

**Survey of Private Sector  
employer's attitude to  
employing people with  
disabilities.**

**Employers Disability Information Service**

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## Summary

- This report presents the findings from a survey of private employers administered in May 2016. The survey was promoted to enterprises associated with the three national employer organisations (Chambers Ireland, Ibec and ISME). There were 301 respondents.
- The purpose of the survey is to set a baseline for the Employers' Disability Information service (EDI), set up in January 2016.
- Just over one in three (38%) respondent enterprises has employed someone with a disability. Of those who have never employed someone with a disability, 30% have considered employing a disabled person.
- The main reason stated for not employing someone with a disability was the lack of candidates at 41%. The suitability of work and the nature of the business were secondary at 11% and 10%.
- Employers did not see the employment of disabled employees as a negative impact on their costs or productivity. By far the reasons for the lack of employment opportunities are the lack of information on the supports available and the lack of knowledge about different disabilities.
- It was also acknowledged that there was a fear of legal consequences if the recruitment does not 'work out'.
- Employers are open to employing someone with a disability but state that they don't know how to go about it.
- Almost two thirds of respondents (63%) were unaware of the Employers' Disability service.
- When compared by size of enterprise, awareness is greatest in the larger enterprises with a score of 80%.
- The results point to the need for awareness promotion among Micro, small and medium businesses, where 63% are unaware.
- (The breakdown is as follows - 61% of micro and small enterprises are unaware, while 71% of medium sized businesses are unaware).
- Not surprising a similar number of respondents (67%) were unaware of the different supports available. Again the large enterprises scored highest with a 30% being unaware.
- Munster enterprises were least aware of the supports with 83% unaware while Leinster scored best at 66%.
- Retailers were least aware at 88%, with services best, scoring 57%.
- If there is little awareness of schemes there will be a low number of enterprises taking up these schemes and points to the need for much more promotion.

## Introduction

As part of the ten-year Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, the Government have funded, on a pilot basis for three years, an employer-led support service incorporating a helpline.

The purpose of this service is to build and enhance employer capacity to recruit and retain staff with disabilities through having ready access to a source of authoritative advice and information, and to assist employers to be more disability-competent and disability-confident.

### **The ultimate aim is to support an increased level of employment of people with disabilities.**

The Employers' Helpline and Guidance Service was launched in January 2016 as the Employers' Disability Information service (EDI) and is managed by a consortium of national employer umbrella bodies (Chambers Ireland, Ibec and ISME) and is housed in ISME, a national employer agency. It is separately branded and open to all employers in Ireland.

The Consortium manages all aspects of the Employers' Helpline and Guidance Service. This includes the establishment and hosting of a helpline for employers and the provision of information and guidance supports for employers.

As part of the service it was proposed to administer a survey of employers to establish a baseline from which progress can be monitored and measured.

This report presents the findings from a survey conducted by Employer Disability Information service (EDI).

The survey was conducted through an internet questionnaire distributed in May 2016 to businesses associated with ISME, Chambers Ireland and Ibec and was promoted through those organisations.

