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# Employer Attitudes Towards Hiring People with Disabilities



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**We would like to thank all the individuals that gave their time to discuss workplace attitudes on employing people with disabilities in order for us to better understand this area.**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

Momenta has undertaken this research project to better understand the current, local attitudes of employers on hiring people with disabilities. Comparing the findings with previous research in this space as well as identifying current gaps and opportunities whilst developing both inter and cross sector relationships locally.

## Method

20 people participated in the research either by in person interviews or an online survey. Respondents came from a variety of business and industry type. Questions explored recruitment, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, disability – personal experience and workplace experience as well as general attitudes on disability in the workplace.

## Findings

- 70% of respondents believed that accessibility was a consideration within their recruitment process. With 90% stating they would be open to learning more about accessibility in recruitment.
- Majority of respondents (83%) were also open to exploring opportunities to co-design employment based and/or training initiatives involving people with disabilities.
- All respondents indicated their workplace values attitude and other soft skills above technical knowledge, when hiring. Many stated that most technical skills can be taught unlike attitude and other desired personal attributes.
- 81% of respondents believed that diversity and inclusion is a focus for their workplace.
- One quarter of respondents personally identified with a disability themselves, with around 75% having a close relationship with one or more people who identify with a disability.
- Over 80% of respondents first thought of a physical disability when picturing someone with a disability.
- Around half of respondents believed there was a mismatch in how employers viewed the 'ideal employee' and a person with a disability.
- Over 80% of respondents indicated they had employees who identified with a range of disabilities.
- Key barriers to employment of people with disabilities were identified as; negative attitudes and perceptions, physical accessibility of workplaces, perceived costs and perceived lower productivity, lack of knowledge and understanding (both of disability and support available) and lack of visible role models.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Over 80% of respondents agreed that there are currently barriers in their own workplaces that would stop people with disabilities being employed.
- Few respondents agreed with the common reasons that previous research has shown why employers don't employ people with disabilities, and did not see these as commonly held views in their workplaces.
- Most employers said they felt their staff would feel completely comfortable working alongside a colleague who had a disability. Although this did depend on the type of disability.
- Suggested approaches to encourage other employers to hire people with disabilities included; education around disability, funding and supports, association with reputable business networks and people of influence, key contact to navigate systems and opportunities to develop well supported and flexible work experience at no cost to the employer.

## Conclusion

Overall the findings present a generally positive outlook from employers about hiring people with disabilities. The findings suggest that a number of employers are willing to engage in order to build greater awareness of accessible recruitment as well as programmes and initiatives they could be involved in with real employment or training opportunities. Respondents largely did not agree with many of the common reasons employers do not employ people with disabilities. However, respondents did believe that common negative attitudes remain within the wider business community.

While these are encouraging findings, there remains a lot of work that can be done in this area to further break down barriers and increase employment opportunities. Given the small sample size and the fact that a large number of businesses that were approached to partake in the research, did not respond, it is possible the findings reflect those who are already more conscious in their hiring, support and understanding of people with disabilities and as such may present findings that are not fully representative of the wider Tauranga business community.

Nevertheless, these findings do provide some insight into employer attitudes in Tauranga and provide a base from where we can explore ways to challenge thinking and increase opportunities. Recommendations from this research include; exploration into a local social media awareness and education campaign, development and trial of work based employment/training programmes, inter and cross sector collaboration with a focus on barriers to employment, establishment of a local disability confident employer network as well as exploring partnerships with business mentors in order to support and promote self-employment.

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# BACKGROUND

One in four New Zealanders identify as having a disability, in the Bay of Plenty that figure is slightly higher at 27% (Statistics NZ Disability Survey, 2013). People with disabilities are three times more likely to be unemployed than their counterparts without a disability. Making up a significant portion of the overall unemployment statistics, leading to greater social and financial inequalities and perceptions.

Despite large amounts of funding and numerous programmes being developed to counteract the high percentage of unemployment among people with disability, there has not been a significant shift in the unemployment statistics in decades. What is becoming largely evident is that in order to create a positive and significant shift in the employment statistics a new approach must be taken, moving from a disability sector push into business, to a complete systems change, developing an employer/business pull.

There is an ever-growing base of evidence highlighting the business benefits of employing people with disability; from better retention rates of employers, higher job performance and increased profit margins among businesses who actively seek to employ people with disabilities (Accenture, 2018; Maxim Institute, 2019).

Despite the evidence, unemployment rates remain high, as such a greater understanding of business/employers attitudes and perceptions is needed in order to work across the sectors to make mutually beneficial positive change.

