

**Department for Work and Pensions**

**Research Report No 517**

# **DWP Able to Work: Realising Potential evaluation**

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Lucy Sterne**

A report of research carried out by SQW Consulting on behalf of the  
Department for Work and Pensions

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# The Authors

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# Abbreviations

|      |                                     |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| DEA  | Disability Employment Adviser       |
| DDA  | Disability Discrimination Act       |
| DED  | Disability Equality Duty            |
| DWP  | Department for Work and Pensions    |
| IB   | Incapacity Benefit                  |
| IBPA | Incapacity Benefit Personal Adviser |
| LEP  | Local Employment Partnership        |
| LMRA | Labour Market Recruitment Adviser   |
| NEP  | National Employment Panel           |
| SQW  | SQW Consulting                      |
| SME  | Small and Medium Sized Enterprises  |



# Glossary of terms

**Respondents or pre-/post-event survey respondents**

The Jobcentre Plus staff who completed the pre/post-event online surveys conducted as part of the evaluation.

**Consultees**

The Jobcentre Plus staff who participated in the consultation exercise of the evaluation and were interviewed on a one-to-one basis.



# Summary

SQW Consulting (SQW) was commissioned, in May 2007, by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to carry out an evaluation of the Able to Work: Realising Potential project, which aimed to engage employers and promote recruitment opportunities for people with health conditions and disabilities. As part of the project, two sets of training events were developed, in partnership with Employers' Forum on Disability: one aimed at Jobcentre Plus staff and the other at employers. The events for Jobcentre Plus staff were held for staff who work with employers to help them promote the business benefits of disability confidence amongst employers.

SQW's evaluation has been concerned with the Jobcentre Plus events and not the employer engagement events. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the success of the Jobcentre Plus staff events, specifically looking at Jobcentre Plus staff's perceptions of the training process, the practical actions that follow and the extent to which Jobcentre Plus staff benefit from their participation in the programme.

The aim of the Jobcentre Plus events, delivered in ten regional locations, was to *'provide disability confidence training for Jobcentre Plus employer-facing staff and position Jobcentre Plus as a partner skilled in disability recruitment'*. Their associated learning objectives were to:

- help staff understand and use the business case for becoming a disability confident organisation;
- describe the needs and expectations of employers and what Jobcentre Plus and intermediaries need to do;
- see the job applicant through the eyes of the employer;
- describe how employer recruitment processes work;
- anticipate and counter objections to hiring disabled people.

## Approach to the evaluation

To evaluate the National Employment Panel's (NEP's) Jobcentre Plus staff events, SQW conducted research to assess prior expectations of the training, levels of awareness of disability issues, perceptions of the training process, changes in staff attitudes and confidence towards engaging with employers to promote the concept of disability confidence, the extent to which participants in the event were able to put what they had learnt into practice and any changes in how they carried out their roles as a result of the training. 'Disability confidence' is a new concept developed by Employers' Forum on Disability to define the key characteristics of a company that is getting it right on disability issues.

The methodology for this evaluation comprised two main elements: a pre- and post-event online survey of participants in the events and in-depth pre-and post-event interviews with four to six consultees in each area selected by their district managers. The consultees did not take part in the online survey and their interviews were used to explore the issues in more depth.

The pre-event survey and consultations took place between one and two weeks prior to the Jobcentre Plus event. The post-event survey and consultations were conducted approximately six weeks after participation in the event. Following the events, the Jobcentre Plus District Managers were also interviewed to provide a more strategic perspective.

In total, the events were delivered in ten areas between March 2007 and February 2008. Two of these events had already taken place before the evaluation began and were not included. In each area, the post-event evaluation was scheduled to take place after the employer engagement sessions, which usually occurred within a month of the Jobcentre Plus event. In two cases – Lancashire and South East Wales (Cardiff) – the employer events were not timetabled until two or three months later. It was agreed to include the survey findings from these two areas in the aggregate survey findings, which are, therefore, based on the respondents in eight areas. But the detailed case study analysis involving in-depth consultations was conducted in the six areas only where the events followed a similar timetable.

## Pre-event evaluation findings

### **Pre-event awareness**

An assessment of initial levels of awareness of disability issues demonstrated that not only were there relatively low levels of awareness but also that many staff lacked confidence in dealing with disability issues.

Respondents were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 ('1' being unaware and 10 very aware) on the level of awareness about the issues surrounding recruitment of individuals with health conditions and disabilities. Nearly half of the respondents rated themselves at level 5 or below. Of those who had received prior

disability training (69 per cent), nearly one in three (32 per cent) rated themselves at 5 or below on prior awareness. Only nine per cent rated themselves as very aware (9 or 10 on the scale).

In most areas, there was a clear correlation between job role and levels of awareness. In one area, for example, the majority of those who rated themselves as 9 were Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs). Overall, 48 per cent of respondents who rated themselves as 9 or 10 were employed as DEAs.

### **Pre-event familiarity with 'disability confidence'**

Respondents were also asked what they understood by the term 'disability confidence'. The results pointed to a general lack of familiarity with the concept. Amongst the survey respondents, only just over a quarter (27 per cent) were aware of the term. Of those who were aware of the term, the majority had experience of dealing with disabled customers (87 per cent), working with employers to promote disabled customers (78 per cent) and nine out of ten had received previous training on disability issues.

Those who were familiar with the term provided a wide range of definitions covering Jobcentre Plus staff confidence in dealing with disabled customers and in engaging with employers on disability issues. A minority of respondents and consultees understood the term as applying to employer organisations that were confident in recruiting disabled people and providing the appropriate support. One consultee defined disability confident employers as those who were positive about disabled workers and the recruitment of disabled staff and who actively supported them and their colleagues so that their welfare, and contribution to the company, were maximised.

### **Prior disability training**

In total, 69 per cent of survey respondents recalled receiving prior training on disability issues<sup>1</sup> and nearly three out of four (72 per cent) of these considered that the training had been useful to their role.

Access to training, and the content of that training, appeared to be heavily dependent on job roles, with DEAs and Specialist Incapacity Benefit Advisers receiving the most extensive, and staff in less specialised roles receiving a more introductory, type of training.

Several consultees expressed the view that much of the learning happens 'on the job' and through informal mechanisms and experience with customers. Some expressed the view that disability training should be more widely available – ie to

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<sup>1</sup> Several of the districts felt that most of their delegates would benefit from a disability awareness briefing before attending *Realising Potential* training. Amanda Wadsworth, Jobcentre Plus North West Region's Disability Champion, provided disability awareness training for 205 of *Realising Potential's* trainees.

all Jobcentre Plus staff regardless of their job role. The view was expressed that this would help to mitigate the tendency of staff to refer any cases with a disability element to the DEA, rather than dealing with it themselves.

### **Event expectations**

In all areas, respondents had high expectations of the Realising Potential event. They hoped that it would help them in three key areas: improve their confidence in working with disabled customers and employers; increase their knowledge, awareness and understanding of the issues faced by disabled customers; and give them tools to liaise more effectively with employers.

## Post-event evaluation findings

### **Assessment of the event, content and delivery**

Overall, the event was very well received with the majority of respondents and consultees reporting that the event had either met or exceeded their expectations (62 per cent and 33 per cent of respondents respectively).