## Questionnaire

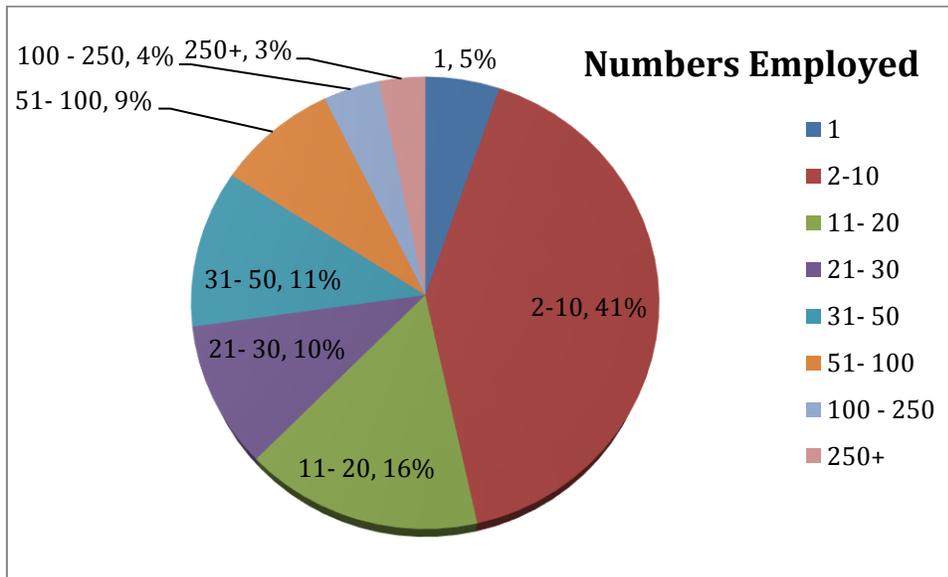
The companies were asked the following questions:

1. Are you aware of the Employer Disability Information service?
2. How did you become aware of the Employer Disability Information service?
3. Are you aware of any of the following supports? - Followed by a list of the many of the existing supports available.
4. Have you ever employed someone with a disability?
5. Have you ever considered employing someone with a disability?
6. Please give main reasons for not employing someone with a disability.

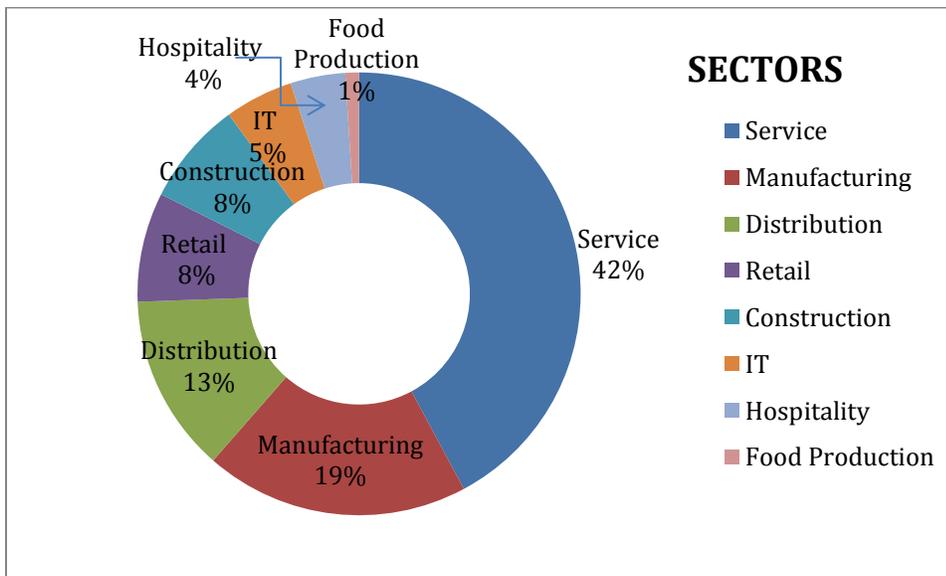
In addition the respondents were asked to rate their attitude to different aspects of employment in relation to disability using the following statements.

- I don't know enough about the different supports available
- I don't know enough about different disabilities
- The potential legal consequences or implications for the company, if the recruitment of a disabled person does not work out, concerns me
- I am open to the idea of employing someone with a disability but don't know how to go about it
- There are sufficient supports in place to allow me to employ someone with a disability
- Employing someone with a disability increases my costs
- Employing someone with a disability makes my business less productive

