

Impact of COVID-19 on Equality Groups

Disability Analysis
[updated October 2020]

Communities Analysis Division - October 2020



Scottish Government
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Introduction

This slidepack is designed to focus on key structural inequalities and presents analysis by **disability** across a range of policy areas.

The audience for the slidepack is policy makers who require evidence to inform policies and programmes to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

The analysis presented highlights some areas where disabled people have different or worse outcomes than the general population.

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Summary

Disabled people are:

- More likely to live in a household in **poverty**
- Less likely to be in **employment**
- More likely to be paid below the **living wage**
- More likely to live in **social rented housing**
- Less likely to view their neighbourhood as a **very good place to live**
- Less likely to **feel safe** walking alone in their local area after dark
- More likely to have **poorer mental health**
- Less likely to meet **physical activity** recommendations
- More likely to experience **child material deprivation**



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COVID-19 Risks

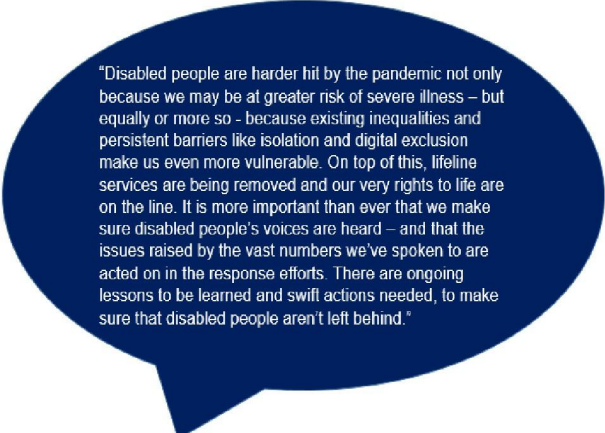
Disabled people are more likely to experience:

Exacerbation of already poor physical health and a higher risk of death due to COVID-19

Exacerbation of already poor mental health due to loneliness and reductions in mental wellbeing experienced during isolation and restrictions in the ability to undertake physical activity.

Difficulties accessing food and other essential supplies due to potential shortages of food in shops, difficulties affording food, and isolation.

Disruptions to social care arrangements due to care staff being redeployed to work on COVID-19, lack of personal protective equipment for carers, and family members being unable to provide unpaid care due to themselves being ill or isolating.



"Disabled people are harder hit by the pandemic not only because we may be at greater risk of severe illness – but equally or more so – because existing inequalities and persistent barriers like isolation and digital exclusion make us even more vulnerable. On top of this, lifeline services are being removed and our very rights to life are on the line. It is more important than ever that we make sure disabled people's voices are heard – and that the issues raised by the vast numbers we've spoken to are acted on in the response efforts. There are ongoing lessons to be learned and swift actions needed, to make sure that disabled people aren't left behind."

Tressa Burke – CEO, Glasgow Disability Alliance

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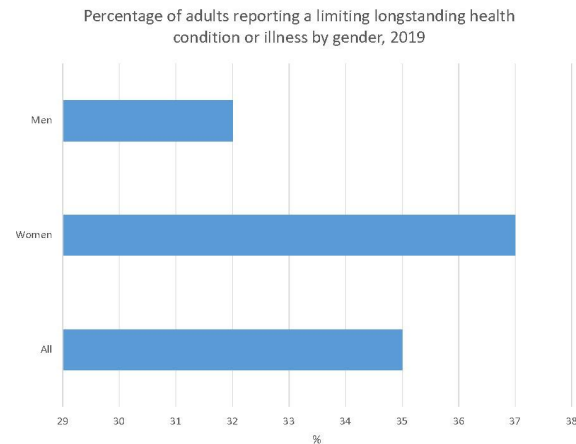
Demographics

Disability is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on ability to do normal daily activities.

The '[social model](#)' of disability, utilised by the Scottish Government, sees the barriers created by society, such as negative attitudes towards disabled people, and inaccessible buildings, transport and communication, as the cause of disadvantage and exclusion, rather than the impairment itself. 'Disabled people' is always preferable language to 'people with disabilities'.

A [two stage question](#) is used in most large scale surveys in Scotland which captures information on longstanding health conditions or illness.

Over a third (35%) of adults and just over one tenth (11%) of children had limiting longstanding conditions, with older people more likely to have one – just under three-fifths (58%) of adults aged 75 and above had limiting conditions compared with just over a fifth (22%) of adults aged 16-24.



