recovery from dependent drug use: the addict's perspective*. Drug Education, prevention and Policy, 2001; 8 (1): 47-59

⁴³ Effective Interventions Unit. *Integrated Care for Drug Users: Principles and Practice*. September 2002

⁴⁴ NHS Grampian/Aberdeenshire Council, *Challenging Physical Disability – A joint strategy for Aberdeenshire*, 2000

⁴⁵ Riddell, S, Banks, P, Tinklin, T. 2005 *Disability and employment in Scotland: A review of the evidence base*. Scottish Executive

⁴⁶ Riddell, S, Banks, P, Tinklin, T. 2005 *Disability and employment in Scotland: A review of the evidence base*. Scottish Executive

⁴⁷ McGregor, A, McDougall, L, Glass, A. 2003. 'The Glasgow Challenge: Realising the potential of Glasgow's hidden unemployed' TERU, The University of Glasgow

These figures are reinforced by the SE Glasgow Future Jobs and Skills in Glasgow report which stated:

“Over half of the unemployed claimants in 1999 were no longer in benefit in 2004. A further one quarter had moved into another client group (7,000 people). By contrast, six out of ten claimants from the sick and disabled client group remained on the same benefit for the entire five years, while just a small proportion (5%) moved into another benefit category. In total, over this period, 9,100 claimants reached retirement age. The number of sick and disabled have seen the slowest change with a fall for males of just 13% and a decline of 10% for among females.”

In addition to the high level of unemployment amongst people with a physical disability, our study also found that many people with a physical disability encounter difficulties staying in work once they have found a job and also receive lower than average incomes. One in six people who become disabled while in work lost their employment within one year of becoming disabled.⁴⁸ This was further reinforced in the same report when it stated:

“Getting work is more difficult for disabled than non-disabled jobseekers, and one-third of disabled people who do find work are out of a job again by the following year.”

The report also suggested that the average income for people with a physical disability is significantly lower than the average income of the general population:

“Overall, half of all disabled people have incomes below half the general population mean (often taken as an indicator of poverty), after making an adjustment for extra costs. Disabled adults in families with children are even more likely to be in poverty: 60 per cent.”

Employers' perspective

Our study found that the way in which employers perceive people with disabilities plays an important part in their employment. We found that some employers lack awareness of disability issues and seem to be afraid to employ a person with a disability while other employers seem to continue to question individual capabilities and autonomy, despite candidates having the qualifications to do the job.

Figures from the Employer Research report prepared by the Department of Work and Pensions highlight that many of the views and attitudes held by employers, employing people with a physical disability, are underpinned by the fact that many of them have never (consciously) worked with disabled people and therefore do not know what to expect from them. The report highlighted that a survey of employers carried out by Scope⁴⁹ (the disability organisation in England and Wales whose focus is people with cerebral palsy) found that 19% of employers said the fact that they have never worked with a disabled person previously, and so did not know what to expect, would prevent them from employing a disabled person.

In addition, a lack of awareness and appreciation of disability issues has given scope for many employers to believe that:

- the workload of other staff and colleagues' will increase as a result of employing people with a physical disability;
- physically disabled people would need more support from their colleagues and managers;

⁴⁸ *Enduring economic exclusion: disabled people, income and work*, October 2000

⁴⁹ Scope, Ready, Willing and Disabled, 2003

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- physically disabled people require additional management and supervisory time;
 - employing physically disabled people would result in having to make costly physical adjustments to the work environment;
 - physically disabled staff are less productive; and
 - physically disabled staff have higher absence rates and are less reliable.

The research found that 26% of employers thought that disabled people would require additional management and supervisory time and that this could be a barrier to employing them.⁵⁰ In the same survey, 78% of disabled people thought the assumption that disabled people need more support from their colleagues and managers prevents employers from employing disabled people. In addition, Goldstone and Meager's survey of employers found that 27% of employers' agreed that disabled employees' require additional management and supervisory time⁵¹. The Employer Research report prepared by the Department of Work and Pensions also highlighted that the cost of changes to the physical work environment was also identified as a barrier to employing more physically disabled staff by approximately two thirds of employers.

This was further reinforced by Roberts et al. (January 2004) who found that 66% of smaller employers (six or fewer employees) were more likely to have difficulty with adapting the physical environment, compared with 53% of employers of 15 employees or more⁵², while a significant proportion of employers' worry about the costs of adjustments (Goldstone and Meager, 2002)⁵³.

