

# Secretary of State's Report on Disability Equality 2008

Department for  
**Innovation,  
Universities &  
Skills**



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## Foreword

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The creation of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) brought together three closely-linked strands of policy that are critical to determining the UK's future economic and social well-being. The UK can only succeed in a changing world if we develop our skills to the fullest possible extent, carry out world-class research, and apply knowledge to create innovative products, services and companies.

Our vision for the UK is one where no-one is left behind, where ordinary people have a greater stake in the community in the form of higher wages, higher aspirations and more stable and secure lives, and where everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. We need to ensure that disabled people are a full part of this agenda.

For many disabled people that vision can seem far removed from the reality of their lives. Disabled people already make a significant contribution to both the economy and community, but the *Wealth bringers* study by the University of Salford this year showed that if more were done to aid disabled entrepreneurs in the north-west of England alone, there could be a net benefit of over a third of a billion pounds in terms of public expenditure savings and better productivity. Our goal is to ensure that all individuals have the access and opportunity to develop the skills they need now and in the future. As we enter more challenging economic times, we know that this goal is more important than ever.

This report, the first of its kind, presents an opportunity to set out where we are on that journey by providing an overview of the vast range of activity taking place across DIUS policy sectors and demonstrating the progress that has been made across all of the organisations that form the wider DIUS family.

Disabled people are more likely to live in poverty, have fewer qualifications, be out of work, and experience prejudice and abuse. We recognise that we cannot deliver our targets and our objectives if we do not do more to improve the engagement and attainment of disabled people through our policies and programmes.

DIUS works with a wide range of delivery partners to develop and deliver our policies. Bodies such as the Learning and Skills Council and the Higher Education Funding Council for England fund local delivery through locally

based organisations such as colleges and other providers, and universities. The evidence we have gathered suggests there have been improvements for disabled people in some key policy areas in recent years. For example, in England, the proportion of disabled people who complete apprenticeships has risen and there has also been a significant increase in the number and proportion of undergraduates who are in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowances.

I hope you will agree that we and the public authorities which operate in our sectors have made good progress in many areas and that we are moving in the right direction. However, I am far from complacent. It is critical that we continue to strengthen our approach and impact in relation to disability equality. We will build on our progress and continue to improve the way in which we design and deliver our services to ensure wider access, participation and attainment by disabled people.

I am totally committed to improving the opportunities for disabled people and working towards the vision of equality for all disabled people by 2025. In this way I believe we will make a lasting difference to the lives of even more disabled people.

Finally, I am grateful to all those who contributed to this report.

**Rt Hon. John Denham MP**  
**Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills**



## Executive summary

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Since its establishment in June 2007, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) has brought together the actions of the former Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on further education and skills, and on higher education, and those of the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) on science and innovation. These three closely linked strands of policy are critical to unlocking talent and determining Britain's future economic and social well-being.

We are clear that a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is critical to ensuring that we deliver our goals and strategic objectives. We need to capitalise on the potential of all individuals, communities and businesses, and we are working towards mainstreaming disability equality across all our policies and programmes.

This document fulfils the requirement on DIUS under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (the DDA) to report on progress made towards equality of opportunity for disabled people across the sectors for which DIUS is responsible, and to set out proposals for bringing about further progress. It is the Department's first such report.

Although this is primarily a report about the Department's sectors of responsibility rather than about DIUS itself, we recognise that our example as an employer is key to the credibility of our policies and initiatives. As such, we are striving to make DIUS exemplary in its own approach to equality and diversity.

### Progress so far

DIUS coordinates work to promote equality and diversity with partners across each strand of its activity. For further education (FE) and skills, our principal partners are the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and for higher education (HE), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). We also work with many other stakeholder organisations and partners, including learners, businesses and employers from the commercial, public and voluntary sectors.

In addition to the strategic and policy activities outlined below, there is a focus across all three sectors on ensuring that consideration is given to disability issues when providing services such as websites, and when evaluating quality of provision. Examples are to be found throughout this report.

### Further education and skills

Work on disability equality in this sector is underpinned by the LSC's five-year national strategy, *Learning for living and work*, for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). This is supported by a programme for providers on implementing the Disability Equality Duty (DED), and a major LSC support programme in 2008 to support providers in developing 'single equality' approaches.

The LSC provides capital grant support for provision for learners with LDD, where this is identified as a priority in regional capital plans, and extra funds for learners with additional learning or social needs.

Disabled people are involved in decision making at a strategic level through the National Learner Panel and they have a voice through the LSC-funded Mental Health Network. The work of the DIUS Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning has developed into a cross-sectoral Disability Equality Implementation Group.

The Integrated Employment and Skills Programme is run jointly by DIUS and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and DIUS contributes to the work of the DWP's Disability Employment Action Committee (DEAC). The LSC consults its own disabled employees through its Workforce Equality and Diversity Steering Group.

### Higher education

HEFCE funds the Disability Equality Partnership (DEP), comprising:

- The Equality Challenge Unit, which supports the HE sector in its mission to realise the potential of all staff and students
- The HE Academy, which supports the HE sector in providing the best possible learning experience for all students
- Action on Access, which coordinates widening participation in HE, specifically through the DIUS-funded Aimhigher outreach programme.

Government supports the extra costs of disabled students in HE through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) scheme. In 2006/07, the scheme supported 38,000 students at a cost of £81 million, and increased support will be available in 2008/09. The National Audit Office reported in 2007 that students in receipt of DSAs were more likely to remain on their course than other students. HEFCE also funds HE institutions directly to help improve access and progression for disabled students.

HEFCE has established a Special Interest Group on Inclusion in Higher Education and produces a range of good-practice guides for practitioners. It works to promote equality positively within the sector by collecting data on the performance of institutions in recruiting disabled students and using it to help institutions to meet their benchmarks. A Gateways to the Professions development fund has supported 24 projects aiming to improve access to graduate jobs in the professions. HEFCE also commissioned the Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) to research how professional bodies are supporting diversity, and to produce a web-based toolkit.

DIUS works closely with the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) to address the attainment gap of disabled pupils.

### Science, research and innovation

DIUS collaborates with, coordinates and/or funds a variety of initiatives and projects to promote inclusivity in the domain of science, research and innovation. We have supported work by the Design Council on equipping the public sector to ensure that services reflect the needs of all users, and by the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) on advances in the technology needed to improve care for disabled people and the elderly.

UK-funded researchers have led on four European research projects relating to capacity building, quality of life and participation issues. The Foresight initiative unites key stakeholders to identify opportunities arising from new science and technologies to help those most vulnerable and in need across society

## Future plans

Our plans for the future are twofold: to build and improve on the work already in progress and strengthen our approach to disability, and to ensure a more comprehensive and joined-up approach to information gathering and policy making across the three strands of activity, linking with other Departments and organisations wherever appropriate.

### Further education and skills

Future work in this area will focus effort on the key issues of supporting participation, developing involvement and leadership among disabled students and staff (for example by developing a National Panel for Disabled Learners to complement the work of the National Learner Panel), and supporting students' transition from education to employment or other meaningful activity.

The LSC plans to relaunch its Mental Health Strategy, following consultation, to promote participation and outcomes for those with mental health issues. DIUS will also be involved with cross-Government work on an Employment Strategy for this group. Further cross-Departmental work will focus on the Independent Living Strategy, covering areas such as how learning can help to build leadership capacity amongst disabled people and their organisations. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service is developing an engagement and involvement programme with disabled staff in the sector, including consultation on how to enhance leadership opportunities.

A new adult advancement and careers service will be fully operational from August 2010, combining skills and training advice with access to practical guidance on overcoming wider obstacles to progress, such as employment rights, health, transport, personal finance issues, childcare and financial support for learners. In-depth support will be targeted at priority groups, including people with LDD.

For Apprenticeships, a National Vacancy Matching Service, to be fully functional by April 2009, will help match employers to potential apprentices. This will include focusing support where there is evidence that some groups, such as disabled people, are not being successful in their applications.

### Higher education

HEFCE is leading the sector by commissioning a comprehensive review (carried out by the University of Leeds and due to report by January 2009) of its policies as they relate to disabled students and the implementation of disability equality schemes. HEFCE and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) also plan to update the 1999 report *Guidance on base-level provision for disabled students in higher education institutions* to reflect the move away from 'minimum compliance' towards the spirit of 'positive promotion'.

Other significant strands of work focus on improving the sources of data on participation rates for disabled people, and work with the DCSF and other partners to take forward the Government's response to the National Student Forum report, in particular as regards the information, advice and guidance (IAG) needs of disabled students. Once these actions are taken it will be an appropriate time for a full disability impact assessment.

HEFCE will also be asking HE institutions for Widening Participation strategic assessments,

in which they will set their own targets and milestones and provide information on how they intend to measure the success of activities, including provision and support for disabled students.

DIUS also plans to launch a web-based 'observatory of good practice' to disseminate information from the Gateways to the Professions projects, with a strong focus on equality and diversity issues.

### Science, research and innovation

The sector is fully mindful of its role in promoting benefits for all parts of society. This includes increasing access and engagement, and ensuring that science and innovation play their role in reducing inequalities. As with the other sectors, there will be a continuing need to improve the evidence base and relate it to what we already know, so as to inform further research and programmes focused on increasing access and improving participation among disabled people. Linking up with other Departments and organisations on programmes, initiatives and data collection will continue to be a focus.

In January 2009 the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) is due to launch a Public Services Innovation Laboratory to enable trials of approaches to innovation in society. The Laboratory will focus on areas that really matter to society, including needs such as mental well-being and long-term health conditions.

## Proposals

### Further education and skills

There are various areas which will be particularly important in strengthening our approach to disability equality:

- Building individual programmes of support to improve outcomes for progression into sustainable employment
- Remedying limitations in data and gathering information on the issues disabled people face
- Improving the diversity of the FE workforce
- Continuing to set and monitor national and local equality measures to gauge progress being made.

### Higher education

Further development of policy relating to disabled students will be informed by the HEFCE policy review (to report in January 2009).

DIUS will work with partners to address current limitations to data (especially as regards HE participation rates for disabled people), and to collect the data we need to track improvements.

### Science, research and innovation

We need to work harder to benefit disabled people by:

- Ensuring science and innovation play their roles in reducing inequalities
- Increasing access to science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) to all groups
- Engaging disabled people more actively

- Using what we already know to inform future research and programmes focused on increasing access and improving participation for disabled people.

### Across all of our stakeholder groups and policy areas

Our priorities are:

- To continue our work with the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) and across Government to share disability information so that results can be compared effectively
- To improve the skills and understanding of our own staff so that we can consult and collaborate more effectively with different groups
- To promote the dissemination of good practice in cross-sector and cross-Government contexts
- To make every effort to ensure that disabled people are fully engaged in this agenda and benefit from the services we ultimately provide, so as to ensure disability equality across the DIUS sectors.



# Chapter 1 Introduction

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## Background to the report

**1.1** This report sets out progress and achievements in addressing disability discrimination across the sectors which fall within the DIUS family: FE and skills, HE, and science and innovation activities. It also sets out next steps for improving opportunities for disabled people and ensuring their successful participation in the economy and in society.

**1.2** Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People, published by the Government's Strategy Unit in 2005, set out the vision that by 2025 all disabled people should:

- Have the same opportunities as everybody else
- Be respected as equal
- Be able to participate as equals in every aspect of family and community life.

## The Disability Equality Duty

**1.3** The DDA places a general duty on all public authorities to make sure that they pay proper attention to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate harassment of disabled people
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and non-disabled people
- Take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

**1.4** From 1 December 2008, and every three years after, certain Secretaries of State<sup>1</sup> are legally required to publish a report that:

- Gives an overview of progress made towards equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people
- Sets out proposals for the coordination of action to bring about further progress towards equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people.

## The UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People

**1.5** This report is published at a time when the Government has further demonstrated its commitment to improve the lives of disabled people through its intention to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. This Convention aims to secure for the estimated 650 million disabled people across the world the same human rights as non-disabled people have – and on an equal basis.

**1.6** Through the Convention, disabled people worldwide have a clear statement that they enjoy the same fundamental human rights as everyone else. Ensuring this is an essential part of our commitment to creating a positive human rights culture in the UK. The principles on

<sup>1</sup> The Departments concerned are: the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform; the Department for Children, Schools and Families; Communities and Local Government; the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; the Department of Health; the Home Office; the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills; the Ministry of Justice; the Department for Transport; the Department for Work and Pensions. The Welsh and Scottish Executives are also subject to this requirement.

which the Convention is based underpin the UK approach to disability equality, and the DED is an important part of the process through which we will know that are achieving success.

### Promoting independent living

**1.7** Independent living, choice and control are key to full participation in society. In March 2008, the ODI published a cross-Government five-year Independent Living Strategy, which aims to give disabled people more choice and control over how support is provided, as well as greater access to housing, education, employment, leisure and transport opportunities. It was developed in partnership with disabled people and disabled people's organisations and is jointly owned by six key Government departments.

**1.8** The five-year strategy sets out over 50 commitments across Government, to be delivered by 2013. The social model of disability provides an important context to these commitments.

#### **What is the social model of disability?**

The social model of disability helps disabled people and, more importantly, non-disabled people to look differently at disabilities.

Traditionally disabled people have been perceived, and often see themselves, as having a 'medical problem' that in turn can set up all kinds of barriers such as feelings of isolation and invisibility. Disabled people often do not believe their dreams and goals can be fulfilled because they feel they are a 'burden' to their families or health services. Other barriers might include financial ones.

The social model of disability turns this perception around by ignoring how 'bad' a person's impairment is and, instead, demonstrating that it is society which erects the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating. Barriers might be physical (stairs, lack of wheelchair access, heavy doors) or less tangible and more to do with the attitudes and behaviour of society.

The emphasis on the social model helps to change attitudes and break down barriers. In this report, we try to use the social model thinking to show how specific actions and policies can shift perceptions and make a real difference to the quality of the lives of people with disabilities.

### Defining disability

**1.9** Definitions of disability vary greatly, and organisations are not required to use any one definition when deciding how to collect or analyse data. This can make data hard to interpret or compare. On the other hand, DIUS recognises that every person with a 'disability' has different circumstances and needs at different stages in their life. The definition we are using for this report is from taken from the DDA, in which a disabled person is defined as 'someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

## About DIUS

'Britain can only succeed in a rapidly changing world if we develop the skills of our people to the fullest possible extent, carry out world-class research and scholarship, and apply both knowledge and skills to create an innovative and competitive economy. The DIUS mission is to work with our partners to meet these challenges.'

### Background to our work

**1.10** DIUS was established by the Machinery of Government changes announced by the Prime Minister on 28 June 2007. The work of the Department builds on the actions it has inherited from the former DfES on FE and skills and HE, and from the DTI with regard to science and innovation activities. Also relating to science and innovation is the Government Office for Science (GO-Science), formerly within the Cabinet Office but now part of the DIUS remit. These three closely-linked strands of policy are critical to determining Britain's future economic and social well-being because together they will help unlock everyone's talents.

**1.11** We are clear that a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is critical to ensuring that we deliver on wider goals and strategic objectives. We are currently auditing our policies as part of the initial development phase of our first Single Equality Scheme. As a new and developing Government department, there are many challenges and opportunities for taking forward our commitments. Although there is evidence of successes and progress overall, impact continues to vary and there remain a number of challenges where inequalities of participation and outcomes persist, and which the Department will address.

