

Accessibility outside the home

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

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

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

The information below explores the accessibility of buildings other than the home. Accessibility is explored in terms of the experiences of adults, aged 16 and over, getting into buildings and moving around or using facilities within them. Results are presented for the 13 per cent of adults who experienced difficulty accessing, moving about or using facilities in buildings.

Buildings where difficulty with access was experienced

A higher proportion of adults with impairment(3) experienced difficulty accessing buildings compared with adults without impairment (29 per cent and 6 per cent respectively).

As seen in Table 1, among adults with impairment the type of building where inaccessibility was reported most often was for shops (54 per cent). The second most commonly reported building was hospitals (34 per cent), followed by pubs, bars or restaurants (23 per cent) and then other people's homes (20 per cent).

The findings are similar when using the Equality Act definition of disability(3).

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

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

3 Please refer to the Introduction of the Life Opportunities Survey Wave one report, 2009/11, for the definitions of impairment status and Equality Act disability status.

Table 1: Six most common buildings where difficulty with access was experienced by adults with impairment, 2009/11

Building	Percentage of adults with impairment
Shops	54
Hospital	34
Pubs, bars or restaurants	23
Other people's homes	20
GP surgery	19
Theatres or cinemas	17

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

Barriers to accessing buildings

Among adults who experienced difficulty accessing buildings, the most common barriers were:

- moving around the building – for reasons related to stairs, doors or narrow corridors (44 per cent)
- inadequate lifts or escalators (23 per cent)
- approach areas – due to lack of ramps/handrails (22 per cent)
- parking problems (21 per cent)
- bathroom facilities - due to location, layout or size (17 per cent)
- footpath design and surfaces (15 per cent)
- difficulty with transport getting to the building (14 per cent)
- lack of help or assistance (13 per cent)

The qualitative research showed the importance of having access to a good and accessible transport network in order to enable adults with impairment to access shops, including in areas where local services have been withdrawn.

“When the Post Office was there we could pay electricity and water. But when they done away with it the nearest place is four miles. When you get to our age you need facilities nearer to hand because it’s difficult to travel long distances.”

Adults with impairment reported problems such as a lack of disabled parking bays close to the place they wanted to shop. Others described difficulties using a wheelchair in crowded places. Some adults with impairment chose to manage these barriers by shopping outside of peak hours.