The majority of survey respondents (85 per cent) thought that the amount of information provided was the right amount. Almost all the respondents (95 per cent) said that the information had been adequately explained.

### **Main messages of the event**

Respondents were asked to comment on the main messages delivered on the day and were generally clear on what these were. The responses fell into three main categories: an understanding of 'disability confidence'; ways of effectively promoting disabled customers to their potential employers; and increased awareness of the issues and barriers faced by disabled customers.

### **Usefulness of lessons learnt**

The value of the training to participants was reflected in the finding that nearly all (95 per cent) respondents believed they would be able to put into practice what they had learned. A small proportion (12 per cent) thought that some of the material had not been relevant or helpful to the audience, citing examples where the content did not sufficiently relate to the types of employers Jobcentre Plus staff typically encountered, or to the different roles of the audience.

Respondents also identified what they saw as the most useful aspects of the event. A wide range of responses were given, including: tips on overcoming employers' negative attitudes towards disabled customers; how businesses can change to become more accessible to potential and disabled employees; ways of promoting disabled customers to employers; how to look at the recruitment process from an employer's perspective; and how to dispel myths and focus on positive images. In all the areas, both respondents and consultees referred to the value of the contribution of both facilitators, one of whom was, himself, disabled.

The expectation that the event might facilitate working together and closer co-operation between staff groups was also highlighted by some respondents.

### **Comparisons of pre- and post-event awareness**

The findings showed an increase in the proportion of respondents who rated themselves highly on their awareness of issues concerning the recruitment of disabled people and people with health conditions. Whereas 39 per cent had rated themselves between 7 and 10 prior to the event, following the event this proportion has increased to 78 per cent.

In addition, almost all respondents (95 per cent) felt that they had increased their awareness of the issues surrounding the recruitment process. A similar proportion considered that they now had more confidence to engage with employers on disability issues.

There was also a considerable increase in awareness of the term 'disability confidence'. Whereas prior to the event, only 27 per cent of respondents were familiar with the term, following the event, only four respondents were unable to provide a definition. Most respondents focused on the meaning of disability confidence as it related to their own sense of confidence in dealing with employers, rather than as a term to be applied specifically to the employer.

### **Event outcomes**

The short timescale between the events and the evaluation of the outcomes meant that only a few respondents (11 per cent or 18 in total) could yet point to any changes in the attitudes and behaviours of employers.

The evaluation sought to find out whether there were any concrete outcomes in terms of respondents' post-event interaction with employers. In each of the areas, some respondents gave examples of how the training had enabled them to work differently with employers. The typical example was of being able to present a disabled customer in a more positive light to a prospective employer.

### **Benefits of participation**

The vast majority of respondents (95 per cent) agreed that they had benefited from participating in the event. Most (92 per cent) believed that the event would help them carry out their role. Nearly as many (86 per cent) went further and said that they had also gained a better understanding of the roles of their colleagues.

### **Future requirements**

Alongside the positive assessment of the training, more than one in three respondents (38 per cent) put forward suggestions about how the event might be improved in the future. These ideas included a two-day event to avoid information overload; more audience interaction and participation; a variety of techniques such as role-play; and more information on how to promote disabled customers to employers.

## Recommendations

In order to build on the success of the Jobcentre Plus staff events, the report puts forward the following Jobcentre Plus-specific recommendations:

- review the content, format and accessibility of Jobcentre Plus' internal disability training for all staff groups;
- promote joined-up working between distinct staff groups within each Jobcentre Plus district, with a focus on aligning the work of Labour Market Recruitment Advisers (LMRAs), Incapacity Benefit Personal Advisers (IBPAs) and DEAs;
- the training delivered at the Jobcentre Plus events should be rolled out to all advisory staff within a district to ensure comprehensive 'buy-in' to the messages of the event;
- there should be strong encouragement from the top to ensure that staff and managers undertake the disability training provided;
- future training should include more focus on the issues facing small and medium sized businesses;
- Jobcentre Plus staff identified particular difficulties dealing with employer preconceptions about people with mental health problems. Future training events could include a session on mental health issues;
- there is a need to refresh and revisit the lessons learnt at a later date to discuss progress, good practice and any new legislation;
- Jobcentre Plus employer-facing staff require additional support from the relevant managers to increase their interaction with employers.

Two general recommendations are put forward:

- disability training may be more effective when the trainers include a disabled facilitator, as was the case in the Jobcentre Plus events;
- consideration should be given to the most effective format for delivering future disability training events – comments from staff indicated that they responded very positively to the face-to-face format of these events<sup>2</sup>.

These recommendations are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

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<sup>2</sup> Although respondents were not asked directly about their preferred training format, it is implicit in their comments that face-to-face delivery was the most effective form of disseminating the information. For example, both facilitators were consistently praised in their delivery of the material, and the face-to-face nature of the event facilitated enhanced understanding of the roles played by colleagues.

# 1 Introduction

SQW was commissioned, in May 2007, by the DWP to carry out an evaluation of the Able to Work: Realising Potential project. As set out in Appendix B, the project aimed to:

- promote more, and better job, opportunities for disabled people and people with health conditions;
- give Jobcentre Plus teams practical tools to work confidently with employers (staff training);
- provide an introductory vehicle for Jobcentre Plus to develop new employer relationships and deepen existing ones (business seminars); and
- challenge employers to adopt best practice recruitment models.

As part of the project, two sets of training events were developed, in partnership with Employers' Forum on Disability: one aimed at Jobcentre Plus staff and the other at employers. The events for Jobcentre Plus staff were held for staff who work with employers to help them promote the business benefits of disability confidence amongst employers.

SQW's evaluation has been concerned with the Jobcentre Plus events and not the Employer Engagement Events. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the success of the Jobcentre Plus staff events, specifically looking at Jobcentre Plus staff's perceptions of the training process, the practical actions that follow and the extent to which Jobcentre Plus staff benefit from their participation in the programme.

The aim of the Jobcentre Plus events, delivered in ten regional locations, was to *'provide disability confidence training for Jobcentre Plus employer-facing staff and position Jobcentre Plus as a partner skilled in disability recruitment'*. Their associated learning objectives were to:

- help staff understand and use the business case for becoming a disability confident organisation;
- describe the needs and expectations of employers and what Jobcentre Plus and intermediaries need to do;

- see the job applicant through the eyes of the employer;
- describe how employer recruitment processes work;
- anticipate and counter objections to hiring disabled people.

Jobcentre Plus staff have a wide range of roles and responsibilities that place them in a position to advise and engage with employers on disability issues. The extent to which they feel confident in carrying out these roles is an important influence on employers' attitudes and practices towards recruiting and employing people with health conditions or disabilities.

'Disability confidence' is a concept which has been developed by Employers' Forum on Disability to explain how successful organisations get it right on disability. They define a disability confident company as follows:

A Disability Confident company:

- Understands how disability affects all aspects of their business – people, markets, competitors, suppliers, communities and key stakeholders
- Creates a culture of inclusion and removes barriers for groups of people
- Makes adjustments which enable specific individuals to contribute as employees, customers and partners

Source: <http://www.realising-potential.org/disability-confidence/>

The Jobcentre Plus staff training sessions sought to explain how disability confidence can improve organisational performance. This was conveyed through the provision of facts on the disabled population of the UK, 'real-life examples' on how to engage and equip employers and the disabled jobseeker with appropriate knowledge and confidence and an explanation of the principles which underpin the concept of disability confidence, which are formed around the following six building blocks: strategic benefits; commercial benefits; legal benefits; societal benefits; ethical benefits; and professional benefits.