In 2012, Ministry of Social Development commissioned Point Research Limited to conduct research into employers' attitudes towards employing disabled people. The following research aims to build on the Point Research findings; with a specific focus on Tauranga employers in order to understand current, local attitudes and perceptions, as well as identifying gaps and opportunities whilst developing cross sector relationships.

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# METHOD

Using the 2012 Point Research as a guide, two questionnaires were constructed to further explore employer attitudes towards hiring people with disabilities, one in an online format the other for in person interviews. Both questionnaires were broken down to subset questions focusing on recruitment, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, disability – personal experience and workplace experience as well as general attitudes on disability in the workplace. This method allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data to be gathered, which is reflected in the findings.

The research was promoted and participants sought through two of the largest business networks in Tauranga; Priority One and Tauranga Chamber of Commerce. A brief explanation of the project as well as a link to the online survey and contact details was provided through member mailouts. 1084 people opened the Tauranga Chamber of Commerce email, with three people opening the link to the survey. While the Priority One email was opened by 246 people with 21 people clicking on the survey link. Despite the email and link reaching a large number of people the response rate was extremely low. One person completed the online survey and two people contacted the researcher for more information with one subsequent in person interview being conducted.

This may demonstrate the business community's general appetite to engage in research on employment of disabilities.

Other participants were reached through personal and professional connections through the Momenta team. 20 people participated in the research; 12 in person interview questionnaires, four online survey responses and an additional four people engaged in a shorter interview due to time restraints.

Participants held a variety of roles from owner, director of business, People and Culture (Human Resources) leads, members of the executive team and general management. The type of businesses ranged from large regionally based employers to smaller organisations with paid and volunteer staff. Industries included health care, recruitment, local government, early education, hospitality, IT, digital media & marketing, forest management, health and wellness and not-for profit.

It is noted that not all participants answered all the questions and as such the total (or percentage of) responses may not always reflect the total number of respondents.

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# FINDINGS

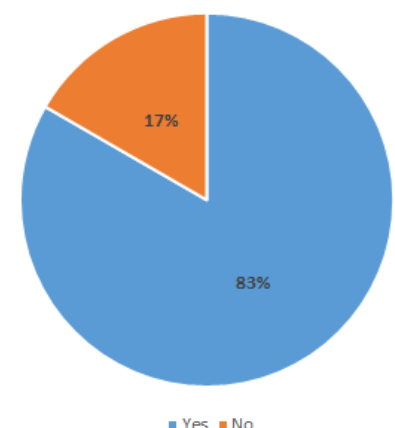
## RECRUITMENT

All of the participants indicated they were involved in the recruitment of staff to some degree.

Over 60% of respondents indicated that they currently use traditional methods to recruit. This includes online advertisements, mostly through TradeMe, Seek and industry relevant publications, followed by a process of shortlisting based on curriculum vitae and applications, and in person interviews. Few respondents indicated that their preferred method is word of mouth or referral and can be more flexible in their recruitment to fit the current needs of the organisations as well as team fit.

The majority of respondents were content with their current recruitment process although were open to external support regarding disability and accessibility. Around 70% believed that accessibility was a consideration within their recruitment process. With 90% noting they would be open to learning more about accessibility in recruitment. Two respondents from larger organisations noted they were currently reviewing their recruitment process to make this more accessible and inclusive.

Majority of respondents (83%) were also open to exploring opportunities to co-design employment based and/or training initiatives involving people with disabilities. All respondents indicated they value attitude and other soft skills above technical knowledge, when hiring. Many stating that most technical skills can be taught unlike attitude and other desired personal attributes.



This presents great opportunities to work with businesses around their recruitment process, educating business on accessibility in recruitment which will open up vacancies to a more diverse and inclusive group of applicants. That being said, there remains barriers until businesses proactively make these changes or are more conscious regarding their recruitment process and candidate selection.

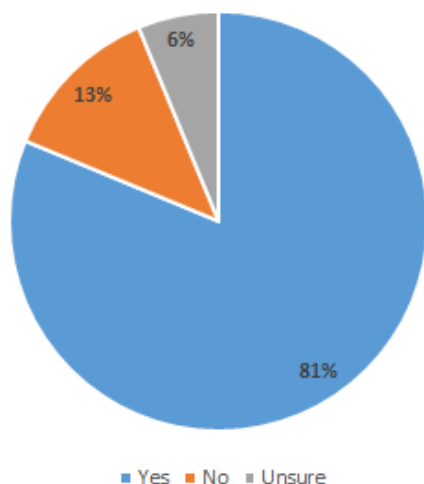
While there was a positive openness to explore work experience type initiatives, there is a need to consider the role type, the current capacity of staff to assist with training and the cost – both to the employer and the trainee. The researcher believes to have sustainable outcomes, such programmes need to be co-designed with business but also be funded externally to be attractive to business. It is also important that the availability of actual employment following work experience is largely viable.