### DIUS as an employer

**1.12** On its creation, DIUS inherited a diverse range of staff from different backgrounds as well as two different sets of data on employees. We do know that currently, 11 per cent of our staff are recorded as disabled, which exceeds the Cabinet Office target of 3.2 per cent.

**1.13** We recognise that our staff are our best advocates, so the more successful we are in delivering our internal equality and diversity objectives, the more we will be able to ensure that our external facing policies and programmes reflect a variety of needs well. Training and development is also a key DIUS priority and commitment to all staff.

**1.14** We have issued an open invitation to members of staff to volunteer as equality champions to share staff views and ideas on equality and diversity across DIUS.

**1.15** Our first Single Equality Scheme has four objectives:

- To understand more about the issues faced by people across our policy sectors in relation to disability, gender (including transgender), race, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation and other barriers, so that we can better address issues of disadvantage and inequality which some of our service users may face.
- To increase the participation and attainment of under-represented groups, including women, disabled people and ethnic minority groups, across FE and skills, HE and science-related subjects.
- To engage all sections of society in the science agenda, with a view to building awareness and interest and increasing public participation in science-related activities.

- To build the capacity and commitment of senior DIUS staff to champion diversity and equality in all that we do, and to become an exemplar organisation on equality, diversity and inclusion.

**1.16** In future, DIUS' actions as an employer on equality-related issues, including disability, will be based on good-quality data and insights into what it tells us about our workforce. The creation of a single database of staff information is a priority for the Department, and will allow us to identify areas of under- or over-representation in relation to human relations (HR) policies such as recruitment, pay, training, grievance, disciplinary measures and harassment. We aim to have a complete set of staffing information available by December 2008 and to start identifying areas of under- or over-representation in April 2009. This will enable us to assess the extent to which we have issues relating to under-representation from particular groups. It will also enable us to benchmark ourselves against other organisations. We will develop plans to address these issues and will review them on an annual basis.

## The language of this report

**1.10** We have written this report with clarity of language in mind, whilst recognising that the subject matter is by definition complex and often abstract, especially when talking about policies and strategies. We have also been conscious that the use of language can itself form a barrier between disabled people and others, and have tried to avoid formulations which suggest that disabled people are a group which stands apart from the rest of society. Instead, we have tried to affirm that they are a group within society, coexisting and overlapping with all of the many groups that can be defined within a population – the young, the old, those with particular interests or who live in a particular area, and so on.



## Chapter 2 Further education and skills

### The evidence base: assessment of data and key issues

**2.1** DIUS has a range of data on disability within the FE and skills sector, covering participation, achievement, skills, employment, demands for learning, attitudes towards learning and employment, and the FE workforce.

**2.2** However, due to differences in the way data is collected, our figures are not all on a like-for-like basis. We are working with the ODI and others across Government to establish a consistent approach to collecting disability data and will adopt new agreed measures as soon as practicable.

**2.3** There are 5.6 million people in England with a disability.<sup>1</sup> Drawing on our range of data we find that:

- A significant proportion – nearly one in five – of the working-age population in England has a disability. This group is important in the context of the Government's aim to raise the employment rate to 80 per cent. The employment rate in the non-disabled population already nearly reaches 80 per cent, so more people with disabilities will need to enter work in order to increase the employment rate of the total population.
- The Government has a further ambition for more than 90 per cent of the population to be qualified to at least level 2 by 2020. This target represents a significant challenge in terms of up-skilling the disabled population, as over four in ten currently lack a level 2 qualification. Furthermore, there is a need to increase the number of disabled people progressing to higher-level qualifications, as one in five currently have a qualification at level 4 or higher, compared to the target of two in five for the population as a whole.
- While the LSC currently funds over 300,000 adult learners with self-declared LDD, there is some research evidence that more disabled people who are not in employment need to be encouraged and supported to participate in learning.
- Learners with LDD are highly satisfied with the quality of their learning experience. However, there are concerns about the lack of opportunities to progress into work experience or employment after learning.

### Key facts and figures

**2.4** These are the characteristics we know for the population in England in relation to disability, with a particular focus on skills and participation in FE:

- Half of the disabled population of working age in England are in employment (50.8 per cent), compared to eight in ten of the non-disabled population (79.5 per cent).
- Nearly three-quarters of the 2020 workforce has already completed compulsory education – this implies we need a strong focus on those in work in order to raise skill levels.
- In 2004, 2.3 million unqualified adults were in work, but current trends suggest that this figure will fall to only 600,000 by 2020. Although the UK has narrowed the productivity gap with our major competitors, we still lag behind the most successful economies. A major reason for this is weakness in our skills base. In 2003, 6.8 million people were not functionally numerate and 5 million people were not functionally literate.

<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Annual Population Survey*, 2007.

- Those in the adult population who are more likely to be unskilled or out of work are more likely to be disabled (or from some ethnic minority groups) which means that it is vital that in encouraging greater learning participation and progression, all providers of FE genuinely reach out across whole communities.

## 2.5 In relation to participation, we know that:

- Around 10 per cent of learners within the FE service in 2005/06 had a declared LDD.
- The ODI's 2007 survey of disabled people found that around one in ten of all disabled people were taking part in some form of course, class or tuition.
- Participation in learning was higher amongst disabled people in employment (23 per cent) and those with an annual household income of £20,000 or more (20 per cent). This indicates that disabled people who are not in employment may be missing out on opportunities to participate in learning.
- It is important to note that the incidence of LDD amongst the learner population is based upon learners' own self-declaration when registering for a course. In 2006/07, over 340,000 adult learners comprising just over 10 per cent of adult learners (age 19 and over) self-declared with LDD.<sup>2</sup>
- In the 2006/07 academic year we recorded data for 92,731 offender learners, of whom 17 per cent considered themselves to have a difficulty or disability (in line with the Prison Reform Trust's earlier suggestion of a range of 13–29 per cent). Of these, 98 per cent engaged in Skills for Life activity. Data is recorded on the Individualised Learner Record (ILR) used for all LSC-funded learning (see Table 2.1 below).
- Some 90 per cent of prisoners (not synonymous with offender learners) display symptoms of at least one of five mental disorders.<sup>3</sup>
- The majority of adult learners with LDD are participating in learning in FE. A relatively small proportion (3.4 per cent) of adult learners with LDD are participating through Train to Gain in 2006/07; however this does represent over 11,000 individuals in total.

LSC-funded provision	Number of adult learners with LDD 2006/07
Further Education	215,500
Adult Safeguarded Learning	65,100
European Social Funding	24,300
University for Industry	18,000
Train to Gain	11,600
Apprenticeships	8,500
Entry to Employment	300
Total	343,300

Table 2.1: LSC-funded provision for adult learners with LDD 2006/07

<sup>2</sup> LSC, *Equality and diversity performance report*, September 2008

<sup>3</sup> Prison Reform Trust, *Bromley briefings: Prison factfile*, May 2007; Singleton et al, *Psychiatric Morbidity Among Prisoners*, ONS, 1998.

## 2.6 In terms of achievement:

- Success rates for adult learners with LDD have increased from 2004/05 to 2005/06, consistent with an overall increase in success rates for all learners over time.
- As shown in the table below, success rates for adult learners in FE and Apprenticeships are lower for those with LDD than those who do not declare themselves as learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD).

Level of learning and Gender	Success Rate LLDD % (2005/06)	Success Rate no LLDD %
FE Full L2 females	66	69
FE Full L2 males	61	69
FE Full L3 females	59	64
FE Full L3 males	53	58

Table 2.2: Success rates for adults in FE and Apprenticeships

## 2.7 In relation to skill levels:

- 68.2 per cent of the working-age population are now qualified to at least level 2, but only 54.6 per cent of disabled people have a qualification at level 2 or higher. Therefore, a significant proportion (over four in ten) of disabled people lacks a qualification that is regarded as being the minimum requirement for sustainable employment. As noted above, it is the Government's ambition that more than 90 per cent of the population be qualified to at least level 2 by 2020.
- Furthermore, over one fifth of disabled people (24.4 per cent) have no qualifications, compared to only 10.4 per cent of those without disabilities.
- Of the adult learners with LDD participating in FE, 48,500 studied for a full level 2 qualification in 2006/07, and 29,800 studied for a full level 3 qualification.
- 48.0 per cent of people aged 19 in 2007 were qualified to level 3, an increase of 1.4 percentage points on 2006.
- Just under one in five (19.7 per cent) of disabled people in England are qualified to level 4 or higher.<sup>4</sup> This compares to just under one in three of the non-disabled population (30.2 per cent).

## 2.8 Employment data is also relevant:

- The employment rate of the non-disabled population already nearly reaches 80 per cent, so more people with disabilities will need to enter work in order to increase the employment rate of the total population.
- Analysis by the Social Market Foundation (SMF) has shown that the employment rate for disabled people is lower than that for the non-disabled population, no matter what their qualification level.<sup>5</sup> The 'labour market penalty' is highest for those with low or no qualifications – around 60 per cent of non-disabled people with no qualifications are in employment, compared to just under 25 per cent of disabled people.

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics, *Annual Population Survey*, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Social Market Foundation, *Disability, skills and work: Raising our ambitions*, June 2007

- The SMF also notes that a disabled graduate has a higher chance of being out of work, but wanting work, than a non-disabled adult who has no qualifications.
- The employment rate varies significantly according to disability type. People with mental health disabilities have the lowest employment rate, at only 21 per cent.<sup>6</sup>
- Disabled people in employment are less likely to work in managerial or professional occupations and more likely to be employed in elementary and manual occupations.
- Reflecting this difference in occupational level, the average gross hourly pay of disabled employees is about 10 per cent less than that of non-disabled employees.
- The proportion of young people starting Apprenticeships in England who have LDD has been around 11 per cent for the last three years. However, we are seeing increases in the number of young people with LDD who complete Apprenticeships as a proportion of all young people who complete them. The proportion rose from almost 8.5 per cent in 2004/05 to 10.5 per cent in 2006/07.
- There is some research evidence that more disabled people who are not in employment need to be encouraged and supported to participate in learning.

## 2.9 In terms of likely demand for learning:

- The LSC's regional analysis of future supply and demand for learning amongst people with LDD, conducted in 2007, involved an analysis of potential trends in the type of disabilities and learning difficulties of learners entering the FE system in future.<sup>7</sup> The analysis forecast that demand for learning is likely to increase amongst people with:
  - Autistic Spectrum Disorders
  - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs
  - Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (although absolute numbers of learners in this category are small, their support needs can be complex and intensive).

## 2.10 We have data on disabled peoples' attitudes towards learning and employment. In terms of positive factors:

- Overall satisfaction with LSC-funded learning is equally high for both disabled and non disabled learners.<sup>8</sup> In fact, learners with LDD are more likely to be extremely satisfied with the quality of their teaching than learners without LDD. Ratings for teachers were also higher amongst learners with LDD.
- The large majority of learners agree that they are treated fairly and with respect by staff. However, learners with mental health problems were less likely than average to feel respected. Members of this group of learners were also less likely to agree that they were consulted by their provider.
- A review of regional analysis conducted by the LSC around the supply and demand for learning for people with LDD in 2007 was consistent with the National Learner Satisfaction Survey (NLSS) in reporting high levels of satisfaction with LSC-funded learning amongst learners themselves, their parents and carers.
- Disabled people's attitudes towards work were very positive. Around 70 per cent of those not currently working agreed that work would keep them active, give them financial independence, enable them to meet new people, and make them feel they are contributing to society.

<sup>6</sup> Disability Rights Commission Disability Briefing, May 2007 (Analysis of Q2 Labour Force Survey, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> LSC East Midlands, *LLDD provision in the East Midlands: A consultation*, October 2007; LSC East of England, *East of England LLDD needs analysis*, September 2007.

<sup>8</sup> LSC, *National Learner Satisfaction Survey 2007: Summary of findings for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties in the FE system*, September 2008 (not published).

### Case study 2.1: West Nottinghamshire FE College

The college, together with Building Blocks Solutions, a social enterprise organisation, introduced a café and craft shop to help adult learners with LDD make the transition into work. Curriculum activities were designed to support the transition in areas relevant to the organisation.

Outcomes of the project for service users include:

- mental health well-being
- increased confidence
- increased self-esteem
- increased independence
- increased motivation
- social inclusion
- reduced dependency on mental health services

Comments from participants include:

*'Placements take the pressure off when considering going into full time work.'*

*'It gave me a reason to get out of bed on a morning and put a suit on.'*

#### 2.11 In terms of barriers:

- Learners with LDD are highly satisfied with the quality of their learning experience. However, there are concerns about the lack of opportunities to progress into work experience or employment after learning.
- The NLSS in 2007 found that learners with a disability in FE were more likely to have left their course early than learners without disabilities (10 per cent vs 8 per cent). A significant proportion (around one in three) disabled early leavers had left their course due to a health problem.
- The 2007 survey of disabled people reported that just over a fifth (22 per cent) of disabled non-learners were interested in taking part in learning in the future. The main barriers to being involved in learning at the present time were poor health, cost and lack of time. This indicates that further work is needed to communicate the presence of both financial and pastoral support for disabled learners, in order to overcome barriers to participating.
- Learners with LDD were also more likely to have experienced at least one type of problem during their studies – 68 per cent of learners with LDD, compared to 59 per cent of learners without LDD. This group of learners were also more likely to have made a complaint about their provider but, positively, were more likely to have been satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.
- Also, one in ten said that they lacked the skills required to find work, and this skills deficiency was highest amongst those aged 16 to 34.<sup>9</sup>
- The key concerns raised by parents, carers and stakeholders in the regional analysis are that:
  - There are insufficient opportunities for learners with LDD to progress into supported employment, or to gain work experience placements.
  - More work needs to be done around engaging employers and encouraging them to offer such opportunities.

<sup>9</sup> ODI, *Experiences and expectations of disabled people*, July 2008.

- The current lack of employment opportunities means that there is a risk that learners will not have the opportunity to practice the skills they have developed through their participation in learning in FE.

**2.12** Data on the FE workforce tells us that:

- 2.6 per cent of the FE workforce have a disability (as reported by Lifelong Learning UK).<sup>10</sup>

## The further education and skills sector approach

**2.13** Our vision, set out in *World-class skills* (July 2007), is of a strong, demand-led FE system which focuses on developing the skills of people to the fullest possible extent. In June 2007 as the then DfES we published our cross-Government strategy *Progression through Partnership* in conjunction with the Department of Health (DH) and the DWP. It stated the clear expectation that learners with LDD should have the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for adult life across all areas of their lives, including their aspirations to work.

**2.14** We want to ensure that disabled people are fully engaged in our FE and skills ambition and that we:

- Maximise awareness (both of what is on offer and of the issues disabled people face),
- Improve access for disabled people to the services on offer.
- Improve the data we collect that enables us to monitor progress.
- Improve the involvement of disabled people in service delivery and design.

**2.15** Following the major consultation which concluded in June 2008, our developing strategy for informal adult learning (IAL) will give us a much stronger, more accessible and better-connected offer for all learners with particular benefits for disabled people. Our strategy for IAL will include better access to information on learning and learner support, and better use of technology, including the internet, broadcasting and mobile technology, to support those who may not otherwise be able to access suitable adult learning provision.