## 1.1 Structure of the report

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 – sets out our approach to the evaluation;
- Chapter 3 – details the key findings from the pre-event evaluation;
- Chapter 4 – details the key findings from the post-event evaluation;
- Chapter 5 – presents some conclusions and recommendations;
- Appendix A – sets out the aggregate analysis of the pre- and post-event survey findings of from all eight of the evaluated areas;

- Appendices B and C – present the context for the Realising Potential events and the invitation letter sent out to all participants prior to the event;
- Appendices D-H – set out the research tools used to undertake the evaluation.



## 2 Our approach to the evaluation

In this chapter we set out the approach we have used to undertake the evaluation. The specific components of the methodology are explained in detail below.

### 2.1 Exploratory work

The first research task comprised a detailed interview with the facilitators of the NEP's Jobcentre Plus events (Employers' Forum on Disability), to gain a clear understanding of objectives, content and delivery of the events themselves. In addition, we conducted consultations with the Jobcentre Plus district managers in the districts which held the first events. These exploratory interviews facilitated robust collation of the issues we were required to cover in the main stage of the fieldwork and informed the development of the research tools (see Appendices D-H).

### 2.2 Evaluation approach

The aim of the evaluation was to assess the success of the NEP's Jobcentre Plus staff events. Specifically, it explored perceptions of the training process, any changes in staff attitudes and confidence towards engaging with employers to promote the concept of disability confidence, views on the suggested approach, the extent to which they were able to put what they have learnt into practice and what, if anything, they now do differently. Examining these issues necessitated pre- and post-event surveys and consultations.

The broad evaluation questions addressed in all case study areas are laid out in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 The evaluation questions**

| Themes                                       | Questions   |
|--|---|
| Pre-event awareness and employer interaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How aware do you feel about disability issues? Are you confident with your present level of understanding?</li> <li>• What do you understand by the term, disability confidence?</li> <li>• Have you had previous training on disability issues?</li> <li>• Do you have experience of dealing with customers with health conditions or disabilities in your Jobcentre Plus role?</li> <li>• Do you have experience of engaging with employers on promoting the recruitment of people with health conditions or disabilities?</li> </ul>  |
| Event expectations                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your personal expectations of the Realising Potential event?</li> <li>• What outcomes would you like to achieve following the event once you have had the opportunity to put into practice some of what you will learn?</li> </ul>  |
| Evaluation of the event                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the main messages delivered by the event?</li> <li>• What was your view on the delivery and content of the event?</li> <li>• Do you think you will be able to put into practice the lessons you have learnt when engaging with employers?</li> <li>• Which parts of the event did you find the most/least helpful?</li> <li>• Do you think the event could have been improved?</li> </ul>  |
| Event outcomes                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you know/understand by the term disability confidence?</li> <li>• Since the event do you feel that you have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A heightened awareness about the issues surrounding the recruitment of people with disabilities?</li> <li>– More confidence to engage with employers on disability issues?</li> <li>– Developed a better understanding of the roles of your colleagues?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Since the event have you witnessed any changes in employers' attitudes and behaviour regarding employment of people with a disability?</li> <li>• Has there been any change in the level of recruitment of disabled people since the event?</li> <li>• Have you encountered any resistance from employers to the promotion of disability confidence?</li> <li>• Overall, do you think you have benefited from participation?</li> <li>• Do you think the lessons delivered will help you in your role?</li> </ul> |
| Future focus                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you like future training sessions on disability confidence issues?</li> <li>• Do you think the events could have any wider benefits?</li> </ul>  |

Source: SQW Consulting.

### 2.2.1 Selecting the areas

Ten Realising Potential events for Jobcentre Plus staff were held (two of which had already been conducted at the time of evaluation) in different locations between March 2007 and February 2008. These events were accompanied by similar sessions for employers, which followed at some stage after each Jobcentre Plus event. We considered it important to have consistency in the timing of the post-event evaluations to ensure that outcomes could be confidently compared. Therefore, for each area, we held post-event interviews **after** the employer engagement sessions, as we were aware that these may have an effect/influence on the outcomes reported by Jobcentre Plus participants.

We noted that in the majority of cases the employer meetings fell within a month of the Jobcentre Plus event. However, there were two exceptions to this – Lancashire and South East Wales (Cardiff) – where employer meetings were not timetabled until two or three months later. Of the eight forthcoming events, we, therefore, excluded these two sub-regions from the main evaluation and undertook detailed evaluations of the remaining six areas.

### 2.2.2 Fieldwork tasks for main evaluation

#### *Consultations and recruitment of consultees*

The procedure for recruiting consultees for the evaluations in each district was agreed with the project Steering Group prior to the commissioning of the evaluation. This entailed Jobcentre Plus district managers recommending between four and six of their staff who were registered for the event, covering a diverse range of Jobcentre Plus roles. Face-to-face interviews were subsequently organised and undertaken with these individuals<sup>3</sup>. In most cases more than six names were provided to avoid any difficulties with availability.

A detailed discussion guide was used for all the consultations to ensure that the information collected from each area was consistent and comprehensive. Consultations lasted a maximum of 45 minutes. The discussion guides were informed by the issues identified during the exploratory consultations and were refined following SQW's attendance at the event in Swansea on 12 June 2007.

#### *Pre-event assessments*

The pre-event assessments took place between one and two weeks prior to the Jobcentre Plus event. The timetable within which we conducted the sessions is set out in Table 2.2.

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that this form of selection procedure may introduce some bias to the results of the consultation exercise.

**Table 2.2 Timetable for pre-event assessments**

| <b>District</b>                          | <b>Jobcentre Plus event date</b> | <b>Dates between which the pre-event assessments were held</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| South West Wales (Swansea)               | 12 June 2007                     | 28 May – 8 June 2007   |
| Forth Valley, Fife and Tayside (Dundee)  | 11 September 2007                | 27 August – 7 September 2007                                   |
| Staffordshire (Stoke)                    | 20 September 2007                | 3 – 14 September 2007  |
| Devon and Cornwall (Plymouth and Torbay) | 6 November 2007                  | 22 October – 2 November 2007                                   |
| Norfolk (Norwich)                        | 15 January 2007                  | 2 – 11 January 2008  |
| Surrey and Sussex (Brighton and Hove)    | 6 February 2007                  | 21 January – 1 February 2008                                   |

There were two parts to the pre-assessment:

- **Pre-event questionnaire** – All event participants who were not taking part in the consultation exercise were sent an online questionnaire on the first date of the range specified in the above table. This asked participants about their existing knowledge of disability confidence issues, gauged the extent and nature of current activity and engagement with employers and teased out any concerns, objectives and expectations. This questionnaire to all participants enabled the research to have as far a reach as possible.

We sent out a reminder email three days after the initial link was distributed in order to collate as many responses as possible prior to the staging of the event.