In terms of perceptions on productivity, the Employer Research report prepared by the Department of Work and Pensions found that approximately 20% of employers think disabled people are less productive. This was again supported by Roberts et al. (January 2004) who found that 18% of employers believe that disabled people have lower productivity. Fears held by employers with regard to the productivity of people with a physical disability were closely linked to perceptions on productivity.

Employees' perspective

Our literature review study also looked at the views expressed by potential employees with a disability. Many of these views addressed the issues that have been highlighted in the employers' views section.

With reference to employer concerns about the cost of making workplace adjustments for staff with a physical disability, The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability in Ireland (AHEAD) report on employer attitudes and concerns⁵⁴ highlighted that not all employees with disabilities need workplace accommodations and in many cases there is no additional cost to the employer when it comes to employing a person with a disability. The report also highlighted that in cases where accommodations are required, they are normally inexpensive (e.g. task lighting, screen magnifiers etc). The report also advised that grants can be provided to private sector employers for assistance with more expensive accommodations. These grants cover adaptations to the workplace such as wheelchair ramps or accessible toilets and the provision of

⁵⁰ Goldstone, C. and Meager, N. March 2002, *Barriers to employment for disabled people*. DWP

⁵¹ Goldstone, C. and Meager, N. March 2002, *Barriers to employment for disabled people*. DWP

⁵² Roberts et al. (January 2004) *Disability in the workplace: Employers' and service providers' responses to the Disability Discrimination Act in 2003 and preparation for 2004 changes*, DWP

⁵³ Goldstone, C. and Meager, N. March 2002, *Barriers to employment for disabled people*. DWP

⁵⁴ AHEAD, The Inclusive Education Information Centre (IEIC) - *Employer attitudes and concerns*

specialised equipment to facilitate a person with a disability in their work, such as enhanced computer monitors.

The report stated that employees with disabilities choose to develop their career in a similar way to their able bodied counterparts and added that working with a person with a disability is no different than working with an able bodied employee.

The report entitled 'How disabled people manage in the workplace', prepared by Breakthrough UK Ltd in 2002⁵⁵ looked at the support needs and techniques of disabled workers. The report highlighted that the work context and culture, length of time in the workplace and the presence of other disabled workers were all important factors in deciding on how to make the most of work. Disabled workers used a very wide range of gradual and non-predictable support. This makes such support difficult to formalise or reproduce. Much support was the result of unwritten 'custom and practice' which sat between formal and informal support.

In addition, workers with a physical disability who participated in the Breakthrough UK Ltd report also emphasised the need to adopt a gradual but planned strategy. They saw it as important not to be too precipitate in asking for workplace changes but to build up workplace relations before asking. This helped them understand employment environments, management styles, personnel changes, corporate priorities and impairment changes.

3.2.4 Visual and sensory impairments

Facts

A visually impaired person is defined broadly as a person who is either blind, has an impairment of vision function which cannot be improved by the use of corrective lenses, to a level that would normally be acceptable for reading without a special level or kind of light, or who is unable through physical disability to hold or manipulate a book or who is unable through physical disability to focus or move his eyes to the extent that would normally be acceptable for reading.⁵⁶

Figures published by the RNIB in their report entitled *Beyond the stereotypes: blind and partially sighted people and work* suggest that there are approximately 140,000 blind or partially sighted people of working age in the UK, although just 37,800 (27%) of these people are currently in employment.⁵⁷ This figure has not changed significantly since similar research was published by the RNIB in 1991, when 25% of blind and partially sighted people were in paid employment. There are 7,588 registered blind or partially sighted people of working age in Scotland (Registered Blind and Partially Sighted Persons, Scotland 2004). Using the figures provided by the RNIB as a baseline, we can estimate that around 1,900 registered blind or partially sighted people are in work. The remaining 75 per cent, an estimated 5,700 people, are therefore of working age but not in employment.

Employers' perspective

Our study found that the substantial majority of employers (92%) see blind or partially sighted people as being either difficult or impossible to employ.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Breakthrough UK Ltd, *How disabled people manage in the workplace* (2003) Online. Accessed 13/10/06. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/793.asp>

⁵⁶ http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_cvipsact2002.hcsp RNIB and Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002

⁵⁷ Baker, M and Simkiss, P. 2004. *Beyond the stereotypes: blind and partially sighted people and work*. RNIB

⁵⁸ Baker, M and Simkiss, P. 2004. *Beyond the stereotypes: blind and partially sighted people and work*. RNIB

In addition to this, the RNIB Campaign Report, *Beyond the stereotypes: Blind and partially sighted people and work*, found that:

- interventions designed to assist disabled people into work are generally not supporting blind and partially sighted people;
- employers do not take account of the needs of blind and partially sighted people in the recruitment process, with advertisements, application forms and interviews often proving difficult or impossible to read;
- seventy four per cent of employers remain unaware of one of the most effective interventions that can help blind and partially sighted people in work - the Access to Work scheme; and
- employers remain unaware of many aspects of the Disability Discrimination Act as it relates to employment, with only 3% of small employers being aware of the extension of the Act to cover their businesses in October 2004.