Source: [Scottish Health Survey 2019](#)

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Longstanding Conditions

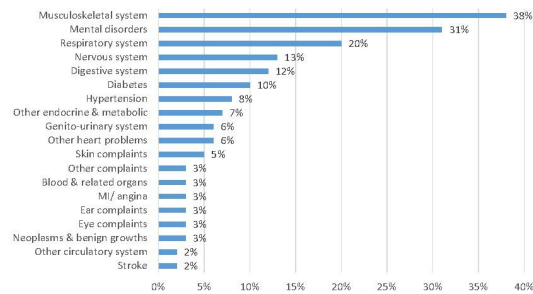
Disabled people are more likely to experience ill-health from contracting COVID-19 than the general population, due to their pre-existing health conditions and poorer overall health.

[Deaths involving COVID in Scotland \(monthly analysis\)](#) shows that as of 11th October of the 4,301 deaths involving COVID-19, 92% had at least one pre-existing condition.

The most common pre-existing condition amongst those who died was dementia and Alzheimer's disease (31%) followed by ischaemic heart disease (13%) and chronic lower respiratory diseases (10%).

Provisional analysis from the [Office for National Statistics](#), released in September 2020, demonstrated that after adjusting for region, population density, socio-demographic and household characteristics, the relative difference in mortality rates between those disabled and those non-disabled was 2.4 times higher for females and 2.0 times higher for males.

Prevalence of limiting longstanding conditions among disabled adults



Source: [Scottish Health Survey 2019](#)

Disabled adults have a range of limiting long-term physical health conditions, such as those affecting the heart and respiratory system, which are linked to increased vulnerability to COVID-19.

Housing and Communities

- Disabled people were more likely to live in social rented housing. Social renters were more likely to have a limiting, long-term physical or mental health condition (59%) than any other tenure and the population as a whole (24%). Source: [SHS 2019](#)
- Just over half of disabled people (53%) perceived their neighbourhoods as 'very good' places to live which is less than for non-disabled people (59%). Source: SHS 2019 (unpublished analysis).
- In 2018/19 disabled people were more likely to be victims of crime generally than non-disabled people (14.7% compared to 11.8%). Source: [SCJS 2018-19](#)
- Disabled people were less likely to feel safe walking alone in their local area after dark non-disabled people (64% compared to 82%). Source: [SCJS 2018-19](#)



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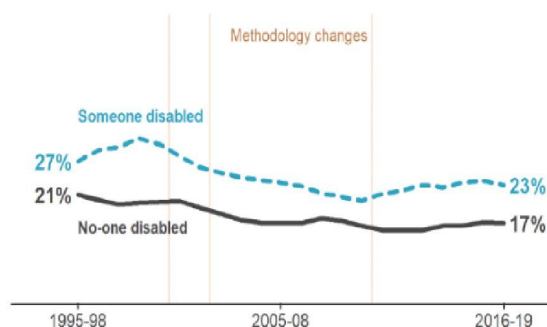
Poverty

Poverty rates remained higher for households with a disabled adult. In 2016-19, the poverty rate after housing costs for people in families with a disabled person was 23%. This compares with 17% of people in a family without a disabled person.

Over a third (35%) of disabled women and just under a third (30%) of disabled men were paid below the Living Wage in the UK in the period up to 2014 (compared to 25% of non-disabled men and 29% of non-disabled women in the same period).

Research carried out in the UK in April 2020 found that disabled people were more likely to say that they will come out of the coronavirus outbreak in more debt compared to non-disabled people. 34.2% of disabled women said their household had already run out of money, compared to 24.4% of non-disabled women ([WBG, n=3,280](#)).

Relative poverty rates higher where a household member is disabled



Source: [Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2016-19](#);

[EHRC, Disability Pay Gap, 2017](#), [Disabled women and Covid-19- Research evidence](#)



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Social Security

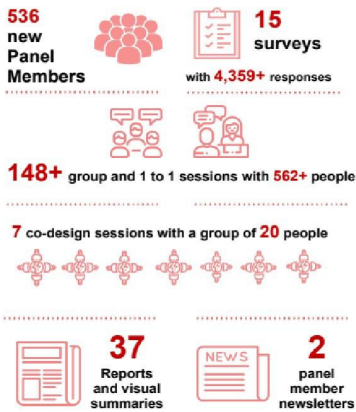
Experience Panels have been set up by the Scottish Government, made up of over 2,400 people with recent experience across the benefits which will be devolved to Scotland, including disability benefits.

Four-fifths (83%) of the 1,275 panel members who responded to 2017 and 2018 surveys about their demographics said that they had a disability or long term health condition. A large programme of research and co-design is underway with panel members.

"The accessibility of the panels is very good, provision of information is good and it is easy to contact people if help is needed."

Panel member
'Who is in the panels' report

Experience Panels 2019 in Numbers



Publications relating to the Panels can be found [here](#).