- **Participant consultations** – As described above, the questionnaire feedback was complemented by one-to-one interviews with four to six participants at each event. An experienced SQW consultant visited the specified location for one full day or over two consecutive days where necessary. The interviews were used to explore the issues included in the questionnaire in more detail.

### *Post-event assessments*

The post-event interviews were timetabled for approximately six weeks after the Jobcentre Plus event. This ensured that each assessment occurred after the employment engagement sessions in the area which as specified above, we regard as an important factor. This timescale also allowed sufficient time for participants to reflect on what had been learnt and for any changes in approach, attitudes and outcomes to be realised. We also felt that six weeks was a permissible interlude for accurate recall by event attendees.

The timetable for post-event assessments is detailed in Table 2.3:

**Table 2.3 Timetable for post-event assessments**

| <b>District</b>                          | <b>Jobcentre Plus event date</b> | <b>Dates between which the post-event assessments were held</b> |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| South West Wales (Swansea)               | 12 June 2007                     | 23 July – 3 August 2007   |
| Forth Valley, Fife and Tayside (Dundee)  | 11 September 2007                | 22 October – 2 November 2007                                    |
| Staffordshire (Stoke)                    | 20 September 2007                | 29 October – 9 November 2007                                    |
| Devon and Cornwall (Plymouth and Torbay) | 6 November 2007                  | 10 – 21 December 2007   |
| Norfolk (Norwich)                        | 15 January 2007                  | 25 February – 7 March 2008                                      |
| Surrey and Sussex (Brighton and Hove)    | 6 February 2007                  | 17 – 28 March 2008  |

The post-event assessments comprised of two stages:

- **Post-event questionnaire** – A post-event online survey was sent to all event attendees who were not consultees, approximately six weeks after participation in the event. Information gathered from the questionnaire was used to assess confidence with and success of the new approach. Crucially, through comparison with the pre-event results, it enabled us to identify any changes in attitudes, awareness, understanding and outcomes.

We sent out a reminder email one week after the initial email link was distributed to ensure that we can gather as many comments as possible on the impact of the events.

Importantly, the design of the questionnaire was such that it could be re-used to conduct a further assessment of event outcomes and changes (or lack of) of behaviour at a future date (for example, six months after completion of the events), which would permit a more longitudinal analysis.

- **Participant consultations** – Complementing the questionnaire data, one-to-one consultations with the same Jobcentre Plus staff who were interviewed during the pre-event assessments were conducted to allow us to delve deeper into many of the issues that the questionnaire raises and properly explore both points of good practice and areas to improve. We also interviewed the Jobcentre Plus district managers at this stage to gain a more strategic perspective.

### **2.2.3 Fieldwork tasks for two additional areas: Lancashire and South East Wales**

During discussions between SQW Consulting and the Steering Group, it was agreed to extend the fieldwork to include both the Lancashire and South East Wales events. However, as a result of the time-delay between the Jobcentre Plus Event and the associated Employer Event, in both these cases the extension included the undertaking of the pre-event and post-event questionnaires only. For the purposes of methodological consistency, we initially analysed the findings from these two

events separately from the main body of six case studies. However, we found a negligible difference between the questionnaire results of these additional areas and the main case study areas and therefore, included the results of all eight areas within the aggregate evaluation analysis illustrated in this report.

## 2.3 Evaluation results

Table 2.4 illustrates both the pre- and post-event response rates for both the survey and consultation exercises. This shows a generally high response rate for all evaluation activities, with only the post-event survey resulting in a response rate of less than 80 per cent.

**Table 2.4 Pre- and post-event response rates**

| <b>Research activity</b> | <b>Total number of potential participants</b> | <b>Participation/ response rate</b> | <b>Reasons for non-participation</b>  |
|--------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Pre-event survey         | 269   | 82% (220)                           | Invalid email addresses<br>Non-completion due to annual leave<br>Late modifications made to delegates list, leaving some survey responses invalid |
| Pre-event consultations  | 32  | 84% (27)                            | Late withdrawal of nominated staff<br>Unable to participate due to annual leave   |
| Post-event survey        | 233   | 67% (157)                           | Invalid email addresses<br>Non-completion due to annual leave<br>General non-completion   |
| Post-event consultations | 34  | 100% (34)                           | N/A   |

Source: SQW Consulting.

It is important to note that although the evaluation sample size represents a high proportion of the overall population of staff who participated in the events, the evaluation was designed to be small in its nature and therefore, results should be taken as indicative only.

The following chapters detail the key aggregate findings of the evaluation, where participants who responded to the survey are referred to as 'respondents' or 'survey respondents' and those who participated in the consultation exercise are referred to as 'consultees'.

## 3 Pre-event evaluation: key findings

### Key findings

The survey found that there were relatively low levels of awareness of disability issues. On a scale of 1 to 10, nearly half the respondents rated themselves at 5 or below. Only nine per cent rated themselves as very aware – 9 or 10 on the scale.

Just over a quarter (27 per cent) were aware of the term 'disability confidence'. Of those who had heard of the term, the majority defined it in terms of staff confidence in dealing with disability issues, rather than as a term to be applied to a disability confident organisation.

More than two-thirds (69 per cent) of survey respondents had received prior training on disability and 72 per cent of these considered that the training had been useful.

Survey respondents had expectations that the event would help them in three key areas: improve their confidence in working with disabled customers and employers; increase their knowledge, awareness and understanding of the issues faced by disabled customers; and provide them with the tools to liaise more effectively with employers.

Some respondents and consultees also anticipated that an outcome of the increased confidence in dealing with employers would be larger numbers of disabled people, or people on Incapacity Benefit (IB), obtaining work.

Some consultees hoped that the event would enable staff members to work more effectively together.

In this chapter, we draw out the key findings from the pre-event survey and the consultations in the six case study areas. Where relevant, we identify any considerable differences between the case study results.

### 3.1 Profile of delegates

All participating delegates were asked to give a description of their primary responsibilities. The majority of responses indicated respondents' roles included either general customer-based service provision, disability related customer based service provision, employer-based service provision or work with partners. A summary of responses is provided below:

- **Service provision for individuals with disabilities or health conditions:** The largest proportion of respondents (61 people (28 per cent)) worked with individuals with disabilities or health conditions and people receiving incapacity benefits. This set of jobs included a range of responsibilities including the following: assisting customers in entering or moving closer to employment and/or training, signposting to other organisations, acting as an advocate with employers on the customer's behalf, motivating customers about their future employment prospects, conducting Disability Symbol visits with employers and advising on other benefits including tax credits.
- **Provision of services for local employers:** The second largest proportion of respondents (36 people (16 per cent)) worked with local employers to support the filling of vacancies and recruitment needs, promote work trials and New Deal agreements and manage employers' expectations of Jobcentre Plus services. More specifically, another nine per cent of respondents were involved in an employer engagement role, predominantly consisting of the delivery of employer engagement strategies.
- **Liaising with partners:** Nearly ten per cent of respondents (20 people) stated their job involved liaising with key partners. This included: working with Train to Gain and Sector Skills Councils, managing operational relationships between Jobcentres and training providers and engagement with the Citizen's Advice Bureau, local authorities and community organisations. Promoting the services of Jobcentre Plus was cited as an additional responsibility in a number of cases, which involved making contact with local employers and providers.
- **Customer-based service provision:** Twenty-three respondents (ten per cent) stated their main responsibilities involved the provision of support to aid customers back into work and/or training, helping those who face particular barriers into the workplace and educating customers on the benefits of entering work.