In response to these findings the report suggested that employers needed to improve the way in which they communicate with blind and partially sighted people and encourage existing staff to become more aware of the issues and difficulties faced by blind and partially sighted people. The report highlighted three key areas of consideration, employers should:

- make their recruitment procedures more accessible to blind and partially sighted people and take account of people's needs at all stages of the recruitment and selection processes;
- guarantee an interview to any blind or partially sighted person who meets the minimum criteria for a job; and
- ensure that all their staff receive extensive awareness training about the abilities and needs of blind and partially sighted people.

Employers tend to know little about the current or future requirements of DDA legislation, and generally have little detailed knowledge about the support and incentives that were available to them in employing a person with a sensory impairment⁵⁹. The report also noted that employers often raise issues of insurance and health and safety as concerns in considering employing a disabled person, alongside fears about extra costs and time incurred in training.

It was interesting to note from the report that once an employer had experience of employing someone who was deaf or blind and partially sighted, and understood the support they and the employee could access, they were often willing to take on further staff with such impairments. This could be particularly helpful to deaf workers who could feel isolated at work because of difficulties in communicating with their colleagues. It was felt that employers could 'feel good' about successful job placements and came to recognise the benefits that could accrue in terms of reliable employees and specific skills.

Employees' perspective

Our literature review also looked at the key issues that were identified by blind and partially sighted people in terms of blocking their path to employment and identified ways in which these barriers could be overcome. The Employer Research report prepared by the Department of Work and Pensions highlighted that many blind and partially sighted people feel that their needs are not taken into account during the recruitment process. Examples given included advertisements and application forms that are difficult or impossible to read because they are not produced in alternative formats.

⁵⁹ Ali, N. Atkins, K. Craig, G. Dadze-Arthur, A. Elliot, C and Edwards, A. 2006. *Examining the inclusion of people with sensory impairments from black and ethnic minority groups in the labour market*, RNIB

The RNIB report, *Examining the inclusion of people with sensory impairments from black and ethnic minority groups in the labour market* noted that the fact that local Job Centre Plus offices now have Disability Employment Advisers had broadly been welcome by blind and partially sighted people. However, the RNIB Campaign Report entitled *Beyond the stereotypes: Blind and partially sighted people and work* suggested that progress still needs to be made with regard to the specialist knowledge that Disability Employment Advisers have about specific conditions and disability issues:

“The increasing distance between DEAs and their clients, as well as the lessening of specialist knowledge of particular impairments, can impact significantly upon blind and partially sighted people. Three quarters (77 per cent) of the blind and partially sighted people interviewed in Bruce and Baker (2003) said that they had received no help in searching for jobs, even though 60 per cent said that they would like to work if they were encouraged to do so.”

In addition it was suggested that some Disability Employment Advisers seem to be more interested in what sensory impaired clients cannot do, rather than what they can do.

It was noted in the RNIB report, *Examining the inclusion of people with sensory impairments from black and ethnic minority groups in the labour market*, that some projects that work with blind or partially sighted people provided disability awareness sessions for the local business community and advised on good practice and the supports available. It was recognised that it was just as important to work with local small community businesses as with larger employers as, for example someone from a minority community could, for instance, find their first job in a corner shop. It was noted that statutory agencies were not necessarily better informed or more willing to take on disabled staff because some local government departments and NHS websites are incompatible with IT software for blind and partially sighted people.

3.2.5 Ex-offenders

Facts

The term ex-offenders is used to describe someone with a criminal record. The commonest 'official' definition of ex-offender is someone who has left prison in the past 2 years as a standard re-offending measure. However, the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables criminal convictions to become 'spent' or ignored after a 'rehabilitation period'. After this period, with certain exemptions, an ex-offender is not normally obliged to mention their conviction when applying for a job, obtaining insurance or when involved in criminal or civil proceedings. The Act is likely to help people with minor convictions as further convictions increase the rehabilitation period.⁶⁰

According to CIPD research more than five million people in the UK have convictions for crimes that could have involved imprisonment. It is estimated that this represents approximately 20% of the working population. The CIPD also found Home Office statistics that show an ex-offender's chances of re-offending are cut by around two thirds if they find settled employment or training. It is also estimated that it is eight times harder for a person with a criminal record to gain employment than someone without.⁶¹

⁶⁰ NACRO 2003, *Recruiting ex-offenders: the employers' perspective*

⁶¹ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Feb. 2001, *Quick Facts, Employing people with criminal records*

Employers' perspective

In terms of employers' views of employing ex-offenders an illuminating piece of literature has been produced by the CIPD, *Employer attitudes towards ex-offenders, 2002*. They undertook a survey of 510 HR professionals and asked them key questions on their attitudes towards the recruitment and employment of people with criminal convictions. Key findings are summarised below.