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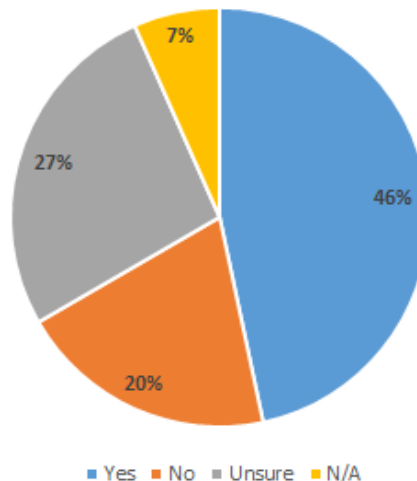
# FINDINGS

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Is diversity and inclusion a focus for your workplace



Are you aware of any diversity and inclusion initiatives/policies that focus specifically on disability



- 81% of respondents believed that diversity and inclusion is a focus for their workplace.
- 46% noted they were aware of diversity and inclusion initiatives and/or policies in their workplace that focus specifically on disability. This included discrimination policies, being an Equal Opportunity Employer, organisational unconscious bias training, and relationships with supported employment organisations.

Overall there seems to be a desire and awareness on diversity and inclusion in the workplace. However, in some cases it was thought these are, 'nice to have' statements/policies that don't necessarily indicate realities within the workplace. Some respondents were actively doing a lot in this space, in terms of staff engagement, physical accessibility and unconscious bias training. But for many other workplaces it was not a conscious business focus.

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# FINDINGS

## EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY

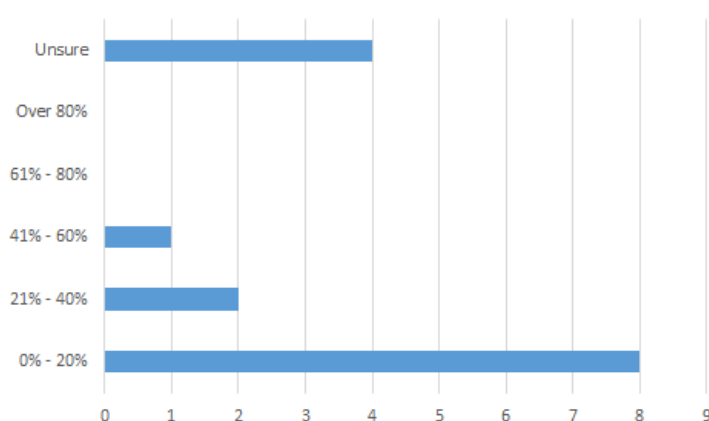
One quarter of respondents personally identified with a disability themselves with 75% having a close relationship with one or more people who identify with a disability. The type of disability varied, with reference to physical, cognitive, neuro-diverse and mental health related disabilities.

When asked their first thoughts when picturing a person with a disability, over 80% of respondents noted a degree of physical disability where mobility was effected and required some type of aid/equipment to assist. Other respondents noted disabilities similar to those of loved ones or people they worked closely with.

Around half of respondents believed there was a mismatch in how employers viewed the 'ideal employee' and a person with a disability. Of those that did think there was a mismatch, the majority acknowledged this was more in the general assumptions/stereotypes of people with disability not necessarily the reality.

Over 80% of respondents indicated they had employees who identified with a range of disabilities, others highlighted they were unsure of numbers as this information was not captured but imagined there would be a number of people with both visible and hidden disabilities.

When asked approximately the number of people in the workforce who had a disability;



- Half of respondents indicated they had less than 20% of their workforce with a disability.
- Around 20% indicated between 21% and 80% of their workforce identified with a disability.
- Zero respondents indicated they had over 61% of their workforce who identified with a disability.
- One quarter were unsure what the number of employees with a disability would be.

Of those that were aware of staff with disabilities, the type of disabilities within the workforce of respondents varied from physical, learning, and mental health.

90% of respondents thought that the low unemployment of people with disabilities was an important or extremely important issue.

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# FINDINGS

## BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

When asked about the key barriers to employment of people with disabilities generally in New Zealand workplaces, respondents identified;

- Negative attitudes of employers and perspectives of what disability is. Often reflecting a 'lesser ability'.
- Physical accessibility of workplaces and private homes (which impacts service delivery roles).
- Perceived costs and perceived lower productivity.
- Lack of knowledge and understanding both of what disability is and what supports are available.
- Lack of visible role models.