A number of other responsibilities were listed in addition to those above, which included: managing a team of advisers, marketing activities, account management for larger employers, management of events for employers, performance management and working on the Pathways to Work programme.

## 3.2 Pre-event levels of awareness

To assess the impact of the training event, the pre-event survey and consultations sought to assess initial levels of awareness of disability issues. The findings from the survey respondents demonstrated that not only were there relatively low levels of awareness but also that many staff lacked confidence in dealing with disability issues.

Respondents were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being unaware and 10 very aware) on their level of awareness about the issues surrounding recruitment of individuals with health conditions and disabilities. Nearly half of the respondents rated themselves at level 5 or below. Of those who had received prior disability training (57 per cent), nearly one in three (32 per cent) rated themselves at 5 or below on prior awareness. Only nine per cent rated themselves as very aware – 9 or 10 on the scale.

In most areas, there was a clear correlation between job role and levels of awareness. For example, in one of the areas, the majority of those who rated themselves as 9 were DEAs. Overall, 48 per cent of respondents who rated themselves as 9 or 10 were employed as DEAs.

### 3.2.1 Pre-event familiarity with 'disability confidence'

Respondents were also asked what they understood by the term 'disability confidence'. Just over a quarter (27 per cent) of survey respondents were aware of the term. Of those who were aware of the term, the majority had experience of dealing with disabled customers (87 per cent), working with employers to promote disabled customers (78 per cent) and nine out of ten had received previous training on disability issues.

Those who were familiar with the term provided a wide range of definitions covering Jobcentre Plus staff confidence in dealing with disabled customers and in engaging with employers on disability issues. A minority of respondents and consultees understood the term as applying to employer organisations that were confident in recruiting disabled people and providing the appropriate support. One consultee defined disability confident employers as those who were positive about disabled workers and the recruitment of disabled staff and who actively supported them and their colleagues so that their welfare, and contribution to the company, were maximised.

### 3.2.2 Experience of dealing with disability issues

Four out of five respondents (80 per cent) had experience of dealing with disabled customers, compared with two-thirds (66 per cent) who had engaged with employers to promote the recruitment of people with health conditions or disabilities. Of those who had engaged with employers, 50 per cent considered that this process had been productive.

Twenty-one per cent (47 respondents) had worked with employers in a particular sector. Some respondents had worked with a variety of companies of different sizes, whereas 30 respondents (14 per cent) had worked with large employers, 25 (11 per cent) with medium sized and 23 (ten per cent) with small employers.

### 3.2.3 Training on disability issues

In total, 69 per cent of survey respondents recalled receiving prior training on disability issues<sup>4</sup> and nearly three out of four (72 per cent) of these considered that the training had been useful to their role.

The proportions varied from just over half in two areas (54 per cent and 53 per cent) to 81 per cent in another area. Access to training, and the content of that training, appeared to be heavily dependent on job roles, with DEAs and Specialist Incapacity Benefit Advisers receiving the most extensive and staff in less specialised roles receiving a more introductory type of training.

Many types of disability training were mentioned, including: Pathways to Work, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) awareness, equal opportunities, health issues and problems, drug and alcohol problems and counselling skills. However, it is notable that no staff reported that they had received any training on the Disability Equality Duty (DED).

Several of the consultees expressed the view that much of the learning happens 'on the job' and through informal mechanisms and experience with customers. Some expressed the view that disability training should be more widely available – ie to all Jobcentre Plus staff regardless of their job role. The view was expressed that this would help to mitigate the tendency of staff to refer any cases with a disability element to the DEA, rather than dealing with it themselves.

## 3.3 Event expectations

Survey respondents hoped that the Realising Potential Event would help them in three key areas:

- Improve their confidence in working with both disabled customers and employers. Examples of responses included:

*'Improved 'disability confidence' among employers in the region; helping more employers fill 'hard to fill' vacancies and address skills shortages by helping them to improve opportunities for people with disabilities; help improve staff awareness of how to support employers in this way.'*

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<sup>4</sup> Several of the districts felt that most of their delegates would benefit from a disability awareness briefing before attending Realising Potential training. Amanda Wadsworth, Jobcentre Plus North West Region's Disability Champion, provided disability awareness training for 205 of Realising Potential's trainees.

*'To perhaps change employers' perceptions of what employing a person with a disability is. Hopefully open doors to more jobs for those who some may feel are disadvantaged in the workplace, but in reality can be more determined and willing to learn.'*

*'More confidence in dealing with employers in all sectors and of all sizes.'*

- Increase their knowledge, awareness and understanding, particularly of 'real-life' examples of disabled customers, so that they could relate to disabled customers more easily and support them in reducing the barriers they face in the workplace. Examples of responses included:

*'Better understanding of the issues faced by customers with health conditions and knowledge of ways to help them and employers.'*

*'Greater understanding of employer concerns in relation to the recruitment of jobseekers with a disability/health condition and, therefore, a greater understanding of how to utilise this knowledge.'*

- Give them tools to liaise more effectively with employers. Comments included:

*'Hoping it will be the first stepping stone to really engage locally with employers on the IB agenda. We now have caseloads of IB customers through Pathways so it is the right time to do this.'*

*'More employers signed up to Two Ticks or LEP's [Local Employment Partnerships] and willing to work with us on recruiting priority customers, doing pre-employment training with us or offering work trial, permitted work, etc.'*

From these responses, it is clear that Jobcentre Plus respondents were both committed and enthusiastic prior to the event about gaining further training that would enable them to build more effective relationships with customers and their prospective employers.

The consultees were also keen to increase their knowledge and confidence. One consultee expressed a widely held view:

*'I want to be more confident when speaking to the customer and to have the information to enable me to be more positive. I want to be confident talking to employers knowing that I will be able to respond to their worries and queries.'*

It is also clear from some respondents and consultees that they anticipated that one outcome of this increased confidence in dealing with employers would be larger numbers of disabled people, or people on IB, obtaining work. They hoped that the event would enable them to:

*'Support IB claimants to take steps back into work.'*

*'Be able to encourage and place more customers with disabilities into work/training.'*

Some consultees voiced the hope that in addition to boosting individual confidence, the event would help staff members to work together more effectively.

## 4 Post-event evaluation: key findings

### Key findings

In general, pre-event expectations were encouragingly realised and reflected through respondents' accounts of the main messages delivered by the event. This indicates that the event predominantly covered the key topic areas which respondents hoped would be addressed. Many respondents were satisfied with the explanation of the material, the amount of information delivered and are confident that they will be able to put into practice the key lessons learnt.

The majority of respondents (95 per cent) said that the event had either met their expectations or exceeded them (62 per cent and 33 per cent respectively).

A variety of responses was given on the most useful aspects of the event. These included tips on overcoming employers' negative attitudes towards disabled customers, an understanding of the recruitment process from an employer's perspective and the personal experiences provided by the disabled facilitator. Recommendations for future events included a two-day event and more audience interaction and participation.