"40% stated that they would always consider an application from an individual with a criminal record, however, only 28% have any experience of employing people with a criminal record. The nature of the conviction is a key factor for 31% in making a decision relating to the recruitment of ex-offenders.

Of those who have employed ex-offenders, two thirds state that it has been a positive experience, while only 6% say that it was a negative one.

Of the 144 HR professionals who have employed ex-offenders, eight report cases of re-offending.

Two out of three companies ask potential employees whether they have a criminal record during the recruitment process.

Experiences of HR managers who have employed ex-offenders have generally been positive. Where the experience has been negative, the main cause of the problem relates to the attitudes and concerns of other employees and customers.

While almost three fifths (57%) of equality/diversity policies cover the recruitment of employees with criminal convictions, this rose to almost three quarters (73%) of policies in the public sector.

Companies in manufacturing or production were least likely to specifically address the employment of ex-offenders in their equality policies (35%)."

Another issue which arose with regard to ex-offenders was the disclosure of information regarding previous offences. In the report conducted for the Scottish Executive⁶², it was made clear that whilst disclosure was important and vital in many senses, it could also deter individuals from applying for a position, whether employment or voluntary positions.

3.2.6 Learning disabilities

The definition of the term 'learning disability' can be defined as a significant, lifelong condition that started before adulthood, affects people's development, and means that they need help to understand information, learn skills and cope independently.⁶³

The Labour Force Survey shows that less than 32% of those people with learning disabilities are employed⁶⁴. Employers' perceptions are that they could work well in repetitive and manual tasks but that they are not able to deal with more complex tasks. Those with learning difficulties can lack confidence which may well reduce their opportunity of employment during the application process.

⁶² Granville, S and Mulholland, S. 2006 '*Protecting vulnerable groups: Scottish Vetting and Barring Scheme, Analysis of the consultation*' Scottish Executive Social Research.

⁶³ Ridley, J and Hunter, S. June 2005 '*Go for it!! Supporting people with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorder in employment*' Scottish Executive.

⁶⁴ The Labour Force Survey,

A study completed by the Scottish Executive⁶⁵ which was aimed at mapping the nature and availability of employment support for people with learning disabilities and/or ASD (autistic spectrum disorder) in Scotland, covered different aspects of supported employment. Throughout the research 'supported employment' was defined as real work for 16 hours or more in an integrated setting with ongoing support. Those interviewed for this research who were receiving supported employment were highly satisfied with the service they received and reported positive outcomes, such as improved self confidence, self-esteem, an increase in income and improved quality of life. However, the research highlighted that 'supported employment' was rare and the Scotland wide questionnaire survey found 3,024 people with learning disabilities and/or ASD being supported by 69 separate providers in jobs (both paid and unpaid).

From an employers' perspective, deciding to employ someone with a learning disability or ASD (autistic spectrum disorder) was influenced by issues such as labour shortages, difficulties with filling posts and the professionalism of the 'supported employment' service.

Employers' anxieties about staff reaction and individuals' ability to cope were largely unfounded, other employees were more tolerant, accepting and supportive than expected according to research conducted by the Scottish Executive.⁶⁶

3.2.7 Black and minority ethnic groups

Facts

The 2001 Census showed that the black and minority ethnic population comprised 7.9% of the total UK population and made up 2% of the population of Scotland, with 101,677 individuals in Scotland being from a minority ethnic background. Sixty percent of those from a minority ethnic background lived in Scotland's four largest cities, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee.⁶⁷ In Glasgow 5.4% of the population were ethnic minorities representing just over 31,000 people.⁶⁸ Glasgow ethnic minorities represented around 31% of the Scottish total. Within Glasgow the concentration of the ethnic minority population varied greatly from location to location.