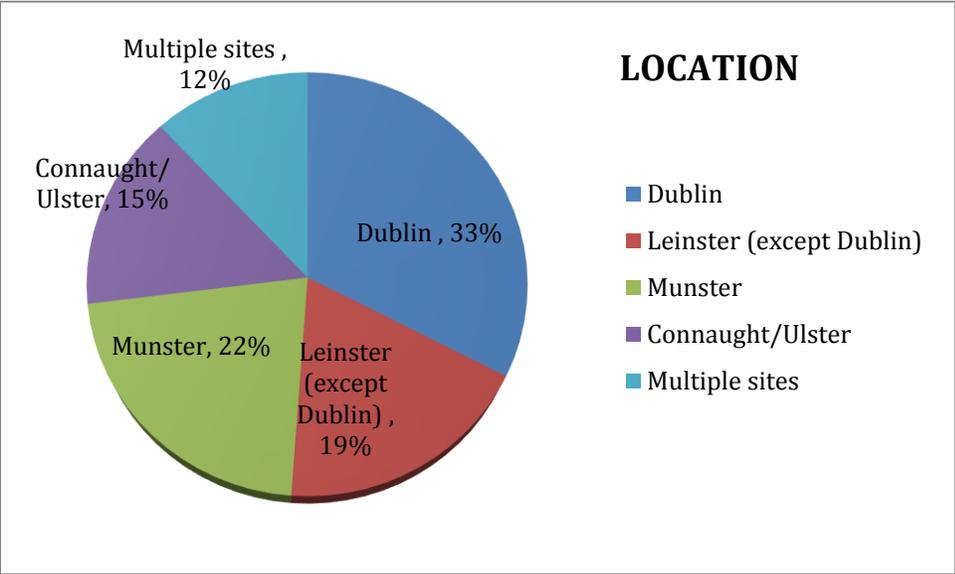
**Respondents by size, sector and location.**



The 301 respondents are categorised by numbers of employees. 3% are in the large category (> 250 employees). Due to the small number of large businesses responding, caution should be exercised in interpreting this data. The 97% are SMEs and are shown as follows. 13% are Medium, with between 50 and 250 employees (>50 <250). 83% are categorised as Small enterprises (1 to 50 employees) Of the 46% of respondents that can be categorised as Micro enterprises (<10 employees) 5% were self-employed.



The sectors represented are set out above with the Services sector being by far the largest at 42%.

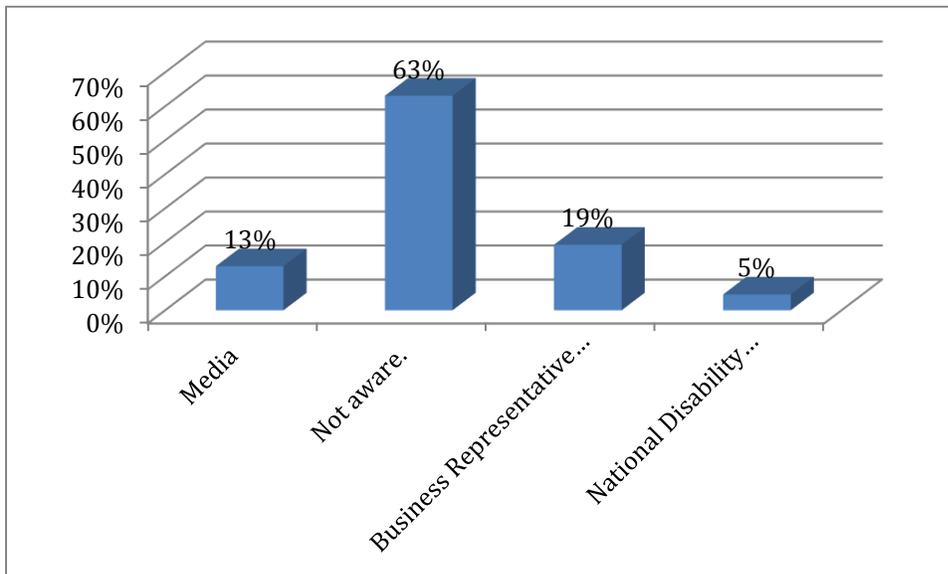


The geographical location is shown above with Leinster being the largest representation at 52% of respondents – Dublin city accounting for a third of all respondents. There were 12% of respondents with multiple sites throughout the country.