Overall, there was a considerable increase in the proportion who rated themselves highly on their awareness of recruitment issues concerning disabled people and people with health conditions. Whereas 39 per cent had rated themselves between 7 and 10 prior to the event, following the event the proportion had increased to 78 per cent.

Because of the short timescale between the events and the evaluation of outcomes, only a few respondents (11 per cent or 18 in total) could point to concrete outcomes. A few consultees were able to provide individual examples of how the training had enabled them to work more effectively with employers. There was a general view that it would be valuable to revisit the districts in six to 12 months' time to assess what changes had occurred.

Nearly all respondents (95 per cent) believed that they had benefited from the event. Most (92 per cent) believed that the event would help them carry out their role. Nearly as many (86 per cent) went further and said that they had also gained a better understanding of the roles of their colleagues.

One-third of respondents agreed they would benefit from further training on a wide range of specific areas and many suggested that it would be important to refresh and revisit what had been learned. There was also a widespread view that the training should be rolled out more widely so that all staff could benefit.

## 4.1 Post-event findings

The findings discussed below are based on responses to the post-event survey and on the consultations with a small number of staff in each of the six case study areas.

### 4.1.1 Event expectations and assessment of content and delivery

Overall, the event was very well received with the majority of respondents and consultees reporting that the event had either met or exceeded their expectations (62 per cent and 33 per cent of respondents respectively). Findings on the assessment included:

- the majority of survey respondents (85 per cent) thought that the amount of information provided was the right amount;
- almost all the respondents (95 per cent) said that the information had been adequately explained;
- some consultees also commented on how well the two facilitators had delivered the event, and the valuable insights provided by one of the facilitators:

*'The presence of a visually impaired facilitator, who could relay stories from personal experience and tackles issues head-on, proved very effective and challenging.'*

### 4.1.2 Main messages of the event

Respondents were asked to comment on the main messages delivered on the day and were generally clear on what these were. The responses fell into three

main categories: an understanding of 'disability confidence'; ways of effectively promoting disabled customers to their potential employers; and increased awareness of the issues and barriers faced by disabled customers.

- **Disability confidence** – many respondents stated that they now felt more disability confident as a result of the event. Comments included:

*'Making us [i.e. Jobcentre Plus staff] more Disabled Confident. Raising the awareness of the importance/benefits to employers of employing disabled people and how Jobcentre Plus can support both our disabled customers and employers.'*

*'Understanding and delivering Disability Confidence can support all parties using Jobcentre Plus services. Employers are customers, Jobcentre Plus need to use 'business' language to work in effective partnership.'*

*'Employers becoming Disability Confident...By understanding disabled people. By not being afraid of disabled people. By not assuming. Employers should only take a disabled person if they consider that person can do the job, taking in to account the disability.'*

- **Engaging with employers** – as well as increasing confidence amongst employers, respondents recognised the need to effectively promote disabled customers to their potential employers. The importance of communicating the business benefits of employing disabled customers, rather than on legal compliance, was mentioned. A key message was that this could be achieved as shown in the following comments:

*'Disabled people can return to the workplace if reasonable adjustments are made. Employers should be more flexible and consider these candidates as they could be missing out on suitable qualified people through disability.'*

*'Employers should not exclude people because of disability. They should be looking for a diverse workforce and we should help them to accomplish this.'*

- **Knowledge and awareness** – respondents stated that they had learnt more about disabled customers and the issues they face during the recruitment process. Responses included:

*'Awareness of difficulties experienced by people with disabilities in finding work. e.g. on line applications difficult to complete for people with sight problems. Awareness of discrimination in the work place against disabled people. The importance of getting employers engaged in employing disabled people.'*

*'The Disability Discrimination Act. Everyone is entitled to a fair chance irrespective of the disability.'*

One consultee gave an example of the message that had come across about disabled people:

*'People with disabilities can and want to work, may only require minor adjustments or considerations to participate in employment and are a valuable and untapped part of the labour supply.'*

#### 4.1.3 Utility of lessons learnt

The value of the training to participants was reflected in the finding that nearly all (95 per cent) respondents believed they would be able to put into practice what they had learned. A small proportion (12 per cent) thought that some of the material had not been relevant or helpful to the audience, citing examples where the content did not sufficiently relate to the types of employers Jobcentre Plus staff typically encountered or to the different roles of the audience.

Respondents also identified what they saw as the most useful aspects of the event. A wide range of responses were given, including: tips on overcoming employers' negative attitudes towards disabled customers; how businesses can change to become more accessible to potential and disabled employees, ways of promoting disabled customers to employers; how to look at the recruitment process from an employer's perspective; and how to dispel myths and focus on positive images. The literature pack, known as 'The Knowledge' was repeatedly cited as an important resource which would be used over and over again.

In all the areas, both respondents and consultees referred to the value of the contribution by both the facilitators, one of whom was himself disabled. The presentation of examples from a personal perspective seemed to really 'drive home' the capabilities of the disabled workforce. One of the consultees said that *'he gave a very positive view on the issue and was able to give real-life examples to back up what he was saying'*.

A number of consultees also highlighted the practical usefulness of 'The Knowledge', a toolkit which was disseminated at the event. For example, one consultee stated:

*'I work with employers and sometimes I feel it is difficult to challenge their behaviour but the toolkit has made me more confident to challenge employers and make suggestions to them.'*

The expectation that the event might facilitate working together and closer co-operation between staff groups was met, according to some respondents. For example, one consultee, an IBPA, stated that she now intended to pursue the contacts made at the event and to work more closely with the relevant LMRAs. Another consultee added that:

*"The event has been a catalyst for the increase in disability-related promotion and activity within the district. We are actually changing the way we do things as a result of the new understanding we now have."*

#### 4.1.4 Recommendations for future events

Alongside the positive assessment of the training, more than one in three respondents (38 per cent) put forward suggestions about how the event might be improved in the future. These ideas included: a two-day event to avoid information overload; more audience interaction and participation; a variety of techniques such as role play; and more information on how to promote disabled customers to employers.

### 4.2 Comparative analysis of pre- and post-event levels of awareness

The findings showed a considerable increase in the proportion of respondents who rated themselves highly on their awareness of issues concerning the recruitment of disabled people and people with health conditions. For example, whereas 39 per cent had rated themselves between 7 and 10 prior to the event, following the event this proportion increased to 78 per cent.

In addition, almost all respondents (95 per cent) felt that they had increased their awareness of the issues surrounding the recruitment process. A similar proportion considered that they now had more confidence to engage with employers on disability issues relating to employment.

There was also a considerable increase in awareness of the term 'disability confidence'. Whereas prior to the event, 27 per cent of respondents were familiar with the term, following the event, only four respondents were unable to provide a definition. Most respondents focused on the meaning of disability confidence as it related to their own sense of confidence in dealing with employers, rather than as a term to be applied specifically to the employer.

### 4.3 Event outcomes

The short timescale between the events and the evaluation of the outcomes, meant that only a few respondents (11 per cent or 18 in total) could yet point to any changes in the attitudes and behaviours of employers. The evaluation sought to find out whether there were any concrete outcomes in terms of respondents' post-event interaction with employers. In each of the areas, some respondents gave examples of how the training had enabled them to work differently with employers. The typical example was of being able to present a disabled customer in a more positive light to a prospective employer.