The employment rates for black and minority ethnic people were lower than for white people: 73% of non-white males were in employment compared to 77% of white males, yet only 43% of minority ethnic women were in employment compared to 72% of white women, albeit that this may be due to cultural factors. Unemployment rates were also considerably higher for the non-white population – groups experiencing the highest rates of unemployment were the Africans (15%), Black Scottish (15%) and other South Asians (14%), in comparison to an unemployment rate of 7% for the White Scottish population.⁶⁹

There are multiple barriers to effective labour market participation for black and minority ethnic groups, as highlighted by the TERU report. Some examples given were that for recent migrants some of their skills and qualifications from other countries are often not recognised in the UK, and there are language barriers and constraints on asylum seekers working. Other perceived individual barriers highlighted throughout the report suggested that there could be family pressures not to register as unemployed (especially for young Asian women) and individuals from the BME community were also less likely to use statutory agencies such as Careers

⁶⁵ Ridley, J and Hunter, S. June 2005 'Go for it!! Supporting people with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorder in employment' Scottish Executive.

⁶⁶ Ridley, J and Hunter, S. June 2005 'Go for it!! Supporting people with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorder in employment' Scottish Executive.

⁶⁷ Mooney, G and Scott, G, *Exploring social policy in 'new' Scotland*, p138, 2005

⁶⁸ ONS, 2001

⁶⁹ <http://www.onescotland.com>

Scotland, which may mean they are less likely to access training provision e.g. Skillseekers. There is also the issue of institutional barriers such as racism, which was perceived to be acute, especially in certain occupations, such as the police and teaching profession.⁷⁰

Figures published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation⁷¹ refer to lone parents of Caribbean or African descent facing a lower risk of non-employment (55%) than would have been predicted on the basis of their family structure and ethnic group (68%). Older Pakistanis and Bangladeshis with low qualifications and skills have an even higher risk of non-employment (82%).

Employers' perspective

The TERU report also highlights employers' attitudes towards recruiting people from black and minority ethnic groups. Employers are concerned that they are not doing enough to engage the potential BME workers. Equal opportunities policies are in place including in many of the private sector labour market companies in Scotland and although, for the most part they include race issues, responses on the impact of their policy upon workplace practices were 'less encouraging'. Sixty one per cent of those with an equality opportunity policy stated that their policy consisted of nothing more than a written statement, or in some cases, an unwritten statement about equality.⁷²

It was stated that although the issue of employment is seen as one of the most critical factors which define the experiences of BME communities, the data available for Scotland on employment issues were described as '*limited and fragmented*'

Wrench and Modood (2001)⁷³ also conducted a study of the effectiveness of employment equality policies and their results suggested that institutional racism has a significant impact on the experiences of minority ethnic individuals looking to enter the labour market. These included examples of recruitment agencies that will not suggest a BME candidate to their clients because they anticipate their rejection – something which further reinforces the exclusion of ethnic minority groups from the labour market.

In the Scott and Sillars research, only three of the employers surveyed employed anyone from a BME background and two employers had one BME employee, and one employer had two employees from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. This might be in part due to the lack of minority ethnic groups in the area. Two employers surveyed expressed an unwillingness to employ an individual from a BME group, one due to 'bad previous experience' and the other was unwilling to explain their reason. However, overall, employers in this research could see no reason why they would not employ members of an ethnic minority.⁷⁴

Employees' perspective

The TERU report again highlighted a range of issues and personal barriers that those from BME backgrounds face when looking to gain employment. These included a lack

⁷⁰ McGregor, A and Sutherland, V. February 2003 '*Developing a strategic approach to employment issues for Glasgow's black and minority ethnic communities*' TERU, The University of Glasgow.

⁷¹ Berthoud, R. March 2003 '*Multiple disadvantage in employment – a quantitative analysis*' Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

⁷² '*Audit of research on minority ethnic issues in Scotland from a 'race' perspective*', 2000, Scottish Executive.

⁷³ Wrench, J and Modood, T, 2000 '*The effectiveness of employment equality policies in relation to immigrants and ethnic minorities*' International Labour Office.

⁷⁴ Scott G. and Sillars K. (2003) '*Employers' Attitudes to hard-to-employ Groups*'. Report prepared for Westworking Partnership. Scottish Poverty Information Unit, School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University.

of confidence, facing institutional racism, language barriers, the role of the family business, lack of IT skills and, for some, being discouraged from entering apprenticeships because parental attitudes do not give these parity of esteem with college and university education.

It was suggested that those from minority ethnic groups may also not want to work in jobs where there are very few or no other minority ethnic workers. It is also argued that for some minority ethnic individuals, working in a BME business, especially a family business, can sometimes offer better wages and conditions than working elsewhere.⁷⁵

The report by Wrench and Modood⁷⁶ also highlights the awareness amongst ethnic minorities of potential discrimination which influences their attitudes to the labour market.