Over 80% of respondents agreed that there are currently barriers in their own workplaces that would stop people with disabilities being employed. Key barriers included;

- Physical access as well as physical component of the work.
- Communication barrier when working with clients.
- Faced-paced nature of work or inability to perform certain tasks.
- Unconscious bias and current recruitment process.
- Varying levels of understanding and consideration across the organisation.

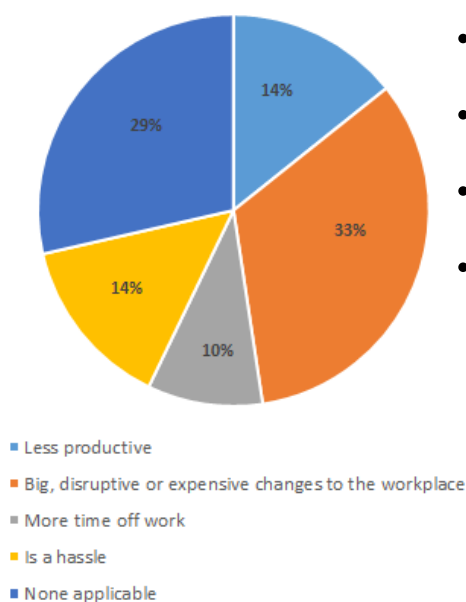
Despite barriers being identified, the majority of respondents agreed that there are work-arounds to the above and would be open to learning more about this and/or trialing new approaches. Respondents believed that education and awareness building of ways around some of these barriers in their own workplaces would be beneficial.

# FINDINGS

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

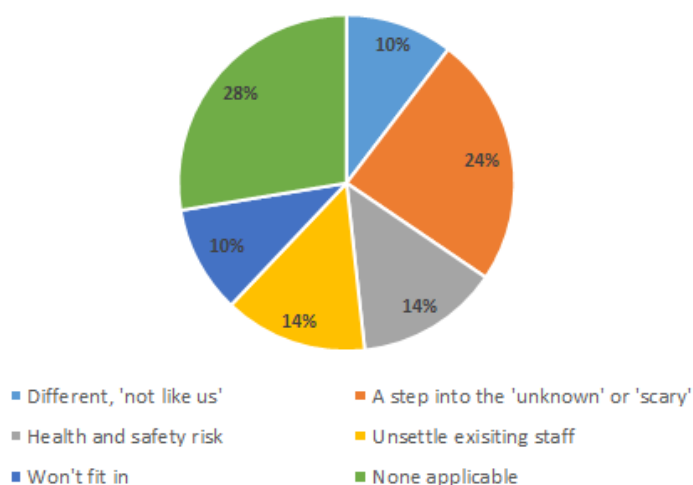
Respondents were asked about common reasons research shows that employers don't employ people with disabilities and asked how these related to their own workplaces.

While 33% of respondents agreed with the statement that employing people with disabilities can require big, disruptive or expensive changes to the workplace and that employing people with disabilities is a step into the 'unknown' or 'scary' (24% agreed). Other common reasons for not employing people with disabilities were not as strongly agreed with by respondents. Reasons included;



- People with disabilities are less productive (14% agreed).
- People with disabilities take more time off work (10% agreed).
- Employing people with disabilities is a hassle (14% agreed).
- 29% of respondents felt that none of the above statements were beliefs held by their workplace.

- People with disabilities are different, 'not like us' (10% agreed).
- People with disabilities won't fit in (10% agreed).
- People with disabilities are a health and safety risk (14% agreed).
- Hiring people with disabilities will unsettle existing staff (14%).
- 28% of respondents felt that none of the above statements were beliefs held by their workplace.

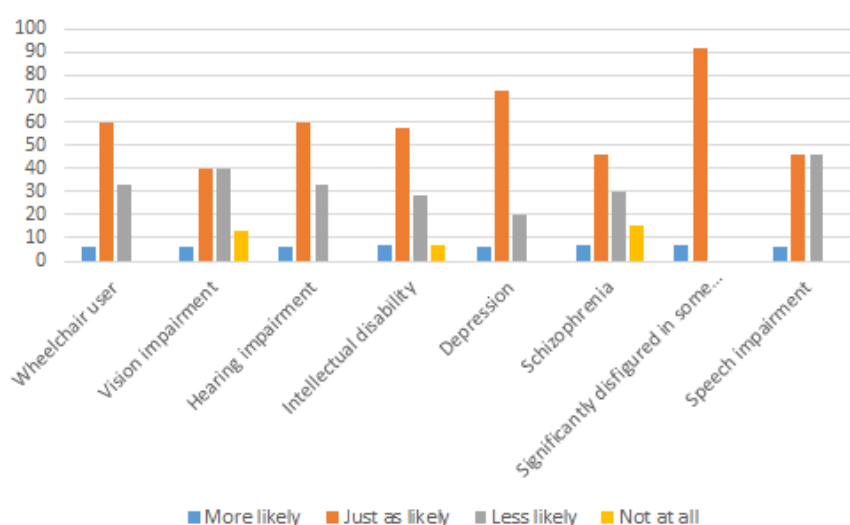


This may indicate a positive change in some attitudes since the Point Research project was conducted in 2012. Further comparisons with that research is provided later in the report.