### General Awareness of service.

The initial subject relevant question was asked to produce a base line for the Employers' Disability Information service (EDI) as to the awareness and the channels through which the awareness was achieved.

As can be seen from the graphic almost two thirds of respondents (63%) were unaware of the service, which is still encouraging as the service was launched in January 2016. Therefore in the five months of operation the service had achieved a 37% awareness rating among the respondents.



When compared by size of enterprise, awareness is greatest in the larger enterprises with a score of 80%. The results point to the need for awareness promotion among Micro, small and medium businesses, where 63% are unaware. (The breakdown is as follows - 61% of micro and small enterprises are unaware, while 71% of medium sized businesses are unaware).

Geographically 58% of Leinster, 69% of Connaught/Ulster and 74% of Munster respondents were unaware of the service.

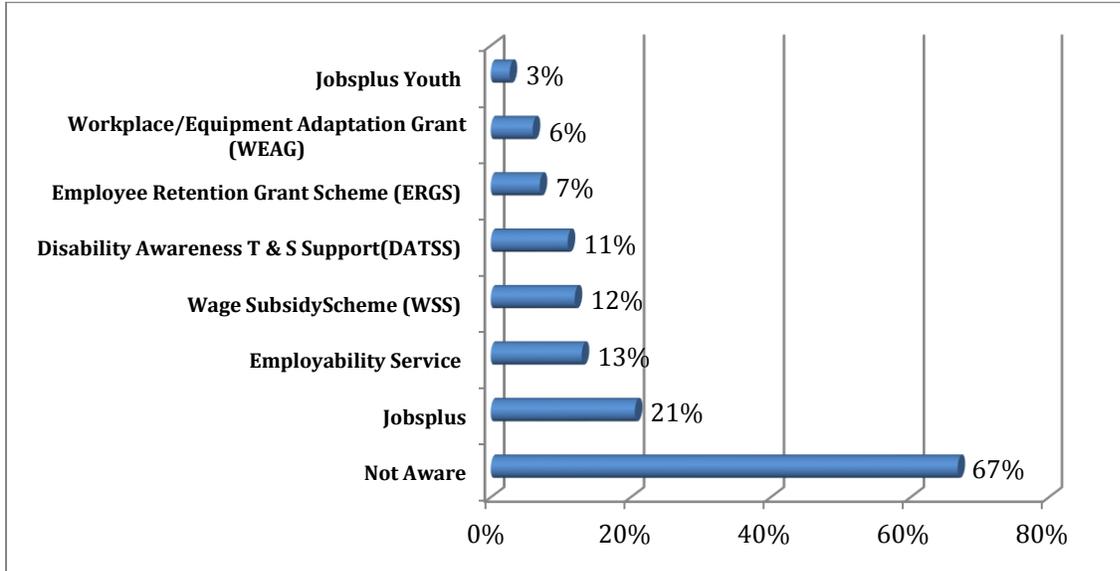
Retailers were least aware at 88%, construction 74%, manufacturing 71% and services were most aware although 51% were still unaware.

The three information channels were business representative organisation 19%, Media 13% and the National Disability Authority 5%.

In fact the distribution of the survey itself has raised awareness among the SMEs as was mentioned by numerous respondents.

### Awareness of Supports for the employment of persons with a disability.

Not surprising a similar number of respondents (67%) were unaware of the different supports available. Again the large enterprises scored highest with a 30% being unaware.