**2.16** We want our policies to be employer-led and learner-focused. We want to see greater integration between employment and skills services, reduced regulation and streamlined, transparent systems that allow providers to be responsive to need.

**2.17** While DIUS leads on setting the overall strategic direction for FE and skills, a range of partners are responsible for delivering key programmes as set out in the table below.

<sup>10</sup> Lifelong Learning UK, *FE workforce data for England: An analysis of the Staff Individualised Record (SIR) data 2006/07, 2008.*

## Principal public authorities operating in the FE sector

**2.18** The table below sets out the existing delivery partners involved in implementing the FE and skills agenda:

DIUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Determines overall investment and priorities</li> <li>■ Determines performance system (Framework for Excellence)</li> <li>■ Responsible for meeting the Skills PSA</li> <li>■ Responsible for FE sponsorship and colleges and learning providers' contribution to DCSF targets.</li> </ul>
LSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Main delivery agent for DIUS work across FE and skills.</li> <li>■ Funds all learning for young people aged 16–19 in school sixth forms, colleges and work-based-learning providers with a total youth participation budget of nearly £6,373 million for 2008/09.</li> <li>■ Expenditure on learners with LLD was nearly £203 million in 07/08, compared to £170 million in 06/07.</li> <li>■ Also funds a range of learning for adults, focused on up-skilling adults and meeting employer needs, with a total adult participation budget of £3,215 million in 2008/09.</li> <li>■ Funding is routed through the LSC to providers through its regional structure (and through national contracts for some provision). The LSC also has a role in improving the quality of provision, in particular FE colleges and work-based-learning providers.</li> </ul>
Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Responsible for advising DIUS on the skills needs of the country.</li> <li>■ Manages the FE and skills research function.</li> <li>■ Manages the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and ensures their effectiveness.</li> </ul>
Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Determine the skills offer for their vocational area.</li> <li>■ Raise employer engagement, demand and investment in skills.</li> <li>■ Only those vocational qualifications which meet the standards set by the SSCs will be put onto the Qualifications and Credit Framework. This will help us to build employers' confidence in the programmes and qualifications offered by universities, colleges and training providers.</li> </ul>
Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Recently formed from the merger of the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL).</li> <li>■ Supports college and learning providers' performance and facilitates self-regulation.</li> </ul>

<p>University for Industry (Ufi) and Learndirect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ufi was created in 1998, and established Learndirect, which has become the largest e-learning network of its kind in the world. Ufi is funded by the LSC. Its remit is to use technology to transform the skills and employability of the working population.</li> <li>■ Ufi plans the Learndirect delivery network and the location of learning centres to ensure they are serving communities with low skills levels. It works closely with its providers to widen participation in learning.</li> <li>■ Through the Learndirect network, Ufi provides training and qualifications for people without skills for life or level 2 qualifications, so that they can progress to further learning or into work. Learndirect has 700 high street, college, and community learning centres in England. In June 2008, there were 526,034 funded enrolments on Learndirect programmes, of which 78 per cent were in skills for life, 19 per cent in ICT and 3 per cent in business and management and other courses.</li> </ul>
<p>Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provides an independent view of colleges' and learning providers' performance.</li> </ul>

## Actions being taken to improve disability equality

### Raising awareness

**2.19** An important theme in delivery is raising awareness, both of the programmes on offer and of the issues disabled people face with those providing services to them. We are working across the FE and skills system to ensure all of our delivery partners are aware of the importance of engaging disabled learners in their programmes and provision.

**2.20** In October 2006, the LSC published its national strategy *Learning for living and work* for learners with LDD. The three priority areas are:

- Investing in provision
- Raising the quality of provision
- Increasing economic participation through sustainable employment.

**2.21** It included the development of local provision and a fit-for-purpose funding system that is learner-focused, integrates multi-agency working, is equitable across all areas of the FE system and provides appropriate levels of support for learning and shared responsibility for costs. To support implementation of this five-year strategy, between November 2006 and September 2007 the LSC delivered a DED support programme for providers. Each LSC region has developed a strategy for further engagement with partners, sharing good practice and developing current practice. These strategies include objectives relating to:

- Better understanding learner needs and tailoring the curriculum to meet them
- Improving services through effective partnerships and building network expertise
- Improving progression routes including into employment.

### **Case study 2.2: Enabling disabled people to train service deliverers on their requirements**

Led by Cornwall County Council, this project was conceived to promote the inclusion of service users and their carers in staff development. The underlying concept was that service users are the experts about their own lives, and therefore best placed to train staff in 'person-centred' approaches to the provision of care. The programme achieved a 92 per cent success rate, with 23 of the 25 starters achieving the award. The learners who became trainers have since delivered a range of awareness raising events such as:

- Training for the Primary Care Trust
- A Keeping Safe course for the Safeguarding Adult Team
- Three days of training for Cornwall County Council Fire Brigade.
- Training for health trainers from the Health Promotion Service.

Recipients of this training have commented on how useful it has been, how it has changed their perceptions, and how it has opened their minds to a subject they assumed they understood.

**2.22** In December 2008, the LSC will publish a report on progress to date in implementing *Learning for living and work*. This report will review progress against all the headline actions.

**2.23** To help raise awareness of the DDA in relation to learners in prisons and young offender institutions (YOI), the LSC has contracted with Skill: The National Bureau for Learners and Students with Disabilities (often abbreviated to Skill), to produce information leaflets for staff, together with an information card for learners.

**2.24** The LSC has commissioned Dyslexia Action to develop a 'Hidden Disabilities' screening questionnaire. It aims to give non-education staff including prison officers and Jobcentre Plus staff the confidence to encourage offenders to seek appropriate support, for example regarding education, psychology and health.

**2.25** The training for Train to Gain skills brokers covers awareness of all equality issues including disability. Brokers are also made aware of their obligations under discrimination legislation to ensure they do not promulgate discriminatory practices and of their remit to remind employers of their obligations.

**2.26** The LSC will continue to provide capital grant support for provision for learners with LDD, where this is identified as a priority in regional capital plans.

**2.27** The national 'Our Future: It's in Our Hands' skills campaign was launched in June 2007. Its aim is to encourage all individuals and employers to realise the individual and business benefits of skills development and make the most of opportunities available. An early evaluation of responses showed that it is starting to reach people in hard-to-reach groups.

**2.28** Ufi has audited and commissioned new images for use on internal and external websites and printed matter to ensure a positive reflection of the diversity of learners, partners, and employees.

**2.29** Ufi has undertaken a range of work with its network to improve the quality of provision for disabled learners and to increase participation. During 2007, Learndirect has:

- Implemented EDIMs across the providers' network
- Published its equality and diversity learner policy to providers, including a self-assessment based accessibility audit
- In partnership with AbilityNet, devised FAQ-style guidance for providers which includes disability-related questions
- Provided a Learndirect Centre equality and diversity checklist, training handbook and Learning Centre Resource Pack
- Promoted the assistive technology available in learning centres and its accessibility through the Direct Enquiries website
- Worked with an external organisation to conduct an equality and diversity healthcheck to ensure that appropriate techniques and imagery are used in materials and practical access details are taken into account
- Revised the existing dyslexia guide for tutors and support staff, in partnership with the Adult Dyslexia Organisation (ADO), to enable them to better support dyslexic learners.

**2.30** LSIS publishes a range of guidance and good practice for providers of FE via the Excellence Gateway and runs a range of support programmes. LSIS:

- Ensures that the Excellence Gateway contains effective guidance for practitioners in the FE sector on supporting disabled people in learning, for example:
  - material on developing employability with learners with LDD
  - supporting people with learning difficulties to make the transition from vocational education and training into employment
  - good practice guidance on how Personal and Community Development Learning can best serve learners with learning difficulties
  - case studies on how providers have consulted with and involved disabled learners to make effective changes to how learning is delivered
- Is currently equality-proofing and impact assessing all programmes and capturing any issues specific to diverse groups including disabled people. This includes identifying areas of good practice as well as areas for improvement
- Is developing an engagement and involvement programme (aiming for early 2009) with disabled staff in the sector and will use the opportunity to consult on how our programmes could be enhanced or improved to support disabled people and to enhance leadership opportunities for disabled people.

### Improving access for and participation of disabled people

**2.31** The DIUS/DCSF Grant Letter to the LSC for 2009/10 and the associated LSC Statement of Priorities make clear that continued support for learners with LDD is a priority for the LSC, which is also expected to maintain progress in partnership working to improve support and progression. The LSC commissioned a major support programme in 2008, to support providers to develop single equality approaches, and to improve how they monitor data and set targets. The LSC is working in a range of partnerships within regions, as well as with national networks, which impact on the agendas of other Government Departments (for example work on mental health and offenders), as well as working on developing an integrated employment and skills agenda with Jobcentre Plus.

**2.32** The LSC and Learndirect's websites are designed to comply with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative (W3C3A) Level 2 (AA) guidelines as a minimum but

where possible comply with the higher Level 3 (AAA) guidelines. A web accessibility policy and guidelines are now being developed.

**2.33** Train to Gain management information for 2007/08 shows that 6 per cent of employees starting on Train to Gain were people with LDD (a total of just over 19,900 individuals). The second full evaluation of Train to Gain is expected to be published shortly; we will use the information from this to inform future policy development to ensure that any emerging equality issues are identified and addressed.

**2.34** The LSC provides extra funds for apprentices with additional learning or social needs. The needs of learners with disabilities are met through a supplement at a monthly rate. The LSC will also meet exceptional learning costs over the full length of the programme, including for the provision of specialist support and equipment for learners with disabilities.

**2.35** In *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking talent, building skills for all*, the Government set out plans to expand the number and range of Apprenticeships in England. It also contained proposals aimed at increasing the take-up and completion rates of Apprenticeships, including by learners who are currently under-represented in the programme such as disabled people. For example, we are developing pilots to increase the 'critical mass' of learners in non-traditional occupations to encourage more such applications, and also mentoring trials to support atypical apprentices, such as disabled people, through their experience.

**2.36** A National Vacancy Matching Service, to be introduced in 2008 and be fully functional by April 2009, will, for the first time in England, provide data on who is applying for Apprenticeships. This data will be used to focus activity on supporting employers and potential apprentices where there is evidence that groups of applicants, such as disabled people, are not being successful in their applications.

**2.37** Ufi has developed and delivered a training package for courseware developers to explain in a practical way how to make e-learning screens as accessible as possible to disabled learners, resulting in developers having a much better understanding of disabled learners' needs. Ufi has embedded accessibility guidelines internally and with courseware suppliers. Improvements to the Ufi courseware specification and acceptance testing process also ensure high quality courseware to meet the needs of disabled learners.

**2.38** Learndirect worked with representative organisations such as RNIB (the Royal National Institute for the Blind) and Deafax to help increase access to courses for learners with visual and hearing impairments through testing assistive technologies.

**2.39** The Integrated Employment and Skills Programme is run jointly by DIUS and DWP. DIUS contributes to the work of DWP's Disability Employment Action Committee (DEAC). We are working with the DEAC to ensure its members are fully aware of policy developments relating to employment and skills which support disabled people, and are taking their advice on policy developments which affect our disabled clients and learners. For example, in response to the Committee's concerns, the adult advancement and careers service prospectus, published in October 2008, committed to ensuring that the service will be accessible to those with disabilities. The Committee members have shared their knowledge of strong local initiatives that we can build on to support disabled people in their transition into learning and work.

**2.40** Related to the 2012 Olympic Games, Personal Best is a programme offering priority customers, including disabled people, a level 1 qualification in Event Volunteering, and the opportunity to gain the 'soft skills' needed to move closer to the job market.

**2.41** The aim is to raise the profile of volunteering amongst those furthest away from the labour market, using it as a means of improving skills/knowledge and experience, and creating routes into employment. A pilot of the programme has shown that once these hard-to-reach individuals are engaged they find it easier to move into employment or further training. The Personal Best programme will engage with 20,000 London individuals. 10,000 people are expected to receive a nationally accredited level 1 qualification in volunteering from the programme and 3,000 Londoners who graduate from the programme are expected to enter employment.

**2.42** Graduates of the programme are guaranteed an interview with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) as a games time volunteer. The scheme was originally piloted in London boroughs and a model is now being finalised to be extended to the English Regions and Nations should they wish to include it in their plans.

**2.43** A new adult advancement and careers service will be fully operational from August 2010, combining skills and training advice with access to practical guidance on overcoming wider obstacles to progress such as employment rights, health, transport, personal finance issues, childcare and financial support for learners. In-depth, differentiated support will be targeted at priority groups, including people with LDD. It aims to ensure that everyone is able to access the help they need to take stock of where they are in achieving their goals and ambitions and to get the support they need to advance themselves and achieve their full potential. The new service will be trialled over the next two years and a key element of the trials will be a 'no wrong door' approach developed jointly with local authorities, colleges, the voluntary sector, childcare, health and financial advice services, offering seamless referrals to more expert advice where necessary.

**2.44** DIUS has also established the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning, which reported in March 2008 on systemic failure in the support of disabled people in the lifelong learning workforce. An implementation group has been formed to act on the recommendations accepted by DIUS and is working to develop an action plan. This will report to Ministers and reports will be made available through Lifelong Learning UK and partner organisations. We expect to have a progress report in the summer of 2009. The group will inform and advise on the FE Workforce Strategy and will have a major role to play in increasing the diversity of the workforce and in improving the quality of support given to disabled staff.

**2.45** Lifelong Learning UK also produces an annual diversity profile which provides a range of information about the FE workforce including disability. This information is used to determine local and national activities to address disability challenges in the sector's workforce.

**2.46** A fundamental principle in developing the Framework for Excellence (the means by which the quality of provision across the sector will be measured) is that consideration is given to disability issues. We have also ensured that our learner views surveys are accessible to all learners with LDD through aspects such as the language used, information technology (IT) and intermediary support.

**2.47** The recent DIUS consultation on IAL has highlighted the need to overcome the barriers to learning faced by those living in residential care homes. We are working with partners like the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and the First Taste charity to develop a model that specifically addresses physical and mental health improvement, including special attention to the needs of the most marginalised residents, such as those with a hearing or sight loss and clients with advancing states of dementia.

### **Involving disabled people**

**2.48** It is a key principle that disabled people should be involved in the development of services to them. A range of mechanisms is in place to support this in the FE and skills sector.

**2.49** The Mental Health Network is funded by the LSC and facilitated by NIACE as part of the LSC's partnership project for improving services for people with mental health difficulties. The network, which is open to providers, mental health service users and other interested people, meets to share best practice and resources. Recently the network focused on the Healthy Colleges initiative and supported the launch of the consultation on the LSC's National Mental Health Strategy.

**2.50** In July 2006, the LSC launched the Talk to Des campaign, one aspect of an involvement programme aimed at engaging with disabled young people, their parents, carers and others to gather their opinions on LSC policy through an electronic survey to inform the development of the Learning for living and work strategy. The LSC commissioned the Learning and Skills Network to develop an online discussion forum to promote disability equality in the sector as part of the Disability Equality Scheme. A new virtual learning environment has since been established as part of the LSC's SES provider support programme. This enables all LSC-funded providers to share good practice on embedding a single equality approach and also to access extensive materials, including case studies, an equality audit tool and checklist.