The attitudes and assumptions of employers were seen as a major barrier to employment for those with a visual impairment. Some reports did include details of blind or partially sighted people who had enjoyed positive experiences with employers but these were largely portrayed as the exception. It was recognised that employers were only reflecting the prejudices and ignorance of society in general about what disabled people could achieve in the workplace, and that this was compounded by extra discrimination against those from ethnic minority groups.⁷⁷

3.2.8 Lone parents

Facts

The term lone parent is used in the 2001 Census to describe a father or mother with his or her child(ren) where the parent does not have a spouse or partner in the household and the child(ren) do not have a spouse, partner or child in the household. The term also includes a lone grandparent with his or her grandchild(ren) where there are no children of the intervening generation in the household.⁷⁸

Figures from the 2001 Census show that there are 15,1452 lone parent households with dependent children in Scotland, the figure for Glasgow City is 27,923. Fifty seven per cent of lone parent households in Scotland contain no working adults and in Glasgow lone parents form 40.1% of all families with children.⁷⁹

Most lone parents are women (92%) and around half (51%) of lone parents on Income Support have no academic or technical qualifications, a fifth are qualified up to NVQ level 2, and about 8% have qualifications of A-Level (5%) or degree standard (3%). The majority of lone parents (77%) say they would like to work at some point and most (82%) have had some work experience although it is likely to have been in a low skill, low paid job.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ McGregor, A and Sutherland, V. February 2003 *Developing a strategic approach to employment issues for Glasgow's black and minority ethnic communities*, TERU, University of Glasgow.

⁷⁶ Wrench, J and Modood, T, 2000 *The effectiveness of employment equality policies in relation to immigrants and ethnic minorities* International Labour Office.

⁷⁷ Ali, N, Atkin, K, Craig, G, Dadze-Arthur, A, Elliot, C and Edwards, A. 2006, *Examining the inclusion of people with sensory impairments from black and ethnic minority groups in the labour market*, RNIB

⁷⁸ 2001 Census Scotland, General Register Office for Scotland

⁷⁹ *'Our right to be heard – lone parents in Scotland speak out'*, One Plus, 2004

⁸⁰ Verwaayan, B. April 2003 *'Work Works'*, National Employment Panel.

The government has set an ambitious objective of raising the proportion of lone parents in work to 70% by 2010.⁸¹ The support provided by the Government has improved with the introduction of Child Tax Credits and benefits like the Jobseekers Grant, extended payments of housing benefit and council tax benefit to ease lone parents back into employment with financial assistance for the interim period when first starting work.

There are a range of barriers which affect lone parents' chances of employment, the main barrier being childcare issues, as well as the financial implications of leaving benefits to start work.⁸² Lack of affordable, high quality childcare is one of the main reasons for a higher unemployment rate within the lone parent group.⁸³

Employers' perspective

Employers' views on recruiting lone parents are varied. As demonstrated throughout the research about employers' attitudes towards recruiting hard to employ groups (looking specifically at the Drumchapel area in Glasgow), 97% said they would employ single parents. Any reticence demonstrated by employers in this study centred on lone parents' ability to find childcare. In the same study, when asked about whether they employed lone parents, 49% responded that they didn't employ anybody they knew to be a single parent. Yet Drumchapel as an area has a high proportion of lone parents with low skill levels and lower than average employment rates. Although the vast majority of employers in this study suggested that they would employ lone parents, these are a group who have difficulties gaining employment in the Drumchapel area. However, no employer admitted to having an issue with employing lone parents in the study nor did they raise any issues about employing lone parents.⁸⁴

Research conducted by Lewis et al, 2000, raised issues and concerns by employers about family responsibilities in general and those being pertinent to lone parents. Employers were specifically concerned about limited flexibility in attendance of hours on the part of a lone parent, the need for higher than average time off work and constrained and unpredictable unavailability for work.⁸⁵

Further research carried out by the National Centre for Social Research for the Scottish Executive⁸⁶ discussed employers' attitudes towards recruiting lone parents. The perceptions held were wide ranging, some employers felt that employing lone parents would present no problems, whilst other employers demonstrated that there were various challenges involved in employing lone parents, such as not having the same level of commitment to the job as other groups, limited availability, flexible working practices required and childcare issues.

⁸¹ Scott G. and Sillars K. 2003 *Employers' Attitudes to hard-to-employ Groups*. Report prepared for Westworking Partnership. Scottish Poverty Information Unit, School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University.

⁸² Scott G. and Sillars K. 2003 *Employers' Attitudes to hard-to-employ Groups*. Report prepared for Westworking Partnership. Scottish Poverty Information Unit, School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University.