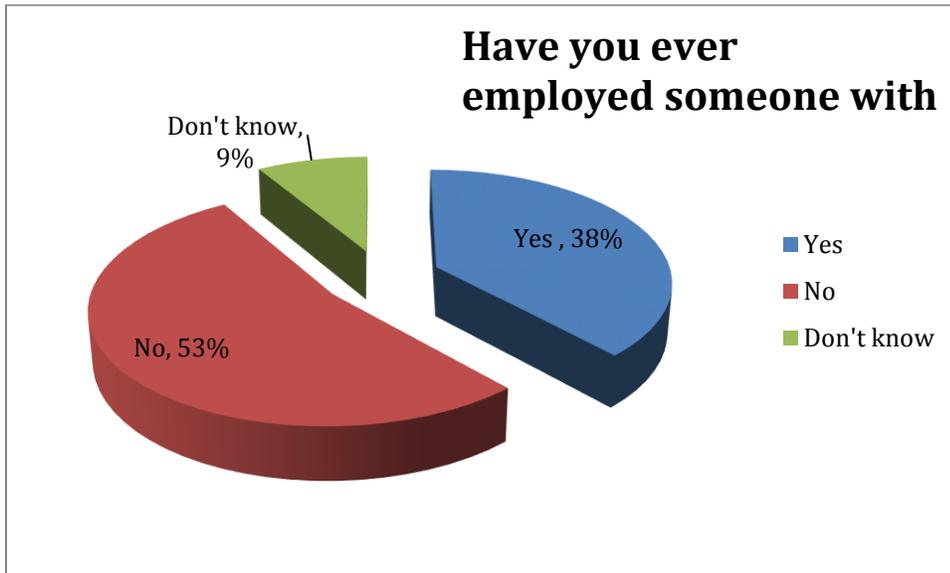
Jobsplus scored the highest at 21%; however the results show a major lack of awareness and knowledge of the supports available. This lack of awareness is consistent across the SME sector for all supports.

Munster enterprises were least aware of the supports with 83% unaware while Leinster scored best at 66%.

Retailers were least aware at 88%, with services best, scoring 57%.

If there is little awareness of schemes there will be a low number of enterprises taking up these schemes and points to the need for much more promotion.

## Have you ever employed someone with a disability?



Just over one in three (38%) respondent enterprises has employed someone with a disability. There was a 9% response from people who did not know.

The survey shows that the larger the enterprise the greater the employment potential. Nine out of ten of the larger enterprises have employed someone with a disability. The figures reduce across the sector size as follows – Medium 58%, Small 41% and Micro 24%.

Manufacturing has the highest employment of someone with a disability figure of 40% with all sectors scoring between 32% and 39%.

Those respondents who had not employed someone with a disability were then asked if they had ever considered employing someone with a disability. 70% of these replied in the negative. On the plus side there are 30% who would consider employment.

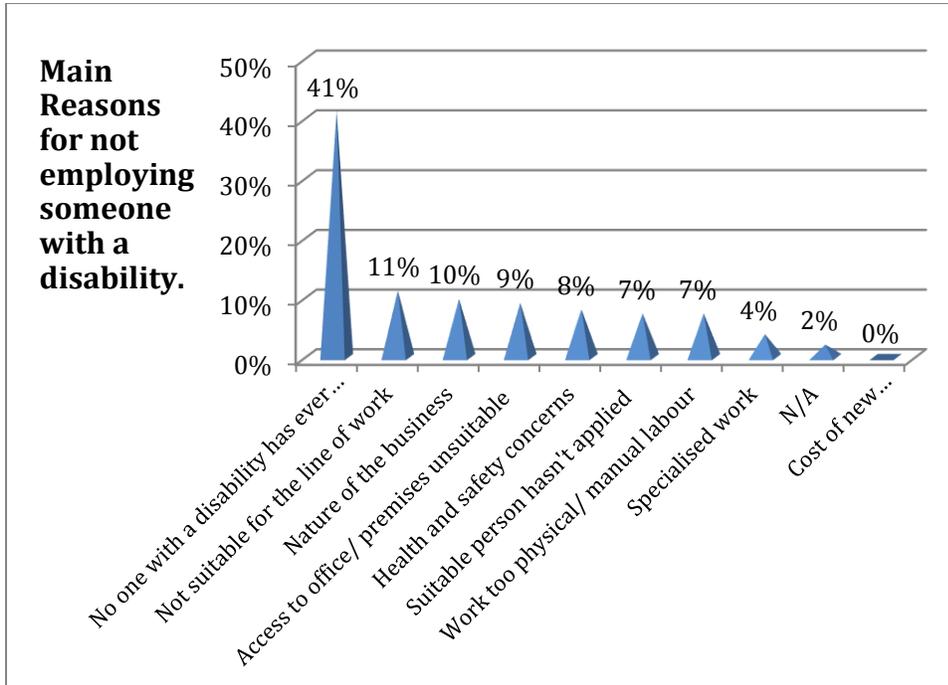
Once more the micro business was less inclined to consider employment at 25% with small and medium scoring 32%.