# FINDINGS

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Respondents were asked if there was a vacancy in their organisation, and a person with a disability with the right skills and qualifications applied, how likely the organisation would be to hire that person. This question further broke down different types of disability to explore if there is a perceived hierarchy of disability types among employers.



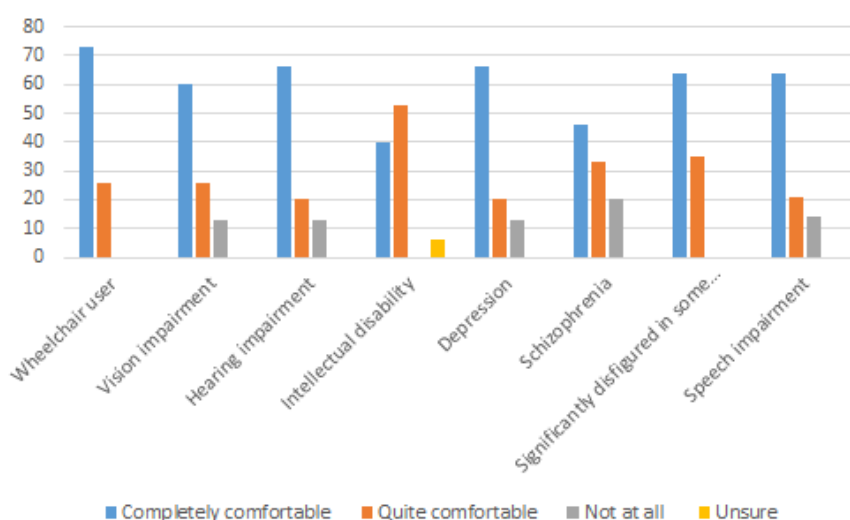
Results found that most employers would be just as likely to employ a person with a disability if they were significantly disfigured in some way (92%), had a mental illness, such as depression (73%), had a moderate to high hearing impairment (60%) or were a wheelchair user (60%).

Fewer employers indicated their workplace would be just as likely to employ a person with a disability if they had a moderate intellectual disability (57%), had a moderate to high speech impairment or a mental illness such as schizophrenia (both 46%), or had a moderate to high vision impairment (40%).

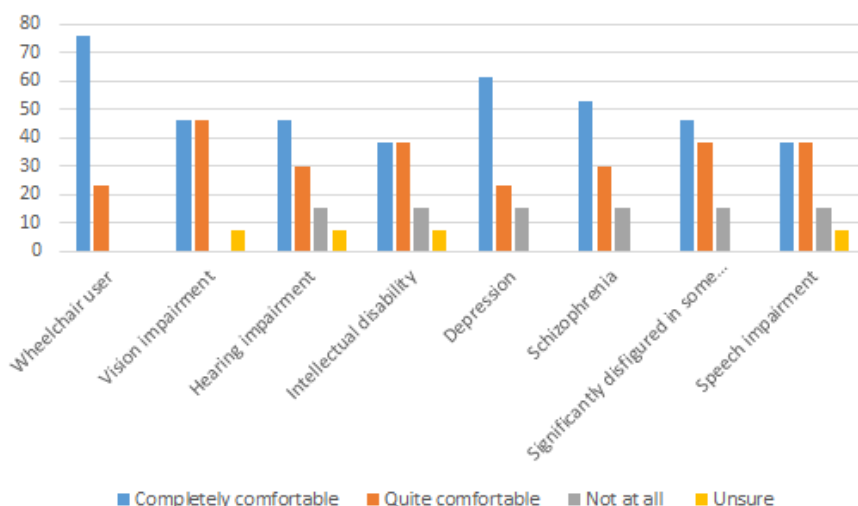
# FINDINGS

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Most employers said they felt their staff would feel completely comfortable working alongside a colleague who had a disability. However, less employers thought their staff would be as comfortable with a colleague who had a moderate intellectual disability (40%), or had a mental illness such as schizophrenia (46%). This compared with the belief staff would feel completely comfortable with a colleague who was a wheelchair user (73%), had a moderate to high hearing impairment or a mental illness such as depression (both 66% of respondents).