**2.51** The LSC continues to consult with its own disabled employees through its Workforce Equality and Diversity Steering Group, a voluntary group of staff which advises on meeting equality and diversity needs in the workforce.

**2.52** Including learners with LDD is a key criterion in user acceptance testing of the Learner Registration Service, enabling learners over the age of 14 to be assigned a unique learner number in the creation of lifelong learner records.

**2.53** DIUS and the LSC will be bringing people with learning difficulties and disabilities into scope for national trials of Skills Accounts in 2009/10.

**2.54** The National Learner Panel gives learners a say in the development of FE at national level. Members are aged from 17 to 67, are from diverse backgrounds and are studying a wide range of subjects in very different settings. In seeking members of the panel, there was a deliberate attempt to capture the diverse nature of the FE learner community across a wide range of variables. A number of panel members have declared learning difficulties and/or disabilities such as dyslexia, mental health disability, hearing impairment and visual impairment. The LSC has commissioned work on a National Panel for Disabled Learners to complement the work of the National Learner Panel.

### Case study 2.3: Focus groups with disabled apprentices

In order to shape the LSC's response to the proposals on addressing inequality in *World-class Apprenticeships: Unlocking talent, building skills for all*, the LSC commissioned research into the experiences of current and potential apprentices from 'atypical' groups. This included focus groups in summer 2008 with apprentices with learning difficulties in the north west and with potential apprentices with LDD in London.

Disabled apprentices said that they found it particularly difficult to find employment and were concerned that this would be the case when finding a work placement. They also told us about the barriers they have faced on their programmes and the extra support they need to succeed.

This information will help the LSC to shape the delivery of mentoring and critical mass pilots, and ensure they meet the needs of apprentices and potential apprentices.

### Improving the data we hold

**2.55** We will continue to maintain and develop our evidence base on disability as set out above.

**2.56** In 2007, a Learner Registration Service was launched, which enables learners over the age of 14 to be assigned a unique learner number, enabling the creation of lifelong learner records. This will enable policy makers to understand better how different groups of people progress, and what policy interventions are most effective in supporting different groups. From September 2009, independent specialist providers, who support approximately 3,500 learners with LDD, will complete the ILRs which record learner details and learning aims.

**2.57** Using data generated from the ILR, the LSC regularly monitors and reports on the participation and success rates of learners with LDD. Monitoring and reporting processes include: regular analysis of the latest available data within the LSC's internal corporate reports; annual reporting within LSC statistical first releases; and an annual equality and diversity performance report. Since September 2008, the Information Authority has agreed to two new codes in the ILR disability field. This means that Asperger's Syndrome and Autistic Spectrum Disorder are now available to learners to self-declare on the ILR.

**2.58** Additionally, the LSC sets EDIMs, enabling it to judge the overall direction and distance of travel. They are based on analysis of success-rate data disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and learning difficulty or disability, and are linked to Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets and key performance measures. National EDIMs are set in the SES. Progress is monitored annually through the equality and diversity performance report, and reviewed through the annual review of the SES. The LSC also expects providers to set EDIMs within their self-assessment and improvement plans, and challenges them on progress through its annual dialogue.

**2.59** National EDIMs for the LSC include:

- Raising the success rates for all groups of learners to at least the 2005/06 average for 16–18-year-olds taking full level 2 and full level 3 qualifications and for young people and adults on Apprenticeships (by 2010).
- Increasing the proportion of Skills for Life target achievements from under-represented

groups, with a particular focus on women with a disability and disabled learners from the Bangladeshi community (by 2010).

**2.60** Progress on national EDIMs is monitored annually through the LSC's equality and diversity performance report, so full details are expected by the end of 2009. However, some examples of progress from early monitoring data suggest that young males and females with LDD on Advanced Apprenticeships are achieving above the 2005/06 average for all learners, so this EDIM has already been achieved. The gap between the success rates of those with and without LDD has also reduced significantly from 9 percentage points to 6. Similarly, adult males and females with LDD on Apprenticeships at level 2 are both achieving above the 2005/06 average for all learners. Disappointingly, however, the gap between success rates of learners with an LDD and those without increased slightly from 4 to 5 percentage points.

**2.61** The LSC also sets EDIMs at a local level to enable a more differentiated and sensitive response to the particular issues faced in local communities. It will review the overall framework for EDIMs, for example their effectiveness and appropriateness, through the annual review of the SES, which will be complete by spring 2009. The LSC also expects all colleges and providers to set EDIMs within their self-assessment and improvement plans, to ensure that any issues of under-representation by groups are identified and addressed in relation to learning provision. The LSC uses this information to challenge colleges and providers on progress, as part of its annual dialogue with them.

**2.62** Ufi conducts a learner satisfaction survey three times during the year, and analyses results by gender, ethnicity, disability and age. The results are used to inform service development.

## Cross-sector approach

**2.63** A range of issues require cross-sector working between Departments and agencies if they are to be addressed successfully.

**2.64** DIUS is working in partnership with the DCSF to secure effective delivery of 14–19 reforms for young people, which for learners with LDD extend to age 25. We are also working with the DCSF to deliver a wide range of Family Learning Programmes which are funded from the LSC's budget for Adult Safeguarded Learning, to extend opportunities for families to learn together. This funding was announced in the Children's Plan and is set at £210 million per annum to 2010/11, enhanced by a further £10 million a year over the same period.

**2.65** DIUS has convened an Equalities Network of external experts to advise on particular adult skills policies as they are being formulated. The network includes members from Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (and formerly from the Disability Rights Commission), from Skill and from the DWP's Disability Employment Advisory Committee. Run jointly with DCSF's Youth Participation and Attainment group, the network focuses in depth on live policy issues. Its objectives are to:

- Advise and challenge DIUS and DCSF on assessing the impact of their policies on skills and 14–19 reform
- Support the development and implementation of new policies and programmes

- Act as a communication forum in which members can raise and respond to queries about DIUS and DCSF programmes and cascade information and good practice as required
- Review findings from research, evaluation and pilots to assess their implications for equality in education and training
- Identify opportunities to work with employers and education and training providers to address equality and diversity issues.

**2.66** DIUS participates in the development work supporting PSA 16 which focuses on four particularly vulnerable client groups, including adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities and adults with mental health problems. The work includes creating customised employment schemes including placements in civil service departments

**2.67** DIUS is also participating in cross-Government work arising out of the Dame Carol Black review of mental health and employment, to promote an Employment Strategy for those with mental health difficulties.

**2.68** DIUS is one of the six Departments which jointly own the Independent Living Strategy, the subject of recent consultation with disabled people on how best to involve them in its implementation and monitoring. DIUS (together with the DWP, DH, DCSF, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) will be signing up to a cross-Government response to this consultation shortly, covering areas such as how learning can help to build leadership capacity amongst disabled people and their organisations.

**2.69** DIUS and the DWP are committed to ensuring that the skills and employment systems work together more effectively for the customer's benefit. That will be reflected in the priorities for Jobcentre Plus, the LSC and the new universal adult advancement and careers service.

**2.70** Building on the findings of the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning, the LSC is supporting the work of the cross-sectoral Disability Equality Implementation Group in:

- Supporting lifelong learning and infrastructure organisations in implementing the commission's recommendations
- Addressing institutional disability discrimination against disabled staff
- Identifying barriers to inclusion and ways to remove them
- Monitoring and advising on how best to improve the disability profile of the lifelong learning sector workforce.

**2.71** The LSC is a member of the Employers' Forum on Disability, which offers employers networking, good-practice workshops and benchmarking tools. In 2007 they improved from Bronze to Silver standard.

**2.72** The LSC is consulting on its proposals to re-launch its Mental Health Strategy which promotes economic and social participation in learning, to aid in returning to work and achieving well-being. The strategy resulting from this consultation will promote practical ways in which capacity in the FE system can increase to support those with mental health issues, demand for learning can increase among people with mental health difficulties, and achievement and participation can increase among learners with mental health difficulties.



## Chapter 3 Higher education

### The evidence base: assessment of data and key issues

**3.1** The evidence base relating to disabled people in HE is not as solid as it is for other groups of people, such as those from lower socio-economic categories or from minority ethnic groups. The main problems associated with efforts to determine HE participation rates for disabled people are:<sup>1</sup>

- The lack of a generally recognised definition of disability, and general taxonomy of subsets of disability
- The essentially self-assessing nature of disability within the population statistics
- The use of different coding frames in national statistics and HE statistics
- Inconsistency of definitions even within HE (e.g. between HE institutions and FE colleges which provide HE).

**3.2** That said, data is available from a range of sources about prior attainment, applications, acceptances and enrolments, the student experience, degree attainment and post-HE prospects. So while policy-makers and practitioners do not have a robustly coherent story about HE participation rates of disabled people, they do have useful information about the issues affecting the participation of disabled people in HE.

### Key facts and figures<sup>2</sup>

#### Prior attainment

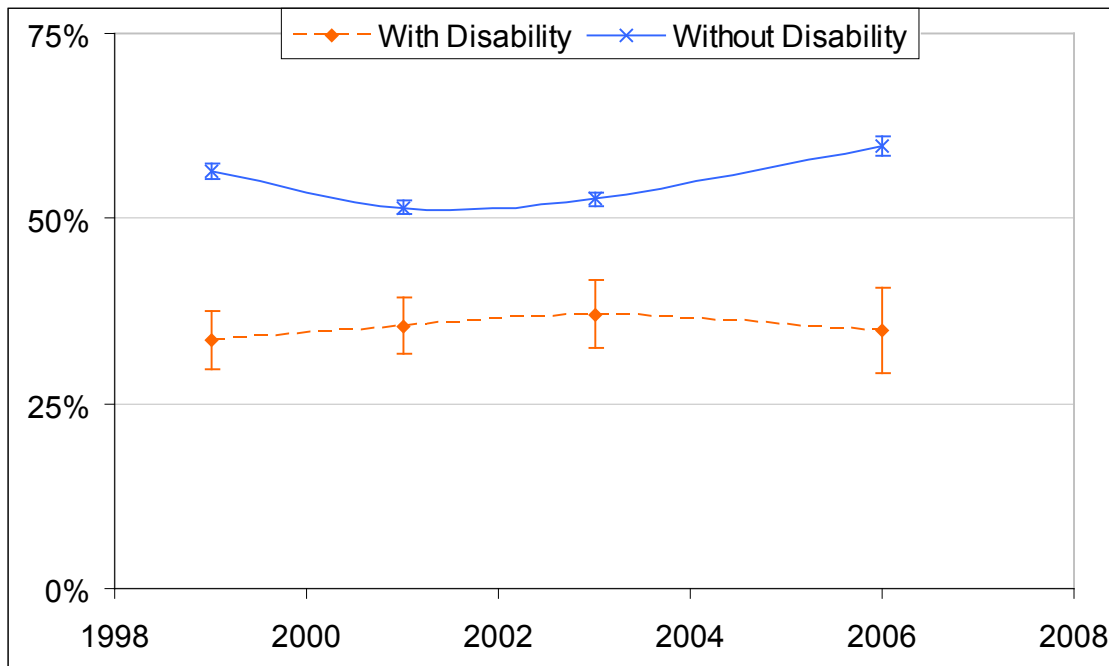
**3.3** Key data about prior attainment of disabled people is drawn primarily from the Youth Cohort Study (YCS).

**3.4** At age 16, disabled people tend to have lower attainment than non-disabled people as measured by General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results. However, the estimates are too imprecise to be confident about changes over time. See Figure 3.1.

1 Ramsden, B., *Participation in Higher Education: A Study to Determine Whether the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate Should be Disaggregated*, DfES Research Report RR676, 2005.

2 Most of the content of the section on evidence is taken from the Department's forthcoming Topic Paper *Disability and Students of Higher Education*, due to be published by early 2009 at the latest. The Topic Paper is based on the following data sources:

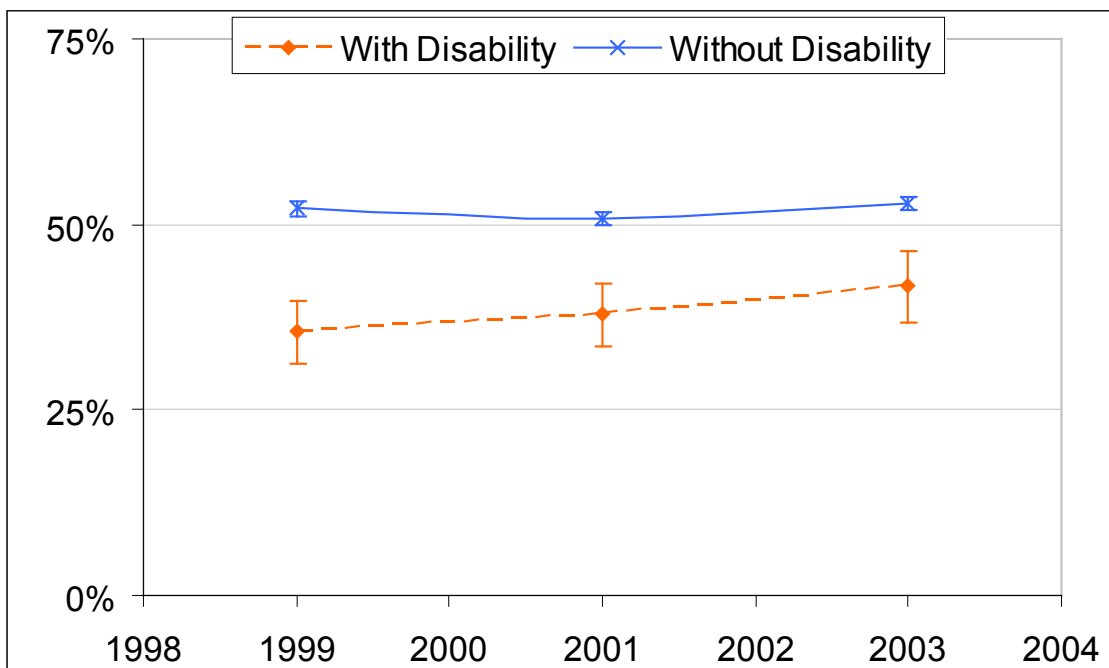
- (a) Youth Cohort Study (YCS) Cohorts 10, 11, 12 and 13 (16-year-olds in 1999/2000, 2001/02 and 2003/04 respectively)
- (b) Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) application and acceptance data
- (c) Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record data, incorporating DSA data
- (d) the National Student Survey (NSS)
- (e) the Student Income and Expenditure Survey (SIES)
- (f) the labour force survey (LFS)
- (g) the DCSF's National Pupil Database (NPD).

**Figure 3.1: Proportion of 16-year-olds attaining 5+ good GCSEs, 1999–2006**

Source: YCS Cohorts 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Note: error bars indicate  $\pm 2$  \* the standard error of the estimated proportions.

**3.5** Disabled young people are only slightly less likely than those without disabilities to be studying full-time at age 17, but they are much less likely to be studying for level 3 qualifications, and less likely to be studying for A Levels. Much of this closely relates to differences in GCSE attainment. See Figure 3.2.