⁸³ <http://www.opfs.org.uk/factfile/stats01.html>

⁸⁴ Scott G. and Sillars K. 2003 *Employers' Attitudes to hard-to-employ Groups*. Report prepared for Westworking Partnership. Scottish Poverty Information Unit, School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University.

⁸⁵ Atkinson, J and Williams, M. 2003 *Employer' perspectives on the recruitment, retention and advancement of low pay, low status employees*. Policy Hub.

⁸⁶ Lewis, J, Mitchell, L, Woodland, S, 2000 'Employers, lone parents and the work-life balance', New Deal for Lone Parents.

Employees' perspective

Despite the fact that the current top ten jobs for lone parents include low skill/low pay occupations such as cleaners and domestics, catering and general office assistants, check out operatives and carers, research suggests that many lone parents are keen to look beyond immediate low-paid, low skill job openings to longer-term career goals and higher skilled, better paid work.⁸⁷

The higher rate of unemployment amongst lone parents can be in part attributed to educational level and work experience. New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) research indicates that 51% of lone parents on Income Support have no academic or technical qualifications and 18% have no work experience, almost 10% of lone parents on NDLP report some basic skill problems.⁸⁸

The key barriers faced by lone parents are as stated above, the low levels of skill, experience and self confidence and perceived high entry and transitional costs to employment. There is also the important and overriding issue of an unmet demand for affordable quality childcare. There is an issue of misconceptions about the loss of benefits and financial implication of securing adequate income to meet the costs of dependents, childcare, housing, travel and debt.

3.2.10 Sector and industry

Public/voluntary sector

Public and voluntary sector employers are more likely to see the benefit of employing a disabled person compared to the private sector (59% compared to 35%)⁸⁹. They are more likely to make workplace adjustments and encourage applications from disabled people⁹⁰. Public sector managers are also more likely to be aware of the Disability Discrimination Act than their private sector counterparts⁹¹.

The NHS is highlighted as a Glasgow public sector employer with the potential to employ those furthest from the labour market.⁹²

“The NHS expects to grow significantly in the next few years. Moreover, they have experience of working with the partners around the welfare to work agenda and appear willing to do more. There are a number of openings at and above entry level, and one option may be an internal upskilling programme with entry level jobs becoming available as people move up the career ladder. It may also be possible to provide entry straight into these higher level jobs, if suitably qualified candidates can be found.”

Private sector

Despite the fact that more public and voluntary sector organisations are likely to employ those groups that are far from the labour market, the Scottish Executive's moving on update report highlights that there are employers who are aware of social responsibility. They cite larger private sector businesses such as Marks and Spencers, Scottish Gas and Standard Life as having:

⁸⁷ Verwaayan, B, 2003, 'Work Works', National Employment Panel.

⁸⁸ Verwaayan, B, 2003. 'Work Works', National Employment Panel.

⁸⁹ Dewson et al. 2005. *New Deal for Disabled People: survey of employers, Research report 301*, DWP.

⁹⁰ Dewson et al. 2005. *New Deal for Disabled People: survey of employers, Research report 301*, DWP.

⁹¹ Goldstone, C and Meager, N, 2002; *Barriers to employment for disabled people*. DWP

⁹² Future Jobs and Skills in Glasgow (2005-2010), SE Glasgow 2005

*“... a focus on community support for a period of years”.*⁹³

This tends to reflect on the individual company's approach to corporate social responsibility which varies from organisation to organisation.

The Scottish Executive also cites the survey undertaken by Scott and Sillars (2003) which reported that:

*“... a significant number of employers said that if the right conditions could be met then they will consider employing individuals from disadvantaged groups including recovering drug users.”*⁹⁴

The DWP⁹⁵ report suggests that the smaller the company, the more negative views they hold towards employing disabled people. SMEs are:

- *less likely to have made physical adjustments for past or present disabled employees;*
- *slightly less likely to agree that it is reasonable for business to bear the costs of reasonable adjustments;*
- *slightly less likely to believe that there are benefits to employing disabled people.*

The report goes on to state the constraints that SMEs work under so as to perhaps understand why they are less likely to employ or support disabled people in their workplace. The report highlights that SMEs:

- *are less able to move an employee who becomes disabled to another part of the organisation;*
- *cannot draw upon internal sources of support e.g. HR, occupational health, for advice - something which larger companies can do;*
- *feel that regulations and legislation falls disproportionately on them;*
- *do have low awareness of Access to Work and a poorer understanding of the DDA.*

⁹³ Effective Interventions Unit, 2003 *Moving on update: education, training and employment for recovering drug users*. Scottish Executive

⁹⁴ Scott G. and Sillars K. 2003 *Employers' Attitudes to hard-to-employ Groups*. Report prepared for Westworking Partnership. Scottish Poverty Information Unit, School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University.