A higher proportion of employers felt their clients and/or customers would feel completely comfortable dealing with staff who had a disability if they were a wheelchair user (76%), with less believing clients and/or customers would feel completely comfortable dealing with staff who had a disability if they had a moderate intellectual disability, or had a moderate to high speech impairment (both 38%).



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# FINDINGS

## INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Respondents were asked what approaches would be most effective to encourage employers to hire people with disabilities.

Responses included;

- Education and awareness of people, disability as well as funding and supports available. This may include profiles of job seekers, successful employment case studies, business benefits and relevant research.
- Association with well-known, reputable business networks as well as with people of influence in the area.
- Key contact person to help navigate systems, job seekers and support services.
- Different options of presenting information, such as network opportunities.
- Opportunities to develop well supported and flexible work experience programmes at no cost to employer.

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# FINDINGS

## COMPARISON TO POINT RESEARCH 2012

The current research aimed to build on to the findings of the Point Research completed in 2012, in order to understand if changes in attitudes have occurred and how a local focused research project compared with those undertaken at a national level.

A total of 106 employers responded to the Point Research, half in interviews and half via an online survey. 6% of those respondents were located in the Bay of Plenty. Considering the key findings of the Point Research report, while there remained some similar findings, there was some notable differences in this research findings which may indicate a positive change in employer attitudes in the past eight years. These included;

- A higher proportion of respondents personally identifying with a disability, 25% compared with 9%.
- Fewer respondents believing there was a mismatch between the 'ideal employee' and a person with a disability. Point Research indicated that most employers agreed with this while in the current research, around half of respondents agreed with this. Respondents further identified work arounds to common barriers and misconceptions, indicating the possibility of employers being more open minded to such approaches.
- The current research indicated higher numbers of organisations identifying staff with disabilities. 80% compared with 34%. While we know that there has not been significant changes in the number of people with disabilities employed, this increase in numbers could represent a better awareness of disability and/or people with less visible disabilities feeling more comfortable disclosing their disability to their employers.
- A higher percentage of respondents agreed there were barriers to employment in their current workplace (over 80% compared with 59%). This is seen as a positive increase, as it indicates more awareness of those barriers and led to discussions as to what could be done to overcome these barriers. Of course, the reverse view could be taken in that there are more barriers in workplaces then previously. However, it is noted that it is imperative that in order to overcome barriers they must be known in the first place.
- A significant difference between the two researches was employers attitudes towards common reasons why people with disabilities aren't employed, Point Research noted,

*"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."*

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# FINDINGS

## COMPARISON TO POINT RESEARCH

*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.”*

- Attitudes from this research showed much lower agreement with the statements for not hiring someone with a disability. While 33% of respondents agreed that employing people with disabilities can require big, disruptive or expensive changes to the workplace and that employing people with disabilities is a step into the ‘unknown’ or ‘scary’(24% agreed). Other common reasons research showed that employers gave for not employing people with disabilities were not as strongly agreed with by respondents;
  - People with disabilities are less productive (14% agreed).
  - People with disabilities take more time off work (10% agreed).
  - People with disabilities are a health and safety risk (14% agreed).
  - Employing people will unsettle existing workers (both 14% agreed).

Point Research highlighted that many employers felt that their staff would not feel comfortable working alongside disabled people. A similar view was held with regard to their customers and clients. Overall respondents in the current research felt both their staff as well as customers and clients would feel comfortable working alongside someone with a disability. However, this did vary depending on the type of disability as recorded in the “Attitudes towards hiring people with disabilities” section above.

Some similar suggestions for ways to encourage employers to hire people with disabilities was also seen across both researches. Including education on disability, funding availability and awareness training.

This highlights some positive findings in terms of overall employer attitudes, identifying numbers of employees with disabilities, awareness of barriers in the workplaces and an openness to overcome these barriers.

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# CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

While there is still a dominant use of traditional recruitment processes that may inadvertently create barriers for people with disabilities to apply for roles, there is an appetite from employers to learn more about accessibility in recruitment as well as a desire from employers to be a part of development of employment and/or training initiatives targeting people with disabilities. It was apparent through the research that many employers were not aware of the barriers their current recruitment processes may create, ultimately leaving them in a difficult position to make changes they are unaware of. Through greater awareness of accessibility in recruitment, businesses may naturally become more diverse and inclusive. Therefore reaping the rewards research has shown for such organisations and no longer including diversity statements purely as a 'nice to have' or a policy that is not practiced.

Majority of respondents personally knew someone with a disability, however this varied in terms of the numbers of employees with a disability in their workplace. Such numbers are reflective of the disparity between employment of people with disabilities and those without a disability. That being said, respondents did believe there would be higher numbers of people with disabilities employed, however they may have hidden disabilities. It is hoped through this research that employers begin to think about not only the people they will recruit in the future but also canvassing the current diversity of their workplace and making people feel more comfortable disclosing disabilities or access needs.