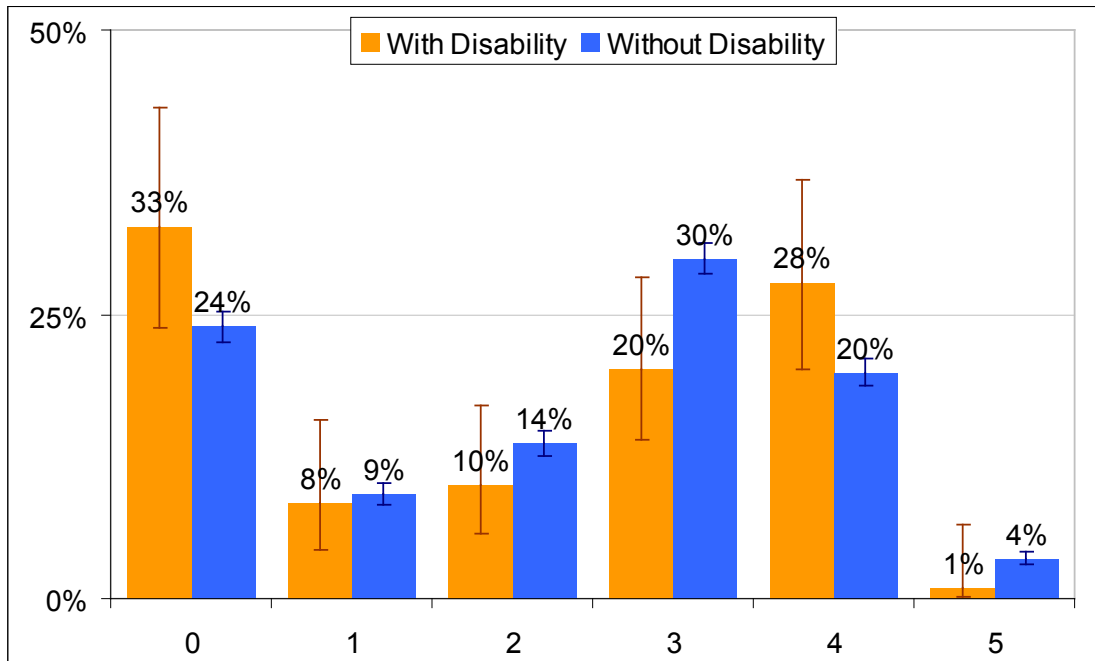
**Figure 3.2: Proportion studying for level 3 qualifications at age 16, 1999–2003**

Source: YCS Cohorts 10, 11 and 12.

Note: error bars indicate  $\pm 2$  \* the standard error of the estimated proportions.

**3.6** The level 3 attainment of young people with disabilities is lower than that of their non-disabled counterparts. There is some evidence that this is true even for high attainers at GCSE although the estimates for this group are somewhat imprecise so it is not easy to be certain. See Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3: Number of A Levels attained by 18-year-olds with five good GCSEs by Year 11**



Source: YCS Cohort 12.

Note: error bars indicate  $\pm 2 \times$  the standard error of the estimated proportions.

**3.7** Of those with five or more A\*–C grades at GCSE, disabled students are only slightly less likely than non-disabled students to say that they will be applying to HE.

### Applications, acceptances and enrolments

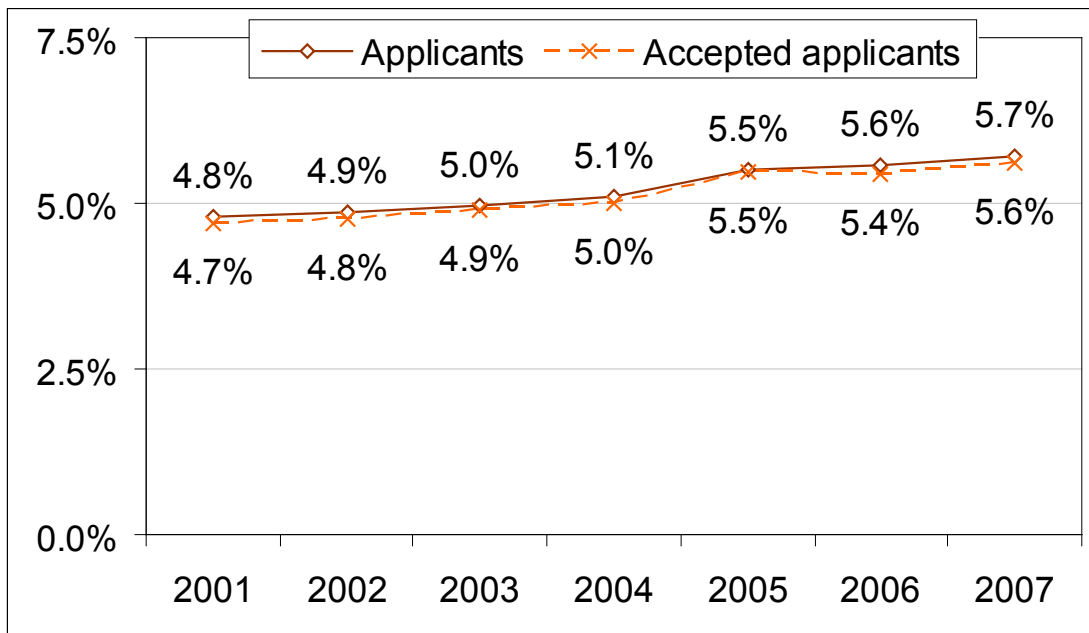
**3.8** Data on these aspects comes from the YCS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

**3.9** The proportion of applicants, accepted applicants and enrolled students who declare a disability or are in receipt of DSAs has increased over time. It is difficult to say whether this is due to more students declaring/institutions recording a disability, or to an actual increase in the number of disabled students in HE. See Figure 3.4.

**3.10** YCS, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the National Pupil Database – Higher Education Statistics Agency (NPD–HESA) sources all show some, albeit tentative, evidence of lower participation rates for young people with disabilities than for those without disabilities (special educational needs in the case of the latter source). Where it is possible to account for A Level attainment using these sources we find that the gaps appear to be markedly reduced, but again estimates tend to be imprecise within the smaller groups of high attainers.

**3.11** The LFS shows that for older age groups a lower proportion of people with disabilities hold HE-level qualifications compared to those without disabilities, but again this difference seems to be much smaller for those with two A Levels.

**Figure 3.4: Proportion of applicants and accepted applicants declaring a disability (UK-domiciled, full-time undergraduate courses)**



Source: UCAS Annual Data Sets.

**3.12** HESA data shows that in England there has been a significant increase over recent years in the number and proportion of undergraduates who are in receipt of DSAs. See Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Number and proportion of full-time first degree students in England in receipt of DSAs**

Year	Total full-time first degree students	Number in receipt of DSAs	Percentage in receipt of DSAs
2006/07	779,415	34,446	4.4
2005/06	770,565	31,565	4.1
2004/05	743,255	27,305	3.7
2003/04	731,480	22,820	3.1
2002/03	712,525	18,640	2.6

**3.13** Disabled students in HE have lower entry qualifications than their non-disabled counterparts, and that they are also more likely to have entered HE through non-traditional routes.

**3.14** Undergraduate (compared to postgraduate), male (compared to female) and full-time (compared to part-time) students are more likely to report disability.

**3.15** The most common disability affecting HE students is dyslexia. 52 per cent of full-time undergraduate entrants in 2006/07 reporting a disability reported having dyslexia (16,000 out of 31,000).

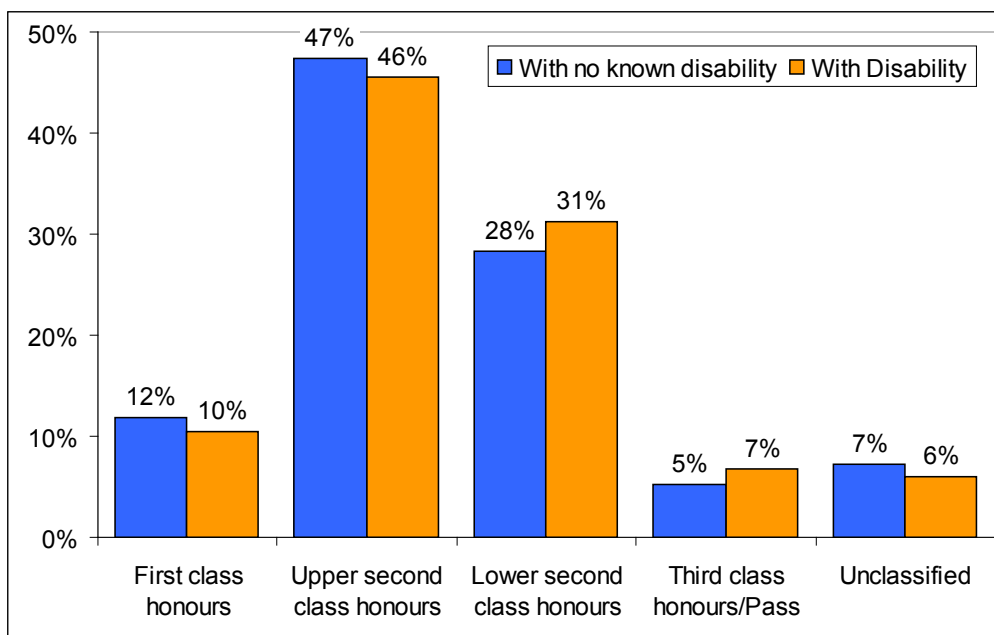
**3.16** 'Creative arts and design' and 'Agriculture and related subjects' had particularly high concentrations of students in receipt of DSAs. Medicine and mathematical sciences, on the other hand, had the lowest concentrations of students in receipt of DSAs.

### The student experience, degree attainment and post-HE prospects

**3.17** Fuller analysis of the National Student Survey indicates that within the context that all six scales and 'Overall Satisfaction' are highly rated by students, dyslexic students were less positive than students with no declared disability on all scales except teaching and learning and academic support.

**3.18** HESA and Student Income and Expenditure Survey (SIES) data shows that a slightly greater proportion of students with no disability (59 per cent) obtain a 'good' degree (first or upper second class) than students with a disability (56 per cent). See Figure 3.5.

**Figure 3.5: Distribution of degree attainment, by disability**



Source: HESA 2006/07.

**3.19** The proportion of full-time first degree entrants in receipt of DSAs not continuing in HE after their first year in 2003/04 was 7.5 per cent – lower than the corresponding figure for all full-time students, which was 9.5 per cent. This difference was similar in 2002/03 and cannot be explained by differential subject choice and prior attainment. It is worth highlighting that these students are in receipt of support via DSAs.

**3.20** Students in receipt of DSAs have slightly higher income and expenditure than other students. The higher income is accounted for by DSAs and higher contributions from family and friends. The higher expenditure is due to higher living, housing and participation costs. See Tables 3.2 and 3.3.

**Table 3.2: Total student income and main sources of income for all full-time students and those in receipt of DSAs (£)**

	All full-time	In receipt of DSAs
Main sources of student support	3,327	3,635
Other sources of student support	629	2,075
Income from paid work	1,821	1,671
Income from family and friends	2,104	2,641
Social security benefits	233	363
Other income	218	109
<b>Total income</b>	<b>8,333</b>	<b>10,493</b>

Source: SIES 2004/05.

**Table 3.3 Total student expenditure and main sources of expenditure for all full-time students and those in receipt of DSAs (£)**

	All full-time	In receipt of DSAs
Living costs	5,870	6,519
Housing costs	2,276	2,529
Participation costs	1,980	2,110
Spending on children	147	162
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>10,273</b>	<b>11,320</b>

Source: SIES 2004/05.

**3.21** Studies have found an improvement in the experience of disabled students since the introduction of DSAs and legislation specifying the responsibilities of institutions. There is still room for improvement, however, in disabled students' experiences in the areas of teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation, and staff development.

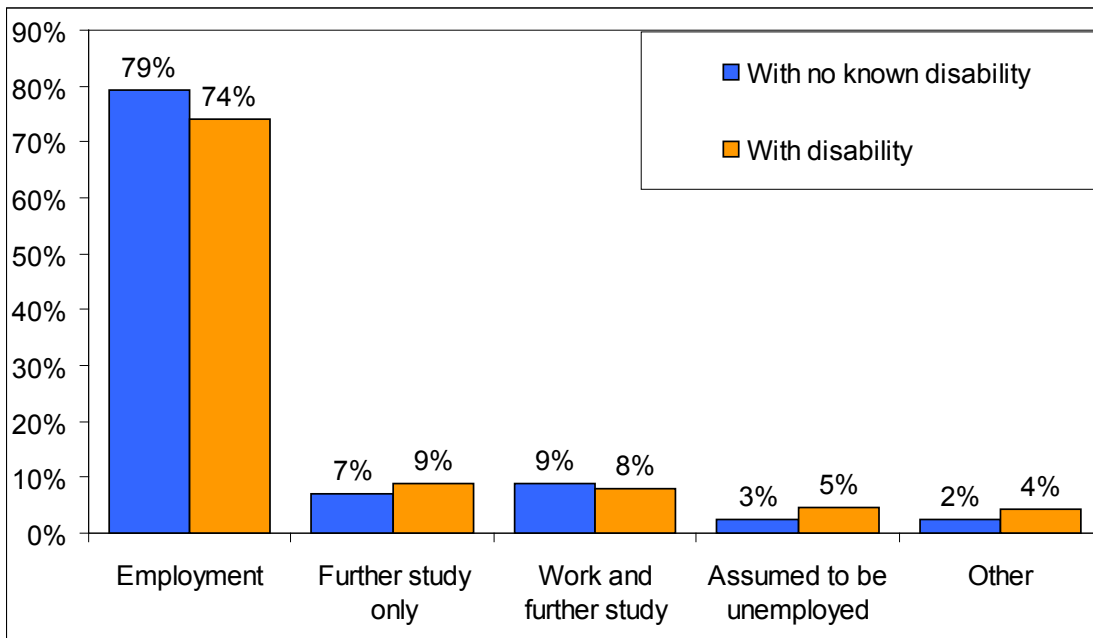
**3.22** Overall, qualifiers reporting a disability are more likely to be unemployed six months after qualifying. However, outcomes differ considerably depending upon the type of disability reported (see Figure 3.6). A similar pattern can also be seen two-and-a-half years after graduation for those students qualifying in 2002/03 (see Figure 3.7).

**Figure 3.6: First destination (percentage of those with known destinations) six months after qualifying, by disability, 2006/07**



Source: HESA 2006/07.

**Figure 3.7: Destinations (percentage of those with known destinations) of 2002/03 UK domiciled, full-time, first degree graduates, as at November 2006**



Source: HESA, Destinations of leavers from higher education: Longitudinal survey.

## HE sector approach

**3.23** Widening participation and unlocking the talents of all learners is core to the success of our HE, as is ensuring that students are not faced with barriers to impede their progress in HE.

**3.24** HE institutions are responsible for all employment matters relating to staff, and the Department looks to institutions to ensure that disabled staff are proportionately represented in HE and offered opportunities for advancement.