Some consultees provided examples of how the training had produced results. For example, one consultee stated that before the training she would avoid telling an employer if a customer had a health condition. Now she is positive and assertive and able to advise an employer on how to make appropriate accommodations for a customer. Another consultee said:

*'My interaction with employers has changed, where I now introduce each customer in a more positive light. I introduce the customer as being on IB but then promptly follow this up by discussing all the positive attributes of the customer, e.g. recent training, experience, etc.'*

#### **4.3.1 Benefits of participation**

The vast majority of respondents (95 per cent) agreed that they had benefited from participating in the event. Most (92 per cent) believed that the event would help them carry out their role. Nearly as many (86 per cent) went further and said that they had also gained a better understanding of the roles of their colleagues.

#### **4.3.2 External factors**

Consultees were asked whether they thought that any changes they had experienced could be attributed to the effect of the Realising Potential event, or whether there were other external influencing factors. Responses varied with some attributing changes directly to the event and others seeing the event as part of a wider organisational change towards engaging more actively with different customer groups. Some consultees said that because the event had raised awareness, it was hoped that it could act as a catalyst for progress, while others thought the events had increased the 'credibility' of any Jobcentre Plus work around disability.

### **4.3 Looking forward**

Survey respondents and consultees were asked about their future training needs and other support requirements. They were also asked about wider issues, such as the barriers that might affect implementation of the approaches that had been suggested at the event.

#### **4.4.1 Future requirements**

Exactly one-third of respondents agreed that they would benefit from further training. A wide range of specific areas were mentioned, including an annual refresher on the evolving issues of the disability agenda, training for working with customers with a mental health condition; updates on legislation and regulation; more information on how employers assess disabled people in the recruitment process and training on how to combat employers' negative attitudes. Apart from additional subject areas for training, there was also a general view that it would be important to refresh and revisit what had been learned so that it was embedded and did not get forgotten.

The positive response to the event was reflected in the consensus that the event should be rolled out more widely in each area. The findings revealed a strong commitment to mainstreaming the disability training, with many respondents taking the view that all staff should be included in future disability training, not only those whose role involved a disability remit.

Various suggestions were made about how future events might be modified and rolled out. In addition, some consultees went further and expressed the view that work around disability needed to be wider than just the event. For example, in one area, consultees talked of the need for wider marketing and possibly a national campaign, along with other measures to ensure that disability issues remain on the staff agenda.

#### **4.4.2 Barriers**

Consultees identified some barriers that could impede the promotion of disability confidence to employers. These included employers' attitudes and ideas on one side and the skills of Jobcentre Plus staff on the other:

*'Employers are sometimes too worried to express their concerns for fear of seeming 'un-pc', and therefore these worries will not get dealt with.'*

*'There is a barrier when Jobcentre Plus staff don't have the confidence and skills to sell a disabled customer to employers. The anecdotal evidence provided by the event should help with this.'*

Some consultees saw employer attitudes as shaped, in part, by the circumstances of the local labour market. In one area with a tight labour market and vacancy rates rising, employers were keen to widen their pool of recruits and this increased the opportunity to promote disability confidence to employers.

#### **4.4.3 Timing of evaluation**

It was widely pointed out that only a short time had elapsed since the event and that it was too early to see any tangible outcomes such as an increase in the recruitment of disabled people. It was agreed that a full evaluation required a longer timescale. It was felt that it would be valuable to revisit the districts in six to 12 months, time to assess how far any measurable changes had occurred, including any changes in the attitudes or behaviour of both staff and employers.



## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

The report has summarised the findings from the evaluation of eight out of the ten Jobcentre Plus staff events of the Able to Work: Realising Potential projects, each of which was delivered across a distinct sub-region within England, Scotland and Wales. It is important to note that, although the evaluation sample size represents a high proportion of the overall population of staff who participated in the events, the evaluation was designed to be small in its nature and therefore, results should be taken as indicative only.

In conclusion, evidence from the evaluation highlights that the aim of the Jobcentre Plus events – to provide disability confidence training for Jobcentre Plus employer-facing staff and position Jobcentre Plus as a partner skilled in disability recruitment – has been successfully achieved. The findings show a positive response from all eight of the evaluated areas, where the majority of both survey respondents and consultees felt that the events had helped to increase awareness of ‘disability issues’ from their own specific Jobcentre Plus perspective, as well as from that of the employer and the disabled customer. This increase in awareness has led to a general rise in disability-related confidence levels amongst staff, who now feel sufficiently confident and better equipped to effectively promote the abilities of their disabled customers and in turn to manage the related concerns of employers.

‘Disability confidence’ as a concept has generally been taken on board by the Jobcentre Plus staff who participated in the events. Although the term has, in a sense, been ‘personalised’ by the participants, the general willingness to accept the messages delivered, indicates an important first step towards a more disability confident employer-facing Jobcentre Plus workforce within the eight areas and if built on, should facilitate an increased understanding of the business case associated with an employer becoming ‘disability confident’.

The evaluation also highlighted the importance of joined-up working across Jobcentre Plus staff roles within an area, in the absence of which it is virtually

impossible to effectively promote and appropriately match a disabled customer with a prospective employer. All areas expressed the need to develop working practices and to drive the general disability-related agenda forward.

## 5.1 Moving forward

In order to build on the momentum that has been created by the Jobcentre Plus staff events, we would like to offer the following Jobcentre Plus specific recommendations:

- **Review of the content, format and accessibility of Jobcentre Plus' internal disability training for all staff groups** – 31 per cent of the individuals who did not work in specifically disability-related roles (i.e. all staff who are not either DEAs or IBPAs) claimed that they had not had any disability training, which highlighted a gap in the more generic disability training all staff receive as part of their induction or within their job role.
- **Increase in joined-up working between distinct staff groups within each Jobcentre Plus district** – each event contained a session on joint-working within a Jobcentre Plus district, which highlighted the need for all the areas to facilitate a more collaborative approach to working with both disabled customers and prospective employers. This will ensure the delivery of a more seamless and effective service and in turn translate into an increase in the recruitment by employers of disabled customers. The evaluation highlighted a particular need to align the work of LMRAs, IBPAs and DEAs.
- **Training delivered at the event should be rolled out to all advisory staff within a district** to ensure comprehensive 'buy-in' to the messages delivered at the event – respondents in nearly all areas stated the need to relay the key messages of the event to all staff who had not been able to attend, i.e. to roll out the training to the whole of the district, to ensure that the whole district was moving in the same direction. There should be strong encouragement from the top to ensure that staff and managers undertake the disability training provided.
- **The content of future training should be reviewed** and consideration given to including more focus on the issues facing small and medium sized businesses Jobcentre Plus staff also identified particular difficulties dealing with employer preconceptions about people with mental health problems. Future training events could include a session on mental health issues
- **Need to refresh and revisit the lessons learnt at a later date to discuss progress made, good practice and any new legislation that has been produced** – staff expressed a desire to refresh and revisit the main messages of the event at a later date (ranged from six months to a year after the event), to share good practice and learn about new procedures or legislation that has been produced.