There remains common misperceptions about what the word disability means and who this effects. With the first image of disability reflecting a physical disability present among the majority of respondents. That being said people did also visualise the type of disability of those known closely to them. Given this, if disability is more positively reflected in our communities, highlighting the hugely broad range of disabilities types, abilities, strengths and talents, this may have some impact on the way the general public perceive the word disability and start to change attitudes from a deficit viewpoint to more accepting of diversity and the strength that brings.

Common barriers that stop businesses employing people with a disability remain a reality. While there was a positive attitude from respondents in this research, with responses indicating a possible attitudinal shift from that observed in the Point Research. Respondents did also acknowledge that while their workplaces may not agree, they did feel the same barriers and negative attitudes largely exist in the wider workplace and continue to reduce the likelihood of people being employed.

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# CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Similar approaches that may have been attempted in the past to challenge this thinking were suggested and it was very prevalent that more education and knowledge is needed among the business community to truly have some impact. The difficult part remains how to present this information in order to reach the right people, businesses and communities so we can educate and increase awareness.

Finally, it is acknowledged that this research is a snapshot of a small number of employers and therefore, may not be largely representative of the attitudes in the wider Tauranga business community. However, it does highlight there are a number of businesses across a range of sectors and industries that are open to exploring new ways of working and recruitment, with a specific lens to include people with disability and/or experience of disadvantage. Providing an opportunity to work closely with these employers to co-create initiatives that can be trialed and used as exemplars to encourage other businesses to adapt similar approaches.

Based on the above findings, the key recommendations of this research are;

- Explore a Tauranga centered social media campaign to act as both a channel to educate as well as to increase awareness. This could include a variety of people, variety of disability types, profiles of job seekers and employment success stories.
- Develop and trial work based employment/training programme/s with employers that have indicated a willingness to be involved. This can then be used as a case study to promote to other employers.
- Connect with other agencies to engage both inter and cross sector approach for those who face barriers to employment. Utilizing relevant data available (for example the Vital Update Tauranga 2020) and knowledge from these organisations.
- Being visible and available as a key contact for information for employers and working alongside reputable employer networks (such as Priority One and Tauranga Chamber of Commerce) to promote this.
- Establish a Bay of Plenty disability confident employer network (similar to Auckland through the Accessibility Tick membership base). This would provide an opportunity for Momenta, or in collaboration with other organisations, to develop training and support to businesses based on their requirements.
- Promote self-employment. Explore opportunities to partner or collaborate with business mentors and organisations who have success in this space to support people to start their own business ventures.

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# APPENDICES

**Appendix One - Online Survey Questions**

**Appendix Two - In Person Interview Questions**

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# APPENDIX ONE

## ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

In New Zealand, people with a disability are three times less likely to be employed than those without a disability. In order to make sustainable change and work towards higher employment rates, we must first understand from a business point of view, where any barriers and opportunities exist.

The following survey sets out to gather insight into Bay of Plenty employers and businesses attitudes towards hiring people with disability.

Some questions below are direct and as such may feel uncomfortable to answer, we ask that you respond honestly in order to show a true reflection on current attitudes and perspectives so we can uncover real-time barriers and opportunities. All responses will be kept confidential and neither you nor your workplace will be identified at any stage.

Thank you for your time in participating in the survey. We look forward to sharing the findings with you in due course.

*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. Organisation and role

Please 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.)

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### 2. Recruitment

Are you involved in the recruitment of staff?

Yes

No

Can you tell us about your recruitment process? Eg. How vacancies are advertised, shortlisting and interviewing process

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Do you believe that accessibility is considered in the recruitment process of your organisation?

Yes

No

Unsure

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# APPENDIX ONE

## ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

Can you provide any examples how accessibility is or is not considered in the recruitment process of your organisation

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Do you think your organisation would you be open to learning more about recruitment accessibility?

Yes

No

Unsure

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.

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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?

Yes

No

Unsure

### 3. Diversity and Inclusion

Do you believe diversity and inclusion is important in organisations?

Yes

No

Unsure

Comment

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Do you feel diversity and inclusion is a focus for your organisation?

Yes

No

Unsure

Can you provide any further explanation for why you think this

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Do you know of any diversity and inclusion indicatives/policies etc in your organisation that focus specifically on disability?

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# APPENDIX ONE

## ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

Yes

No

Unsure

Can you provide any examples of this

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### 4. Disability

Do you identify with having a disability?

Yes

No

Rather not say

If yes can you tell us a bit about this?