**3.25** Data on the HE workforce for 2006/07 tells us that the number of disabled staff in UK HE institutions is:

- 3,515 (2.1 per cent) academic staff
- 5,115 (2.6 per cent) professional and support staff
- 8,630 (2.4 per cent) in total.<sup>3</sup>

## Principal public authorities and sector bodies in the HE sector

**3.26** The table below shows the existing delivery partners involved in implementing the policies set out above:

<b>HEFCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Distributes public money to universities and colleges in England that provide HE.</li> <li>■ Provides funding which supports high-quality, cost-effective teaching and research and meets the diverse needs of students, the economy and society.</li> <li>■ HEFCE's SES details its approach to disability equality both within the Council itself and also in terms of its policy functions.</li> <li>■ HEFCE recognises that it needs to ensure the involvement of disabled people in the design and development of its policies and practices in order to be compliant with the DDA legislation. More positively than simply abiding by the letter of the law, HEFCE sees that this will also help to drive forward a culture change on disability equality.</li> <li>■ HEFCE has taken steps to include disabled people in its policy making processes and to increase the numbers of disabled people employed by the Council.</li> </ul>
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<sup>3</sup> To find out more about trends relating to disabled staff in HE see HEFCE's workforce framework at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lgm/hr/frame/> and HEFCE's SES at [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07\\_01/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_01/)

<b>Student Loans Company (SLC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A non-profit-making organisation providing loans and grants annually to almost one million students in UK colleges and universities. Also manages the administration of the collection of loan repayments from just over two million customers no longer in HE.</li> <li>■ Has taken forward action specifically relating to disabled students, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Focusing on ensuring that its communication channels, such as websites, and customer processes meet the diverse needs of disabled students</li> <li>□ Running a 12-month pilot of a specialist unit aimed at supporting vulnerable customers and/or their representatives</li> <li>□ Working with local authorities to develop a more efficient and supportive process for the administration of DSA.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>HE institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ HE institutions are classed as public authorities in the DDA, and as such they are legally required to meet both the general duty and specific duties to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people in HE.</li> </ul>
<b>Equality Challenge Unit (ECU)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Independent of Government.</li> <li>■ Established in 2001 to promote equality for staff in the HE sector. Its role was expanded in 2006 to cover equality and diversity issues for students as well as staff.</li> <li>■ Supports the HE sector in realising the potential of all staff and students whatever their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief or age.</li> </ul>
<b>Higher Education Academy (HE Academy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Independent of Government.</li> <li>■ Supports the HE sector in providing the best possible learning experience for all students. The HE Academy's strategic aims are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Identify, develop and disseminate evidence-informed approaches, in particular to embed disability equality and widening participation within policy and practice</li> <li>□ Broker and encourage the sharing of effective practice, including raising the awareness and dissemination of inclusive practices across the higher education sector</li> <li>□ Support universities and colleges in bringing about strategic change</li> <li>□ Inform, influence and interpret policy</li> <li>□ Raise the status of teaching.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Action on Access**

- The national coordination team for widening participation in HE.
- supports the development, promotion and enhancement of social inclusion for the broadest possible access to HE by:
  - Working with institutions and key stakeholders across the sector
  - Working with partnerships including Aimhigher
  - Working to promote inclusive approaches to disability within HE.

## Actions being taken to improve disability equality

**3.27** HEFCE has a strong focus on supporting the increased participation of disabled students in HE.

**3.28** As the landscape is markedly different today and HEFCE and the sector are moving forward with the implementation of their respective disability equality schemes, HEFCE has commissioned a thorough review of its policy as it relates to disabled students. The main report by the Centre for Disability Studies and School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds will provide an in-depth overview of policy towards disabled students and very detailed results of a survey amongst institutions about support they provide.

**3.29** The review will comprise:

- Commissioned research to establish what the sector is doing currently to meet the needs of disabled students and progress made since the publication of HEFCE 99/04.
- An evaluation of the DEP.
- A review of its method for allocating the mainstream disability allocation to ensure that, in light of the increases in student numbers claiming the DSA, and the changes in legislation, the current methodology remains fit for purpose.

**3.30** The Review will report to HEFCE by January 2009 and HEFCE will use the findings of the review to inform future policy and its current support to the sector with regard to supporting disabled students.

**3.31** HEFCE published a joint report with the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) in 1999 called the Guidance on base-level provision for disabled students in higher education institutions. The base-level provision document contains information that is still useful and relevant today. However, both HEFCE and HEFCW are keen to ensure that this guidance is updated to reflect the issues currently facing institutions and the progress the sector has already made. Both funding councils are keen to reflect in such guidance the move away from 'minimum compliance' towards the spirit of 'positive promotion' as underpinned by the amendment to the DDA in 2005.

### Supporting HE students

**3.32** DSAs are available to help students in HE with the extra costs they may incur on the course as a direct result of a disability, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty. DSAs are paid in addition to the standard student finance package; they are not means-tested and do not have to be repaid.

**3.33** The type and level of DSA support applicable is identified by means of an assessment of course-related needs carried out by an experienced assessor at an independent assessment centre, or by trained disability advisers in HE institutions.

**3.34** Under the DSA scheme, eligible undergraduate students may receive the following allowances in 2008/09:

Allowance	Maximum payable to eligible full-time undergraduates	Maximum payable to eligible part-time undergraduates
Specialist equipment allowance (for the duration of the course)	£5,030	£5,030
Non-medical helper's allowance	£20,000	£15,000
General allowance	£1,680	£1,260
Travel allowance	Unlimited	Unlimited

For full and part-time postgraduate students there is one allowance of up to £10,000 in 2008/09 to meet all costs.

**3.35** We have increased the non-medical helper's allowance for undergraduates and the postgraduate DSA by about 60 per cent for 2008/09 because there are a small number of severely disabled students who need a lot of support, particularly those with sensory impairments.

**3.36** Government expenditure on DSAs has increased steadily in recent years (data relates to English HE students in receipt of full-time, part-time, or postgraduate DSAs awarded by local authorities or the SLC).

Academic year	No of students	Total expenditure	Average expenditure per student
2004/05	32,000	£71 million	£2,180
2006/07	38,000	£81 million	£2,130

**3.37** Key DSA policy changes are given in the table below:

Academic year	DSA policy change
1990/91	Current DSA scheme (consisting of four separate allowances) introduced for full-time undergraduates.
1998/99	DSAs became non-means tested.
2000/01	DSAs extended to part-time undergraduate students including Open University and other distance-learning students.
2000/01	DSAs extended to full- and part-time postgraduate students including distance learners.
2005/06	DSAs extended to full-time undergraduate students studying by distance learning.

**3.38** The National Audit Office (NAO) published a report in July 2007 entitled *Staying the course: The retention of students in higher education*. The report looked at retention and completion rates of first degree students in HE in England and found that disabled students receiving DSAs were much more likely to continue their course than students who are not disabled.

### Supporting HE institutions

**3.39** HEFCE is committed to ensuring that all those with the potential to benefit from HE have the opportunity to do so, whatever their background and whenever they need it. As part of this commitment, it has been funding initiatives in institutions aimed at improving access and progression for disabled students since 1993. This funding to institutions to enable them to best support disabled students complements the direct funding provided to students through DSAs.

**3.40** Between 1993 and 1999 HEFCE supported special disability funding programmes that had the broad aim of widening the participation of students with disabilities in HE. Over 100 projects worth £12 million were funded through these programmes and significant gains were made by the sector for students with disabilities. Two further specialist funding programmes between 1999 and 2005 totalling over £11 million supported a range of projects designed to ensure that provision for disabled students was consistent across the sector. During this time, the National Disability Team provided hands-on support and advice both to funded projects and to institutions more generally.

**3.41** From 2000/01, HEFCE introduced a disability premium into its mainstream teaching funding method. The mainstream disability allocation provides institutions with additional funds, on a recurrent basis, to recognise that additional costs are incurred in recruiting and supporting students with disabilities. HEFCE's overall disability funding allocation for the sector has increased from £7 million when it was introduced in 2000/01, to £13 million in 2007/08.

**3.42** HEFCE has also helped HE institutions to invest in their physical infrastructure and to make anticipatory adjustments to ensure that disabled students and staff can access their facilities. In May 2003, HEFCE invited institutions to bid for round 3 project capital funding. Of the £494 million that was subsequently allocated to improve capital and IT infrastructure to support learning and teaching, £117 million was allocated to improve provision for disabled students.

**3.43** Since January 2006, HEFCE has funded the Disability Equality Partnership (DEP), which comprises the HE Academy, ECU and Action on Access, and promotes disability equality across the HE sector.

**3.44** The focus of the DEP is on providing advice and guidance to institutions to help them support disabled students. The DEP aims to help embed the disability agenda across HE, disseminate best practice and proactively respond to the needs of the sector by engaging with current and emerging themes and priorities.

**3.45** The HE Academy's mission is to enhance the student learning experience and its activities focus on teaching, learning, curriculum and assessment. ECU is the lead organisation supporting the HE sector in its mission to realise the potential of all staff and students whatever their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief or age. Action on Access contributes a widening participation focus, to promote access for disabled students. The DEP brings these three organisations together to provide a comprehensive and targeted service to help embed disability services in all aspects of HE.

**3.46** Each organisation has a remit to embed disability within its own strategic aims and operational plans, as well as to work in partnership to support the development of an inclusive culture and provide a range of services to the sector. The DEP currently provides a regular e-bulletin and a helpdesk which offers advice and guidance to institutions.

**3.47** As part of HEFCE's positive promotion of equality in the sector, annual performance indicators are published which provide comparative data on the performance of institutions in recruiting disabled students. If institutions are not meeting their benchmarks this will be discussed in meetings between HEFCE's institutional teams and HE institutions. HEFCE will also be asking institutions for Widening Participation strategic assessments. Within these HEFCE will ask HE institutions to set their own targets and milestones and provide information on how they intend measuring the success of their activities – provision and support for disabled students will be included in these documents.

**3.48** Other initiatives and resources include a Special Interest Group on Inclusion in Higher Education, good-practice guides for academics, educational developers, learning support staff and disability service advisors. Action on Access aims to ensure that disability issues are embedded in widening participation initiatives. It holds a diverse array of disability-centred resources which were developed by the HEFCE-sponsored National Disability Team. ECU offers support to institutions across all equality areas and leads a range of projects aimed at improving disability equality in HE.

### **Raising aspiration, attainment and participation: Aimhigher**

**3.49** The Aimhigher programme is the key initiative relating to widening participation in HE. It is funded by DIUS, and its main aim is to address the under-representation in HE of people from lower income/social class backgrounds. Disabled people are a priority group. Aimhigher is a national outreach programme and the typical activities it provides include: visits to universities, master classes, summer schools and mentoring. There is also a national roadshow which visits schools and colleges in disadvantaged areas. Local area partnerships determine the specific activities provided and which groups these will be targeted at, according to local needs but within national guidelines.

### Case study 3.1: Aimhigher Greater Merseyside (AHGTM)

AHGTM's approach involves both developing inclusive activities, and targeted work that meets the needs of disabled young people and is informed by their views. It has created a disability working group, which includes disabled young people. AHGTM uses the social model of disability in its work, and the organisation's disability coordinator is important in the central coordinating team.

Activities and achievements:

- A poster campaign on the theme 'Difference matters – include us'. Six young people were photographed for the posters. They shared information about themselves to raise awareness of HE opportunities for disabled young people.
- An 'access requirements form' to help Aimhigher project leaders identify and meet young people's needs, especially where a disability might be hidden.
- A young persons' reference group. This is developing from the group that worked on the poster campaign.
- An information evening for parents of young disabled people.
- Guidelines and a toolkit for practitioners. Once developed, these may be rolled out nationally.
- The Merseyside Outlook programme. Targeting disabled, black and minority ethnic, and potential first-generation HE applicants, the programme offers careers information, mentoring, and help with interviews and writing CVs.
- A BTEC level 4 qualification on widening participation. AHGTM is including a core theme on equality and diversity in this course.

**3.50** The majority of Aimhigher partnerships have engaged in local activity with disabled pupils. This includes taster days in HE institutions, mentoring, and general information advice and guidance events, and there is a wealth of good practice shared among the partnerships through Action on Access's coordinating work.

### Supporting disabled students post-HE

**3.51** Through the Gateways to the Professions development fund, DIUS has supported projects which aim to improve access to graduate jobs in the professions for those from a wider range of backgrounds. The projects have provided valuable information on the effectiveness of approaches including work-based learning, placements and mentoring. Over two years we have given funding of nearly £4 million to 24 projects.

**3.52** DIUS is developing a web-based resource on access to the professions. The resource, intended as an 'observatory' of good practice, will give access to materials and findings from the Gateways projects. The observatory will have a strong focus on equality and diversity issues and will be launched on the DIUS website in early 2009.

**3.53** The Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) was commissioned to undertake research on the approaches which professional bodies are taking to embed support for diversity. The research has now been completed and a diversity toolkit can be found on the PARN website at <http://www.parnglobal.com/completed-diversity.htm>

**3.54** The General Medical Council (GMC) has produced guidance for medical schools on how best to encourage and respond to applications from disabled students.



## Chapter 4 Science, research and innovation

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### The evidence base: Assessment of data and key issues

- 4.1** The term ‘science’ here covers activities across science, research, innovation and GO-Science.
- 4.2** An acknowledged gap in the current data concerns public understanding and engagement with science and technology. This is measured periodically through surveys, the latest of which was published earlier in 2008. It covers the adult population, but does not enable the breakdown of responses by disability status. This will be considered for future surveys.
- 4.3** Most business innovation programmes are not tied to individuals and thus do not require the collection of disability data. However, the feasibility of collecting such data may need to be considered for initiatives like Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, where support to business is delivered by an identified individual researcher.
- 4.4** With regard to science, education and technology (SET), we have limited knowledge of the intersection between disability and gender within the workforce. Nor do we have a picture of the profile of disability and gender within those with SET qualifications who are inactive in the labour market, or (other than anecdotally) of the extent to which disability and health issues are the reason for women or men leaving SET and choosing to work in other sectors. Collecting this data would provide a baseline and set the context for positive action.

### Key facts and figures

- 4.5** Those who are disabled are less likely to have achieved higher-level qualifications than those with no disability. Where disabled people have higher-level qualifications, those who are both DDA disabled (a disability that affects their day-to-day activities) and have a work-limiting disability are less likely to have studied a STEM subject. However where the individual is either DDA disabled or has a work-limiting disability but not both, they are as likely to have studied STEM as the non-disabled group. See Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Proportion of disabled and non-disabled students in the working-age population with higher level qualifications (degree data analysed by STEM and non-STEM subjects)**

		DDA disabled and work-limiting disabled	DDA disabled	Work-limiting disabled only	Not disabled
Those with first degrees	Proportion with level 4 and above qualifications	15%	29%	24%	31%
	Proportion with a STEM first degree	36%	50%	49%	45%
	Proportion with a non STEM first degree	64%	50%	51%	55%
Those with higher degrees	Proportion with a STEM higher degree	31%	45%	40%	42%
	Proportion with a non STEM higher degree	69%	55%	60%	58%

Source: LSS, second quarter 2008, UK 16–59/64-year-olds.

## Science, research and innovation

**4.6** DIUS is responsible for the development, funding and performance management of the science and research base across the UK, so that we continue to develop a world-class research base responsive to users and the economy, with sustainable and financially healthy universities and public laboratories, and a strong supply of scientists, engineers and technologists.

**4.7** The £3.6 billion UK science budget is used to ensure that DIUS:

- Funds only the very best research in our universities and public laboratories
- Provides the very best training and development opportunities for those who wish to pursue careers in research
- Exploits as quickly and effectively as possible the knowledge generated by research for the good of the UK economy and society
- Uses the scientific evidence base from across a wide range of disciplines to identify the broad range of factors that influence society, looking beyond the obvious
- Builds on this evidence to identify effective interventions
- Creates a shared understanding of the relationships between key factors influencing society and outcomes, and their relative importance.