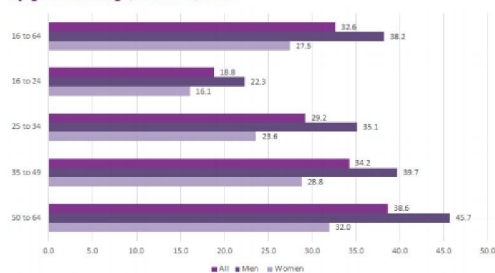
Labour Market

In 2019, the employment rate for those classed as disabled under the Equality Act 2010 was 49.0 per cent which was significantly lower than the employment rate for non-disabled people (81.6 per cent). In 2019, the disability employment gap was 32.6 percentage points.



Source: [APS 2019](#)

Disability employment gap for ages 16 to 64 by gender and age, Scotland, 2019



The disability employment gap was lower for women (27.5 percentage points) than men (38.2 percentage points) for ages 16 to 64 and across all other age bands. The disability employment gap was lower for young people and increased with age, with the gap being highest for those aged 50 to 64 years, for both women and men.

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Children and Young People

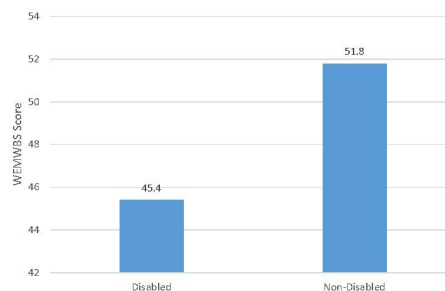
- Households containing a disabled person have higher levels of child material deprivation (20%) compared to households with no disabled people (8%). [Source FRS 16-19](#)
- Compared to non-disabled children, disabled children were more likely to have high scores in the Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire indicating greater evidence of emotional and behavioural difficulties (2016- 2019 combined). 40% of children with a disability scored between 17-40 (abnormal) compared to 5% of non-disabled children. [Source: SHeS 2019](#)
- Overall, only 53% of young people felt that their perspectives were taken into account by adults. Fewer disabled young adults felt their perspectives were considered (47%) than non-disabled young adults (58%). Source: Young People in Scotland Survey, 2017
- Disabled children reported more social, emotional and behavioural difficulties at an early age, compared to non-disabled children. Source: [GUS](#)
- The majority of disabled children (75%) said they had three or more friends, although this was slightly lower than for non-disabled children (82%). Source: [GUS](#)
- Childcare satisfaction for parents with disabled children is comparable to that of parents with non-disabled children, although the data suggests some gaps in provision. Source: [GUS](#)

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Health and Wellbeing

- Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to smoke (26% compared to 13%), but non-disabled people are more likely to engage in hazardous/harmful drinking (26% compared to 20% of disabled people).
- A smaller proportion of disabled people meet physical activity recommendations than non-disabled people (55% disabled; 73% non-disabled).
- More than two thirds of disabled and almost two thirds of non-disabled people are overweight (including obesity)- 71% disabled; 62% non-disabled (based on BMI). [Source: SHeS 2019](#)
- Around [170,000 adults](#) in Scotland have been defined on medical grounds as clinically extremely vulnerable due to having an existing health condition that puts them at very high risk of severe illness from COVID-19.
- An additional group of people are required to follow enhanced social distancing, because pre-existing health conditions or circumstances mean they are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. A large proportion of disabled people will fall into these groups.

Average Score on the Warwick-Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale,
Source: SHeS 2019



A range of evidence shows that disabled people have poorer mental health than non-disabled people. Recent data from the [SHeS 2019](#) shows that disabled people had lower mental wellbeing than non-disabled people (45.4 compared to 51.8 on a scale of 14 to 70).

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Key Publications

- A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People action plan, 2019 Update <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-progress-report-2019/pages/2/>
- Scotland's Wellbeing: national outcomes for disabled people. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-wellbeing-measuring-national-outcomes-disabled-people/>
- Scotland's National Performance Framework <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>
- The Equality Evidence Finder www.equalityevidence.scot
- Scottish Health Survey 2019 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2019-volume-1-main-report/>
- Scottish Household Survey 2019 <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-household-survey-publications/>
- Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2018-19 <https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-crime-and-justice-survey/>
- Social Security Experience Panel Publications <https://www.gov.scot/collections/social-security-experience-panels-publications/>

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COVID-19 Press Cuttings

- Coronavirus: Hundreds of learning disability deaths in just eight weeks, new data shows <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-learning-disability-nhs-england-mencap-a9522746.html>
- 'Brink of collapse': parents of disabled children buckling under 24-hour care <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/may/13/parents-disabled-children-buckling-under-24-hour-care-coronavirus>
- 'I have lost care support because of coronavirus' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-52415302>
- Disabled people at breaking point with fear and anxiety; <https://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/disabled-people-at-breaking-point-with-fear-and-anxiety>
- Coronavirus: 'All of our respite has been taken away' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-52665688>
- Disabled people left off coronavirus vulnerable list go without food <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/19/disabled-people-left-off-coronavirus-vulnerable-list-go-without-food>

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