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

Yes

No

Rather not say

If yes can you tell us a bit about them – eg. Type of disability, how it affects them, if they are working etc.

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From the top of mind - could you begin by picturing a person with a disability and tell us what 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

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### 5. Disability in the workplace

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?

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

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# APPENDIX ONE

## ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

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We know that around 25% of New Zealanders report they have a disability – and this is slightly higher in Bay of Plenty. Are you aware of any staff with disabilities in your workplace? This could be physical, sensory, intellectual or mental.

Yes, they had disabilities when we employed them  
Yes, staff acquired a disability while working here  
No, but we have had staff with disabilities in the past  
No

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

0%  
1-20%  
21-40%  
41-60%  
61-80%  
Over 80%

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?

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Statistics released in June 2017, indicated that around 72% of the working age population in NZ who did not identify with a disability were employed, compared with 25% of the working age population in NZ who did identify with a disability.  
Were you aware of the disability employment gap?

Yes  
No

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

Not an issue at all

Extremely important issue

1

2

3

4

5

Given the high number of people with disabilities who are unemployed, what barriers, if any, do you think stop more people with disabilities from being employed in NZ workplaces?

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# APPENDIX ONE

## ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

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

Yes

No

Unsure

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

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What, if anything, could be done to overcome these barriers?

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### 6. Attitudes on disability in the workplace

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.

To what extent do you agree with these statements?

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

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 un-tapped resource

Any further explanation to above.

---

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? Please select any statement/s you think would be commonly held views in your workplace and as such may be a barrier to employment.

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

---

# APPENDIX ONE

## ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

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? As with above question, please select any statement/s you think would be commonly held views in your workplace and as such may be a barrier to employment.

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 ...

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

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
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)

Any further explanation to above

---

How comfortable do you think your staff would be working alongside other staff who ...

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

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

---

# APPENDIX ONE

## ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

5. Had a mental illness, such as depression
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?

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And how comfortable do you think your customers and clients would be dealing with staff who

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

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
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?

---

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

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

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?

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

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# APPENDIX ONE

## ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

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

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

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# APPENDIX TWO

## IN PERSON QUESTIONNAIRE

### 1. Organisation and role

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.)

How long have you worked at this organisation?

What is your role?

### 2. Recruitment

Are you involved in the recruitment of staff, if yes how so?

Can you tell us about your recruitment process?

What works well and not so well in recruiting this way?

What further supports would be useful for your organisation's recruitment?

Do you think your organisation would be open to external support for recruitment?

Do you think your organisation would be open to opportunities to co-design work experience/internship type programmes? – has this been done in the past?

Do you believe that accessibility is considered in the recruitment process? Any examples for or against.

Do you think your organisation would be open to learning more about recruitment accessibility?

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 ...

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?

### 3. Diversity and Inclusion

Do you believe diversity and inclusion is important in organisations? Explain.

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# APPENDIX TWO

## IN PERSON QUESTIONNAIRE

Do you feel diversity and inclusion is a focus for your organisation? Any examples of this.

Do you know of any D&I initiatives/policies etc in your organisation that focus specifically on disability?

### 4. Disability

Do you identify with having a disability? If yes can you tell us a bit about this?

Are there other people in your life that have a disability? If yes can you tell us a bit about them – eg. Type of disability, how it affects them, are they working etc.

Top of mind - could you begin by picturing a person with a disability and tell us what 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 ...

### 5. Disability in the workplace

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?

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

We know that around 25% of New Zealanders report they have a disability – and this is slightly higher in the BoP. Are you aware of any staff with disabilities in your workplace?

Can 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?

Statistics released in June 2017, indicated that around 72% of the working age population in NZ who did not identify with a disability were employed, compared with 25% of the working age population in NZ who did identify with a disability.

Were you aware of the disability employment gap?

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# APPENDIX TWO

## IN PERSON QUESTIONNAIRE

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

1. Not an issue at all – 5. Extremely important issue

Given the high number of people with disabilities who are unemployed, what barriers, if any, do 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? Can you provide examples.

What if anything could be done to overcome these barriers?

### 6. Attitudes on disability in the workplace

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.

To what extent do you agree with these statements?

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

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 un-tapped resource

Any further explanation to above.

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 exist as a barrier to employment in your workplace?

Yes / No

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

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# APPENDIX TWO

## IN PERSON QUESTIONNAIRE

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?

Y/N

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 ...

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

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
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)

Any further explanation to above

How comfortable do you think your staff would be working alongside other staff who ...

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

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
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)

---

# APPENDIX TWO

## IN PERSON QUESTIONNAIRE

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 ...

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

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
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?

To what extent might the reactions of others influence your decision to employ disabled staff?

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

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?

Thank you.

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