⁹⁵ DWP, 2006

4 Conclusions

This report summarises the key perspectives of over 60 reports, the majority of them underpinned by more expansive primary research. From the review of literature we have attempted to produce a general hierarchy of employability among the groups we have focused on. This is based on both their employment rate and how willing employers are to employ them. An important caveat to this hierarchy is that these figures are from different sources, with differing methodologies and undertaken at different time periods. This is therefore merely a 'feel' for how employers rank various employability groups. It is also important to consider that there are genuine reasons why people from these groups will either not apply for employment or are not suitable for employment.

Disability / issue	In employment	Employers state they would hire	Number in Scotland
Lone parents	47.5% ⁹⁶	97% ⁹⁷	15,1452
Black and minority ethnic	46%	90% plus	101,677
Learning difficulties	25% – 32%	89% easy or difficult (but not impossible) to employ	18,066 ⁹⁸
Difficulty in hearing	62%	86% easy or difficult (but not impossible) to employ ⁹⁹	8,945,000 (UK wide figure) RNID
Physical Disability	40% ¹⁰⁰	60%-70% easy or difficult (but not impossible) to employ	Around 1 million people with disability or long term illness in Scotland
Visual impairment	27% ¹⁰¹ -54%	70% easy or difficult (but not impossible) to employ	180,000 (RNIB, 2004)
Ex-Offenders	28% ¹⁰²	40%	5 million in the UK (20% of working age population) ¹⁰³
Mental Health	20%	40% ¹⁰⁴	720,000 adults ¹⁰⁵
Drug Addictions	4% ¹⁰⁶	30% ¹⁰⁷	7,813 heroin users (2003/2004)

Those at the bottom of the hierarchy may well be affected by multi-barriers to employment. In conclusion, it is necessary to refer back to the beginning of section

⁹⁶ 2001 Census Scotland, General Register Office for Scotland

⁹⁷ Scott G. and Sillars K. (2003) *Employers' Attitudes to hard-to-employ Groups*. Report prepared for Westworking Partnership. Scottish Poverty Information Unit, School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University.

⁹⁸ <http://www.scot.gov.uk>

⁹⁹ Roberts et al. (January 2004) Disability in the workplace: Employers' and service providers' responses to the Disability Discrimination Act in 2003 and preparation for 2004 changes, DWP

¹⁰⁰ Disability and Employment in Scotland, Scottish Executive, 2005

¹⁰¹ RNIB, 2006

¹⁰² CIPD, 2002

¹⁰³ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Feb. 2001, *Quick Facts, Employing people with criminal records*

¹⁰⁴ Mental Health Foundation, 2006

¹⁰⁵ Hallam, A. Health Department Analytical Services Division, Scottish Executive

¹⁰⁶ Drug Outcome Research In Scotland, 2004

¹⁰⁷ Scott G. and Sillars K. (2003) *Employers' Attitudes to hard-to-employ Groups*. Report prepared for Westworking Partnership. Scottish Poverty Information Unit, School of Law and Social Sciences, Glasgow Caledonian University.

three and re-emphasise the factors affecting the supply and demand for labour. In the near future demand for entry level jobs is expected to decline while supply could well increase.¹⁰⁸

These findings need to be put into the context of current labour markets, including the dimension of demand for labour and supply of labour. This may well mean that competition for entry level jobs (those most likely to employ people who are at a distance from the labour market) could increase in the future. This could give employers further choice when employing workers and further distance the employability groups from the labour market and consolidate the hierarchy of employability.

It is recognised that the public sector and the voluntary sector are likely to be the most receptive to engaging with those people facing barriers to engagement with the mainstream labour market.

We would highlight the need to raise awareness of the barriers to employability with local employers while emphasising the reality rather than employers' perceptions of the barriers. This may well be best undertaken using a series of case studies.

It may be worthwhile targeting private sector companies known to have corporate social responsibility policies. Such organisations include large retailers such as Marks & Spencers and Tesco, as well as utility companies (who may still have an element of public sector ethos).

The most challenging labour market to consider is probably the private sector SME market. The merit of an HR advisor/support worker to be made available to a cluster of SMEs merits investigation, should this business sector be a target for future endeavour.

¹⁰⁸ SE Glasgow & Glasgow City Council, Future jobs and skills in Glasgow, 2005

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