## Principal public authorities operating in the science sector

4.8 The table below shows out the existing delivery partners involved in implementing the policies set out above.

<b>Research Councils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The seven Research Councils are responsible for allocation of the majority of the science research budget.</li> <li>■ They also undertake activities to raise public awareness and engagement in science and innovation.</li> </ul>
<b>Council for Science and Technology (CST)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An independent advisory body that reports to the Prime Minister.</li> <li>■ Under a wider definition, the CST operates under the umbrella of DIUS, mainly for secretariat and administrative functions, and so falls under the procedures and processes set up by GO-Science, including diversity obligations.</li> </ul>
<b>Technology Strategy Board (TSB)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Drives forward the Government's Technology Strategy by facilitating the rapid deployment of new knowledge.</li> <li>■ With a focus on business and business needs, it promotes innovation through a range of mechanisms.</li> </ul>
<b>National Measurement System (NMS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Has responsibility for the UK's weights and measures framework and the provision of statutory and commercial metrology services.</li> </ul>
<b>National Physical Laboratory (NPL)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The UK's national measurement institution and a centre of excellence in developing and applying accurate measurement standards, science and technology.</li> <li>■ DIUS provides the NPL with guaranteed funding to maintain and disseminate current measurement standards and to perform research into new standards, techniques and instrumentation that will support future UK needs and stimulate innovation.</li> </ul>
<b>British Standards Institute (BSI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The National Standards Body of the UK, developing and selling standards and standardisation solutions that meet the needs of business and society.</li> </ul>
<b>UK Accreditation Service (UKAS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The sole national accreditation body recognised by Government to assess organisations that provide certification, testing, inspection and calibration services.</li> <li>■ Accreditation by UKAS demonstrates the competence, impartiality and performance capability of these evaluators.</li> </ul>

<b>Design Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The national strategic body for design, funded by grant-in-aid from DIUS.</li> <li>■ Inspires and enables the best use of design to make the UK a more competitive, creative and sustainable nation.</li> <li>■ Runs practical programmes for business as well as the design, education and public sectors (jointly sponsored by DIUS and DCMS).</li> </ul>
<b>National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Established by the National Lottery Act 1998 with a remit to 'support and promote talent, innovation and creativity in the fields of science, technology and the arts'.</li> <li>■ Funded by endowment from the Lottery and delivers practical programmes to help innovation flourish, provides innovators with access to early stage capital and drives forward research into innovation, with a view to influencing policy.</li> </ul>
<b>British National Space Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ At the heart of UK efforts to explore and exploit space. Formed from ten Government Departments and Research Councils, it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Coordinates UK civil space activity</li> <li>□ Supports academic research</li> <li>□ Nurtures the UK space industry</li> <li>□ Works to increase the understanding of space science and its practical benefits.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>UK Intellectual Property Office (UK-IPO)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An executive agency and trading fund, responsible for the national framework of Intellectual Property Rights. Works closely with DIUS on all aspects of its business, including international engagement on IP and education.</li> </ul>
<b>National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Responsible for ensuring that the system of weights and measures is fair, accurate and legal, thus enabling consumers and businesses to be confident that they are getting what they pay for.</li> </ul>

## Actions being taken to improve disability equality

### Research and technological developments

**4.9** The Design Council recognises that addressing disability is an area where design has a significant role to play. It plans to review, by December 2008, the potential for using programmes to address disability issues more specifically. It has worked with diabetes sufferers and the Alzheimer's Society and in partnership with the Inclusive Design Research programme of the Helen Hamlyn Centre, Royal College of Art.

**4.10** DIUS is working with the Design Council to support public sector managers in using a design-led approach to work with the public through customer insight approaches to redesign, develop and transform services. This approach will ultimately benefit all

### **Case study 4.1: The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)**

With a view to raising the profile of the biosciences and generating interest in related careers, specifically among people from the under-represented groups, the BBSRC has identified a number of role models, two of whom have declared a disability. Their career profiles along with images of them at work have been used to produce a leaflet that has been issued to all BBSRC establishments for use at careers fairs, open and taster days and in their engagement with schools. The same leaflet has been published in the July edition of BBSRC's magazine *Business*. It is hoped that some or all of the role models will be able to become personally involved in many of BBSRC's profile-raising activities.

At the same time, specific disability objectives have been included in the combined BBSRC Equality Duty Action Plan:

1. Attract more applicants with disabilities (in recruitment, funding for research and membership of BBSRC boards, panels and committees).
2. Ensure line managers are aware of guidance on employing people with disabilities.
3. Conduct a review of all buildings and facilities at BBSRC establishments.
4. Produce an SES.

There is recognition that many applicants for research grants and fellowships and for membership of BBSRC boards, panels and committees do not declare their disability. BBSRC will not be unique in this, but through improved communication of its approach to disability and diversity, BBSRC seeks to encourage more applicants to declare their disability.

members of society, including disabled people, by equipping managers in the public sector with the tools to ensure that services reflect the needs of all users.

**4.11** Given the predicted increase in the number of people living with chronic long-term conditions, current care models are unsustainable and major changes will be needed. The TSB's Assisted Living Innovation Platform focuses on the advances in technology needed to improve care for disabled people, including the elderly and sick living at home. The aim is to enable people who suffer from chronic long-term conditions to live independently. The platform will also be able to consider well-being and the social challenges raised by health conditions that require a preventative approach. A wide range of activity has been proposed, including short- and long-term research and development, in areas such as standards, user-centred design, knowledge transfer and business modelling, working towards a future technology demonstrator 'suite'.

**4.12** Numerous programmes, initiatives and support measures are carried out at European Union Research in support of knowledge. The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) bundles all research-related EU initiatives together under a common roof.

**4.13** FP7 is made up of four specific programmes (plus a programme on nuclear research): cooperation, ideas, people and capacities. There have been specific calls

for proposals on 'Quality of life issues relating to handicapped/disabled people' and 'Developing intelligent systems that empower persons with disabilities and ageing citizens to play a full role in society and support EU policies'. UK researchers have led on four projects and collaborated on a small number of others related to these calls. Details of these projects can be found on the Cordis FP6 website at <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp6/projects.htm>

#### 4.14 Research funded includes:

- Building the capacity of European disabled peoples' organisations in civil society for participation in the FP7 research programme and other relevant initiatives. As the official umbrella organisation representing disabled people in civil society, the European Disability Forum (EDF) is ideally placed to initiate this participation, supported by two expert research partners (Leeds and Maastricht universities).
- 'Translational research in Europe applied technologies for osteoarthritis' (TREAT-OA). TREAT-OA will address the need for better treatment and diagnostics for osteoarthritis, the most common cause of disability in Europe. Currently there are no drugs that can cure, reverse or halt the disease. This is the largest study of its kind that will address the general ability and utility of genetic and biochemical risk factors throughout the EU.
- Effective evaluation of active labour market policies in social insurance programmes. In most European countries social insurance programmes, like welfare, unemployment insurance and disability insurance are characterized by low re-employment rates, leading Governments to spend large amounts of money on active labour market programmes aimed at helping individuals find work. This research proposal aims to develop an economic framework that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of popular programmes such as re-employment bonuses, fraud detection, workfare and job search monitoring.
- Architectural design in dialogue with disability: theoretical and methodological exploration of a multi-sensorial design approach in architecture (AIDA). This research project is based on the idea that, because of their specific interaction with space, people with particular disabilities are able to appreciate spatial qualities that most architects or other designers are not even aware of. This notion holds for sensory disabilities such as blindness or visual impairment, but also for mental disabilities like autism or Alzheimer's dementia. The experiences and subsequent insights of these disabled people, it is argued, represent a considerable knowledge resource that can complement and enrich the professional expertise of architects and designers.

**4.15** The UK Government's Foresight programme, with its Horizon Scanning Centre, brings together key people from all parts of society, knowledge and ideas to look beyond normal planning horizons to identify potential opportunities from new science and technologies and actions to help realise those most vulnerable and in need across society. The Horizon Scanning Centre aims to inform decision making both within and across Government Departments, as well as to spot the implications of emerging science and technology and enable others to act on them.

**4.16** One such project was 'to produce a long-term vision of how we can deliver a sustainable response to obesity in the UK over the next 40 years'. A project on mental capital and well-being advised the Government on how to achieve the best possible mental development and well-being for everyone in the UK in the future. The project used

### Case study 4.2: Signs for science

As part of Manchester Science Festival the BA, in collaboration with the Museum of Science and Industry, the University of Edinburgh and the University of Manchester's School of Chemistry, delivered two events using British Sign Language (BSL) on Saturday 25 October at Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry.

#### **BSL signs for science – chemistry demonstration**

*Come and see how to make elephant's toothpaste and what happens when Hydrogen and Oxygen explode!*  
*Sat 25 October 11.00 – 12.00*  
*Museum of Science and Industry*  
*Free event open to all ages, no booking required.*

At this event, Dr Audrey Cameron and Gary Quinn demonstrated science experiments. The event was interpreted so it was accessible for everyone, deaf and hearing.

#### **BSL signs for science – finding new science terms**

*Issues of language planning, deaf children's rights and exploring the differences between BSL and English.*  
*Sat 25 October 14.30 – 15.30*  
*Museum of Science and Industry*  
*Free event aimed at teenagers and adults, no booking required.*

Gary Quinn from Heriot Watt University and Rachel O'Neill from the University of Edinburgh discussed the process of finding and agreeing new signs for science terms in BSL.

the best available scientific and other evidence to develop a vision for the opportunities and challenges facing the UK over the next 20 years and beyond.

### Raising awareness

**4.17** Go-Science in Government is a part of the science programme and aims to improve the quality and use of science and technology advice across Government. It also aims to build public confidence in the Government's use of science and technology in all sectors of society irrespective of race, religion, disability or gender.

**4.18** With NESTA, DIUS is also launching a Public Services Innovation Laboratory in January 2009 to provide a space for trialling approaches to innovation in science and technology. The laboratory will focus on areas that matter to society and which can develop services to meet the needs of those with disabilities such as ageing readiness, mental well-being and long-term health conditions.

### Improving access for and participation of disabled people

**4.19** The British Association for the Advancement of Science (the BA) runs a Creativity in Science and Technology (CREST) award for students aged 11 to 19. The initial evaluation of the new CREST Star Investigators scheme specifically included assessing the suitability of the scheme for students with special educational needs. The informal, practical, discussion-based approach to learning appeared to suit working with these students.

### **Case study 4.3: How BSI makes a difference from stadiums to websites**

The BSI publication BS8300, *Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people*, extends to accessible car parking provision and access routes to, for instance, patios and picnic areas. It is applicable to buildings from a home to a hospital or football stadium.

Phil Downs, Manchester United's disability liaison officer, says 'Manchester United takes accessibility very seriously and as a result we are regarded as the best in the country, setting standards for other clubs to follow. Within the framework provided by BS8300, I've been responsible for working with architects to make sure the changes take account of the needs of our disabled supporters. There is no doubt that implementing this standard has enabled more people to have access to live football and to enjoy their match day experience.'

BSI standards publications also include a PAS78, *A Guide to good practice in commissioning accessible websites*. It describes how to involve disabled people in requirements gathering, concept design and testing. RNIB states that 'confusion still exists around how to create fully accessible websites that blind and partially sighted and other disabled people can easily use. There is a clear need for more guidance and we believe that PAS78 provides this and is leading to a more accessible web for everyone'.

**4.20** As part of its work to promote STEM careers, the DIUS- and DCSF-funded STEMNET works to ensure equality of access for all, including those covered by disability legislation. While the duty to ensure wide access falls principally to schools, Science and Engineering Ambassadors (SEAs) and others design activities and enrichment material in a way that allows young disabled people to fully appreciate how science can be a part of their lives and careers.

**4.21** The national Resource Centre for Women in SET (UKRC) was set up with DTI support in 2004 to take forward the Government's 'more women in SET' agenda. UKRC works closely with 100 employers and over 300 women are using Return to SET Career services. At a practical level, provisions that support disability equality are built into activities. For example, accessibility in terms of venues and event times is addressed, as are travel and support costs. Accessible online resources and web communication are a key part of the initiative's Connect strategy. All participants are requested to provide equalities monitoring data on disability, and the current level of participants who have declared a disability is two per cent. However, it is known from personal contact and qualitative feedback that a more significant number of women would describe health-related issues, both mental and physical, which may be impeding their progress in SET or have led to them leaving SET careers.

**4.22** The British Standards Institute (BSI) is continuously working for standards that fulfil basic consumer principles in the area of accessibility and inclusivity. The organisation works to support standards that promote the availability of products and services to all consumers regardless of where they live, their sensory, cognitive or physical abilities and other social, cultural and economic considerations.

**4.23** NESTA has taken a number of steps to reduce disadvantage to disabled people both as employees and as members of the public interested in NESTA activities. A specific

### **Case study 4.4: The Science and Technology Facilities Council at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and Daresbury**

Employees with dyslexia have been put in touch with each other to share ideas on coping mechanisms and experience of using aids and software packages. Software packages have been identified and purchased (for example Natural Readers and TextAloud).

For an employee with MS, a number of adjustments were made including a change to part-time working, redeployment to a new post, a review of wheelchair access and participation in the Jobcentre Plus taxi-to-work scheme.

An employee diagnosed with arthritis of the spine returned to work on reduced hours after initial treatment. An ergonomic assessment and the purchase of new equipment and chair were helpful. Occupational Health gave physiotherapy sessions in addition to the NHS provision. Arrangements are in place for her to work from home when appropriate.

An employee with cancer worked reduced hours as and when she was able to during chemotherapy treatment and worked at home when she wished. The timescales of her main project were adjusted to accommodate this. Guidance has been issued to HR staff on supporting staff with cancer.

An employee with depression found the free external counselling service very helpful and is sure that this speeded his recovery and continues to benefit his mental health.

In an employee survey, sixteen disabled employees said that they had asked for adjustments to be made and in all cases these requests had been met.

example is the setting up of a NESTA staff skills database which includes details of those in the organisation who are able to assist disabled people, for example through the use of sign language.

### **Involving disabled people**

**4.24** The Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue in Science provides co-funding (£1.15 million in 2008/09) to Government Departments and agencies to develop and commission public dialogue activities. In using the public to help policy development, Sciencewise ensures that it listens to a representative mix of individuals, including disabled people and those from other groups covered by equality legislation.

### **Improving the data we hold**

**4.25** Data on public understanding and engagement with science and technology is measured on a periodic basis through surveys. The latest survey report was published in early 2008, and covers the adult population, but without specifically enabling a breakdown of responses by disability status. This will be considered for future surveys.

## Chapter 5 Key conclusions and proposals

**5.1** It is vital that we continue to strengthen our disability equality approach on the basis of progress made so far. This chapter sets out our key conclusions by sector and across all sectors.

### Further education and skills

**5.2** While the FE and skills sector is active in addressing disability equality issues through the provision of services to learners, concerted effort will be needed to improve in specific areas in order to help reach our ambitious goals:

- In encouraging greater participation and progression of learners, all FE providers must genuinely reach out to disabled learners and build individual programmes of support to improve outcomes into sustainable employment.
- The limitations in the data currently held should be remedied, and more should be done to understand the issues faced by people across our policy sectors in relation to disability.
- The diversity of the FE workforce needs to be improved if it is to be more representative of disabled people.
- The LSC and its successor bodies should continue to set and monitor national and local equality measures to help judge progress towards disability equality throughout FE and skills provision.