Geographically Munster enterprises were less inclined to employ at 23% with Leinster at 32%.

Retailers at 31% were most inclined to employ someone with disability with construction the lowest at 14%.

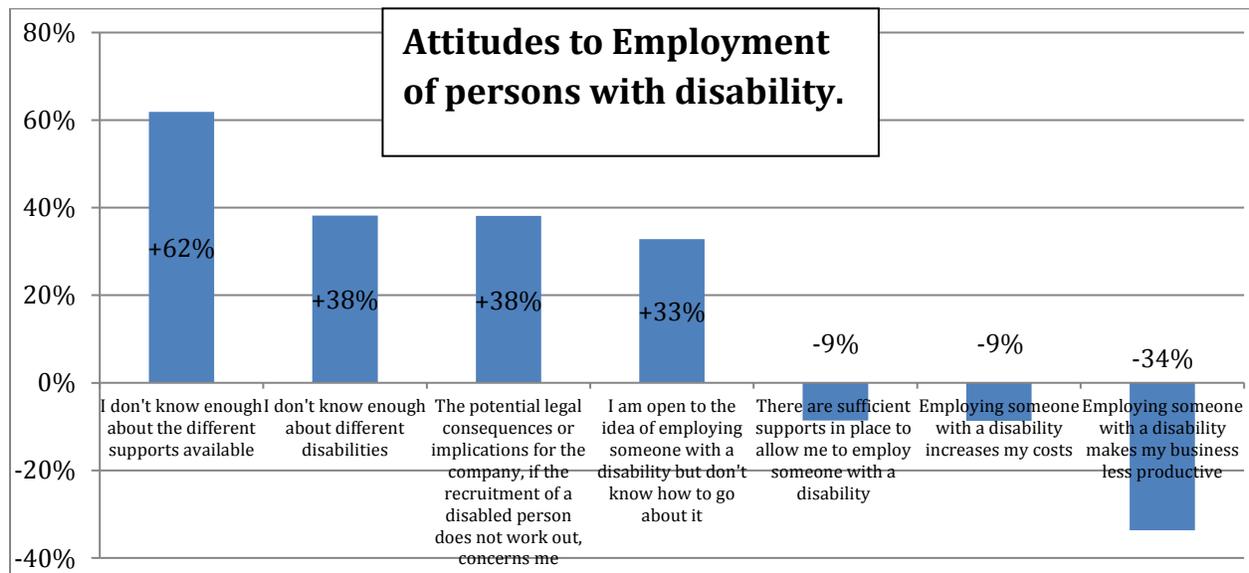
### The reasons for not employing someone with a disability.

Respondents who had never employed someone with a disability were asked to nominate their main reasons.



The main reason was that no one with a disability had ever applied at 41%, while there was little variation in the other general reasons across the sectors, location or size of business.

## Attitudes to employment of persons with disability.



Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the comments and the net responses are stated in the graphic. (If agree or strongly agree are greater than disagree or strongly disagree then the result is stated as a plus figure).

Employers generally agree that they do not know enough yet about supports, different types of disability or the process involved to employ someone, with scores of +61, +38 and +33 respectively.

The perceived potential legal consequences of the employment give concern to many and scores a +38.

Employers did not see disability as impacting on their bottom line as a reason for reticence. However they do see the need for relevant supports and do not know enough about those supports.

There were no major differences across the size sectors.