### Higher education

**5.3** A range of groups are under-represented in HE, but HE participation patterns are largely determined by prior educational attainment. It is therefore critical that action be taken earlier in the education system – in primary, secondary and further education – to have a positive impact on HE participation patterns. However, there is still a role for HE to play, and the evidence suggests that there have been improvements for disabled students in HE over recent years:

- Legislation over the last decade sets out clear legal duties for HE institutions towards disabled students. The sector acknowledges the need to plan and provide support for disabled students.
- Government has provided significant funds to institutions to help them meet their legal requirements towards disabled students, and to give disabled students direct support to help them overcome barriers to learning.
- HEFCE has set out baselines for provision to support disabled students, which has helped to deliver a step-change in the sector's approach to disabled students. It is continuing to provide a lead in the sector by undertaking a comprehensive review of its policies and determining a way forward that will meet the needs of a changed landscape on disability equality.
- There are increasing numbers of disabled students in HE according to the data. But we don't know if these numbers reflect real rises or improved data collection. The latter would still be positive.

**5.4** The evidence in this report upholds actions already under way which will support disabled students in HE:

- DIUS will be working with the DCSF and other Government and HE-sector partners to take forward the Government's response to the National Student Forum report, with a focus on the IAG needs of disabled students.

- Further development of policy relating to disabled students will be informed by HEFCE's thorough review of its policy in this area which is currently under way.
- We can improve the way we collect and use data. We know certain things about disabled students such as how many students there are in HE, broken down by impairment category, what their progress is in HE and what they do after they leave. However, there are some severe limitations to this data and Government has difficulties around sources of data from which to determine HE participation rates for disabled people. DIUS will work with partners to address this and collect the data we need to track improvements.
- Once these actions are taken it will be an appropriate time for a full disability impact assessment.

## Science, research and innovation

**5.5** Although considerable efforts are being directed towards securing the UK's place at the forefront of research to benefit all parts of society and disabled people worldwide, and because equality considerations are not generally the drivers for science, research and innovation activities, we need to work harder to benefit disabled people by:

- Ensuring science, research and innovation play their roles in reducing inequalities faced by different groups across society
- Increasing access to STEM to all groups across society, including disabled people
- Engaging disabled people more actively as we strive to increase wider understanding of science, research and innovation activities
- Relating what we already know through science and research to inform future research and programmes focused on increasing access and improving participation for disabled people.

## Across all our stakeholders and policy areas

**5.6** We will continue to work with the ODI and across Government, including the DWP and the DCSF, whose remits overlap our agenda, to grasp issues such as how we can share disability information where we may not have uniform definitions and data-gathering protocols, so that results can be compared on a like-for-like basis. This will enable a clearer view of progress for disabled people in terms of participation and achievement.

**5.7** DIUS can play a pivotal role in enabling its family of stakeholders to disseminate and share isolated examples of good practice more widely. We will continue to build on cross-sector and cross-Government working and actively support the sharing of good practice as an effective means to drive change and improvements

**5.8** DIUS is also committed to improving the skills and understanding of our own staff in being able to ask the type of questions that are key to consulting more effectively and unlocking better-quality data. We will continue to explore and exemplify ways to collaborate with different stakeholder groups, including the co-creation of policy where appropriate..

**5.9** Finally, and most importantly, we will make every effort to ensure that disabled people are fully engaged in this agenda and benefit from the services we ultimately provide to ensure disability equality across the DIUS sectors.

## Annex I Further information

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This annex provides signposts to some of the main sources of information relevant to DIUS as well as to information about the wide variety of organisations, policies and programmes which form the backdrop for this report.

### The DIUS context

Visit the DIUS website at [www.dius.gov.uk](http://www.dius.gov.uk)

DIUS leads on two of the Government's Public Service Agreements (PSAs) for 2008–2011.

**PSA 2** Improve the skills of the population, on the way to ensuring a world-class skills base by 2020

**PSA 4** Promote world-class science and innovation in the UK

We also contribute to many of the PSAs led by other Government Departments.

Six Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs) set out in greater detail the actions that DIUS will take from 2008 to 2011.

For more information about PSAs, see [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/3680.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/3680.htm)

For more about the DIUS DSOs, see [www.dius.gov.uk/mission.html](http://www.dius.gov.uk/mission.html)

### Further education and skills

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**Commission for Employment and Skills** [www.ukces.org.uk](http://www.ukces.org.uk)

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**Learndirect** [www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk)

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**Learning and Skills Council** [www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

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**Learning and Skills Improvement Service** [www.lsis.org.uk](http://www.lsis.org.uk)

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**Lifelong Learning UK** [www.lluk.org](http://www.lluk.org)

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**National Skills Academies** [www.nationalskillsacademy.gov.uk](http://www.nationalskillsacademy.gov.uk)

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**Office for Standards in Education** [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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**Sector Skills Councils** [brokers.traintogain.gov.uk/partners/sector-skills](http://brokers.traintogain.gov.uk/partners/sector-skills)

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**University for Industry** [www.ufi.com](http://www.ufi.com)

*Learning for living and work: Improving education and training opportunities for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.*

A national strategy for LSC-funded provision for learners with LLD from 2006/07 until 2009/10. [readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Learning\\_for\\_Living\\_and\\_Work\\_Complete\\_2.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/Learning_for_Living_and_Work_Complete_2.pdf)

*Progression through partnership*

The 2007 vision document which sets out the need for DH, the DWP and the then DfES (whose remit was divided between DIUS and the DCSF) to work closely together to help young people and adults with LDD to access FE and training.

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/progressionthroughpartnership](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/progressionthroughpartnership)

Current and forthcoming developments in FE include:

- **The Framework for Excellence**, which aims to measure all FE providers against clear and unambiguous quality standards. [ffe.lsc.gov.uk](http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk)
- **The adult advancement and careers service**, which will provide help and advice for adults on learning, skills and careers. A prospectus explaining what the service offers is available at [www.dius.gov.uk/press/AACS\\_301008.html](http://www.dius.gov.uk/press/AACS_301008.html)
- **A National Apprenticeship Service** will lead the drive for more high-quality Apprenticeships. It will be supported by a new legal definition and a right for suitably qualified young people to get an Apprenticeship. The service is explained at [www.dius.gov.uk/press/28-01-08c.html](http://www.dius.gov.uk/press/28-01-08c.html)
- **Skills Accounts** will give people greater ownership and choice in their learning, help them progress in employment, and offer them a 'virtual voucher' for funding.
- A new Government agency will provide training and skills for adults, replacing the Learning and Skills Council by 2010. Local authorities will then be responsible for offering a full range of learning options to young people.

## Higher education

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**Action on access, including the Aimhigher programme** [actiononaccess.org](http://actiononaccess.org)

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**Equality Challenge Unit** [www.ecu.ac.uk](http://www.ecu.ac.uk)

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**Higher Education Academy** [www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk)

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**Higher Education Funding Council for England** [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)

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**Higher Education Funding Council for Wales** [www.hefcw.ac.uk](http://www.hefcw.ac.uk)

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**HE institutions (and research organisations)** [www.hero.ac.uk](http://www.hero.ac.uk)

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**Student Loans Company** [www.slc.co.uk](http://www.slc.co.uk)

Details of the current HEFCE policy review referred to in paragraphs 3.28–3.30 can be found here: [www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/slidd](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/slidd)

Information on the Disabled Students' Allowance is available on the Directgov website at: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG\\_10034898](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG_10034898)

## Science, research and innovation

### Research councils

<b>Arts and Humanities Research Council</b>	<a href="http://www.ahrc.ac.uk">www.ahrc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council</b>	<a href="http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk">www.bbsrc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Economic and Social Research Council</b>	<a href="http://www.esrc.ac.uk">www.esrc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council</b>	<a href="http://www.epsrc.ac.uk">www.epsrc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Medical Research Council</b>	<a href="http://www.mrc.ac.uk">www.mrc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Natural Environment Research Council</b>	<a href="http://www.nerc.ac.uk">www.nerc.ac.uk</a>
<b>Science and Technology Facilities Council</b>	<a href="http://www.scitech.ac.uk">www.scitech.ac.uk</a>
<b>Research Councils UK website</b>	<a href="http://www.rcuk.ac.uk">www.rcuk.ac.uk</a>

### Other organisations

<b>British National Space Centre</b>	<a href="http://www.bnsc.gov.uk">www.bnsc.gov.uk</a>
<b>BSI Group</b>	<a href="http://www.bsi-global.com">www.bsi-global.com</a>
<b>Council for Science and Technology</b>	<a href="http://www2.cst.gov.uk">www2.cst.gov.uk</a>
<b>Design Council</b>	<a href="http://www.designcouncil.org.uk">www.designcouncil.org.uk</a>
<b>Foresight and the Horizon Scanning Centre</b>	<a href="http://www.foresight.gov.uk">www.foresight.gov.uk</a>
<b>Government Office for Science</b>	<a href="http://www.dius.gov.uk/policy/science.html">www.dius.gov.uk/policy/science.html</a>
<b>National Measurement System</b>	<a href="http://www.berr.gov.uk/dius/innovation/nms/index.html">www.berr.gov.uk/dius/innovation/nms/index.html</a>
<b>National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts</b>	<a href="http://www.nesta.org.uk">www.nesta.org.uk</a>
<b>National Physical Laboratory</b>	<a href="http://www.npl.co.uk">www.npl.co.uk</a>

National Weights and Measures Laboratory	<a href="http://www.nwml.gov.uk">www.nwml.gov.uk</a>
Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue in Science and Innovation	<a href="http://www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk">www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk</a>
STEMNET, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network	<a href="http://www.stemnet.org.uk">www.stemnet.org.uk</a>
Technology Strategy Board	<a href="http://www.innovateuk.org">www.innovateuk.org</a>
UK Accreditation Service	<a href="http://www.ukas.com">www.ukas.com</a>
UK Intellectual Property Office	<a href="http://www.ipo.gov.uk">www.ipo.gov.uk</a>
UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology	<a href="http://www.ukrc4setwomen.org">www.ukrc4setwomen.org</a>

In Autumn 2008, DIUS consulted on *A vision for science and society*, which supports the development of a new Science and Society Strategy for the UK. The strategy will look at the engagement of science with society in its broadest sense, including the diversity of the science workforce.

[interactive.dius.gov.uk/scienceandsociety/site/about](http://interactive.dius.gov.uk/scienceandsociety/site/about)

## Other documents

The cross-Government Independent Living Strategy is a five-year plan that seeks to realise the Government's aim that all disabled people (including older disabled people) should be able to live autonomous lives, and to have the same choice, freedom, dignity and control over their lives as non-disabled people. This includes access to education.

[www.officefordisability.gov.uk/working/independentlivingstrategy.asp](http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/working/independentlivingstrategy.asp)

*Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, published by the Government's Strategy Unit in 2005, set out the vision that by 2025 all disabled people should have the same opportunities as everybody else.

[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work\\_areas/disability.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/work_areas/disability.aspx)

Finally, the 2008 *Wealth bringsers* report referred to in the Foreword, which studies entrepreneurial activity among disabled people in the north-west of England, can be accessed here.

[www.nwda.co.uk/pdf/Wealthbringers2008.pdf](http://www.nwda.co.uk/pdf/Wealthbringers2008.pdf)

## Annex II Glossary of abbreviations

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<b>ADO</b>	Adult Dyslexia Organisation
<b>BA</b>	British Association for the Advancement of Science
<b>BBSRC</b>	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
<b>BSI</b>	British Standards Institute
<b>BSL</b>	British Sign Language
<b>CREST award</b>	Creativity in Science and Technology award (from the BA)
<b>CST</b>	Council for Science and Technology
<b>DCSF</b>	Department for Children, Schools and Families
<b>DDA</b>	Disability Discrimination Act 2005
<b>DEAC</b>	Disability Employment Action Committee (DWP)
<b>DED</b>	Disability Equality Duty
<b>DEP</b>	Disability Equality Partnership
<b>DfES</b>	Department for Education and Skills (ceased to exist in June 2007)
<b>DH</b>	Department of Health
<b>DSA</b>	Disabled Students' Allowance
<b>DSO</b>	Departmental Strategic Objective
<b>DTI</b>	Department for Trade and Industry (ceased to exist in June 2007)
<b>DWP</b>	Department for Work and Pensions
<b>ECU</b>	Equality Challenge Unit
<b>EDIM</b>	Equality and diversity impact measures
<b>EHRC</b>	Equality and Human Rights Commission
<b>FE</b>	Further education
<b>FP7</b>	The Seventh Framework Programme (FP7): includes all research-related EU initiatives
<b>GCSE</b>	General Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>GO-Science</b>	Government Office for Science
<b>HE</b>	Higher education
<b>HEFCE</b>	The Higher Education Funding Council for England
<b>HEFCW</b>	The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
<b>HESA</b>	The Higher Education Statistics Agency
<b>HR</b>	Human resources
<b>IAG</b>	Information, advice and guidance
<b>IAL</b>	Informal adult learning
<b>ILR</b>	Individualised Learner Record
<b>IT</b>	Information technology
<b>LDD</b>	Learning difficulties and/or disabilities
<b>LFS</b>	Labour Force Survey
<b>LLDD</b>	Learner with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
<b>LLUK</b>	Lifelong Learning UK
<b>LOCOG</b>	London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games
<b>LSC</b>	Learning and Skills Council
<b>LSIS</b>	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
<b>NAO</b>	National Audit Office
<b>NESTA</b>	National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts
<b>NIACE</b>	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

<b>NLSS</b>	National Learner Satisfaction Survey
<b>NMS</b>	National Measurement System
<b>NPD-HESA</b>	National Pupil Database – Higher Education Statistics Agency
<b>NPL</b>	National Physical Laboratory
<b>NWML</b>	National Weights and Measures Laboratory
<b>ODI</b>	Office for Disability Issues
<b>PARN</b>	Professional Associations Research Network
<b>PSA</b>	Public Service Agreement
<b>RNIB</b>	Royal National Institute for the Blind
<b>Sciencewise-ERC</b>	Sciencewise Expert Resource Centre for Public Dialogue in Science
<b>SEA</b>	Science and Engineering Ambassador
<b>SES</b>	Single Equality Scheme
<b>SET</b>	Science, engineering and technology
<b>SIES</b>	Student Income and Expenditure Survey
<b>SIR</b>	Staff Individualised Record
<b>Skill</b>	Skill: The National Bureau for Learners and Students with Disabilities
<b>SLC</b>	The Student Loans Company
<b>SMF</b>	Social Market Foundation
<b>SSCs</b>	Sector Skills Councils
<b>STEM</b>	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
<b>STEMNET</b>	The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network
<b>TSB</b>	Technology Strategy Bureau
<b>Ufi</b>	University for Industry
<b>UKAS</b>	UK Accreditation Service
<b>UKCES</b>	UK Commission for Employment and Skills
<b>UK-IPO</b>	UK Intellectual Property Office
<b>UKRC</b>	UK Resource Centre (for Women in SET)
<b>YCS</b>	Youth Cohort Study



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