- **Jobcentre Plus employer-facing staff require additional support from the relevant managers to increase their interaction with employers** – several of the areas reported the constraints within which they worked when interacting with employers, which often limited the format of their liaison with employers to only telephone calls (as opposed to the more favoured face-to-face interaction) and limited the type of employers with whom they came into contact, i.e. those who had already been awarded the ‘two tick’ disability status. Therefore, it will be important to increase the autonomy and resources of staff in employer-facing roles, to facilitate more and varied contact with employers.

The following are two general recommendations which are applicable to the wider audience:

- **Disability training may be more effective when the trainers include a disabled facilitator** – comments from all the events highlighted the effectiveness of the ‘visually impaired’ facilitator, who was able to challenge participants’ beliefs and present examples from his own personal experience.
- **Consideration should be given to the most effective format for delivering future disability training events** – comments from staff indicated that they responded very positively to the face-to-face format of these events<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Although respondents were not asked directly about their preferred training format, it is implicit in their comments that face-to-face delivery was the most effective form of disseminating the information. For example, both facilitators were consistently praised in their delivery of the material, and the face-to-face nature of the event facilitated enhanced understanding of the roles played by colleagues..



# Appendix A

## Aggregate survey analysis

### Key findings

Knowledge and understanding of the recruitment issues surrounding those with disabilities and health conditions has increased considerably since the event. This is reflected in a noticeable improvement in the respondents' self-assessment of their awareness after the event and greater understanding of the term 'disability confidence'. This has been a benefit to staff from a number of different roles and responsibilities.

An increase in understanding of the term disability confidence is reflected in the post-event responses. Most respondents focused on the meaning of disability confidence as it related to their own sense of confidence in dealing with employers, rather than as a term to be applied specifically to the employer.

In general, pre-event expectations were encouragingly realised and reflected through respondents' accounts of the main messages delivered by the event. This indicates that the event predominantly covered the key topic areas which respondents hoped would be addressed. Many respondents were satisfied with the explanation of the material, the amount of information delivered and are confident that they will be able to put into practice the key lessons learnt.

Almost all respondents agreed that the event met or exceeded their expectations, increased their awareness of recruitment issues and also taught them more about the roles of their colleagues. This success warrants further events of a similar nature, especially as some attendees agree that it would be very helpful to have events on an annual basis to refresh their knowledge and awareness.

In future, it is recommended that the event should be spread over a two-day period, to allow attendees to reflect on the key lessons and effectively absorb the main messages.

## A.1 Pre-event background

The original delegates list for the eight events contained a total of 269 potential participants for the pre-event survey<sup>6</sup>. Table A.1 illustrates the response rate for the pre-event survey and the reasons for any non-participation.

**Table A.1 Pre-event research information**

| Research activity | Total number of potential participants | Participation/ response rate | Reasons for non-participation   |
|-------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| Pre-event survey  | 269                                    | 82% (220)                    | Invalid email addresses<br>Non-completion due to annual leave<br>Late modifications made to the delegates list, leaving some survey responses invalid |

Source: SQW Consulting.

### A.1.1 Profile of respondents

The profile of respondents who participated in the evaluation is detailed in Table A.2. The most common role amongst survey respondents was LMRA (53 respondents (24 per cent)) followed by IBPA (34 survey respondents (15 per cent)) and DEA (27 survey respondents). There is a broad range of Jobcentre Plus roles amongst the respondents, with over 50 different titles recorded in the online survey. For all those who had their own unique job title we are unable to identify their role for confidentiality reasons.

The majority of respondents were well established in their role, where 58 per cent had been in their current role for one to five years and a further 25 per cent in their role for over five years. The remainder (17 per cent) had been in their role for less than a year.

<sup>6</sup> This figure reflects the total number of respondents eligible to complete the pre-event survey and does not include the additional numbers who took part in the consultation exercise.

**Table A.2 Jobcentre Plus role**

| <b>Role at Jobcentre Plus</b>          | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|--|---------------|------------|
| Pre-event survey                       |               |            |
| LMRA                                   | 53            | 24         |
| IBPA                                   | 34            | 15         |
| DEA                                    | 27            | 12         |
| Personal Adviser                       | 14            | 6          |
| District External Relations Manager    | 10            | 5          |
| National Sales Team Personnel          | 8             | 4          |
| Employment Engagement Manager          | 7             | 3          |
| Regional Employment Engagement Manager | 6             | 3          |
| Advisory services manager              | 4             | 2          |
| District Manager                       | 4             | 2          |
| District Marketing Manager             | 4             | 2          |
| Contact Centre Personnel               | 3             | 1          |
| Jobcentre Manager                      | 3             | 1          |
| Customer Services Operations Manager   | 2             | 1          |
| Employer Engagement Team               | 2             | 1          |
| Floor Manager                          | 2             | 1          |
| Third Party Provision Manager          | 2             | 1          |
| Other                                  | 35            | 16         |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>220</b>    | <b>100</b> |

Note: The percentage total may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

All participating delegates were asked to give a description of their primary responsibilities. The majority of responses indicated respondent's roles included either general customer based service provision, disability related customer based service provision, employer based service provision or work with partners. A summary of responses is provided below:

- **Service provision for individuals with disabilities or health conditions:**  
The largest proportion of respondents (61 people (28 per cent)) worked with individuals with disabilities or health conditions and people receiving incapacity benefits. This set of jobs included a range of responsibilities including the following: assisting customers in entering or moving closer to employment and/or training, signposting to other organisations, acting as an advocate with employers on the customer's behalf, motivating customers about their future employment prospects, conducting Disability Symbol visits with employers and advising on other benefits including tax credits.

- **Provision of services for local employers:** The second largest proportion of respondents (36 people (16 per cent)) worked with local employers to support the filling of vacancies and recruitment needs, promote work trials and New Deal agreements and manage employers' expectations of Jobcentre Plus services. More specifically, another nine per cent of respondents were involved in an employer engagement role, predominantly consisting of the delivery of employer engagement strategies.
- **Liaising with partners:** Nearly ten per cent of respondents (20 people) stated their job involved liaising with key partners. This included: working with Train to Gain and Sector Skills Councils, managing operational relationships between Jobcentres and training providers and engagement with the Citizen's Advice Bureau, local authorities and community organisations. Promoting the services of Jobcentre Plus was cited as an additional responsibility in a number of cases, which involved making contact with local employers and providers.
- **Customer based service provision:** Twenty-three respondents (ten per cent) stated their main responsibilities involved the provision of support to aid customers back into work and/or training, helping those who face particular barriers into the workplace and educating customers on the benefits of entering work.

A number of other responsibilities were listed in addition to those above, which included: managing a team of advisers, marketing activities, account management for larger employers, management of events for employers, performance management and working on the Pathways to Work programme.

## A.2 Pre-event levels of awareness

Prior to the event, respondents were asked to rate themselves on their level of awareness surrounding recruitment of those with health conditions and disabilities on a scale of one to ten (one being unaware and ten very aware)<sup>7</sup>. Figure A.1 illustrates the results of the question, which indicated that nearly half of respondents (43 per cent) rated themselves at level 5 or below, reflecting a considerable lack of specific awareness or understanding of recruitment in this area.

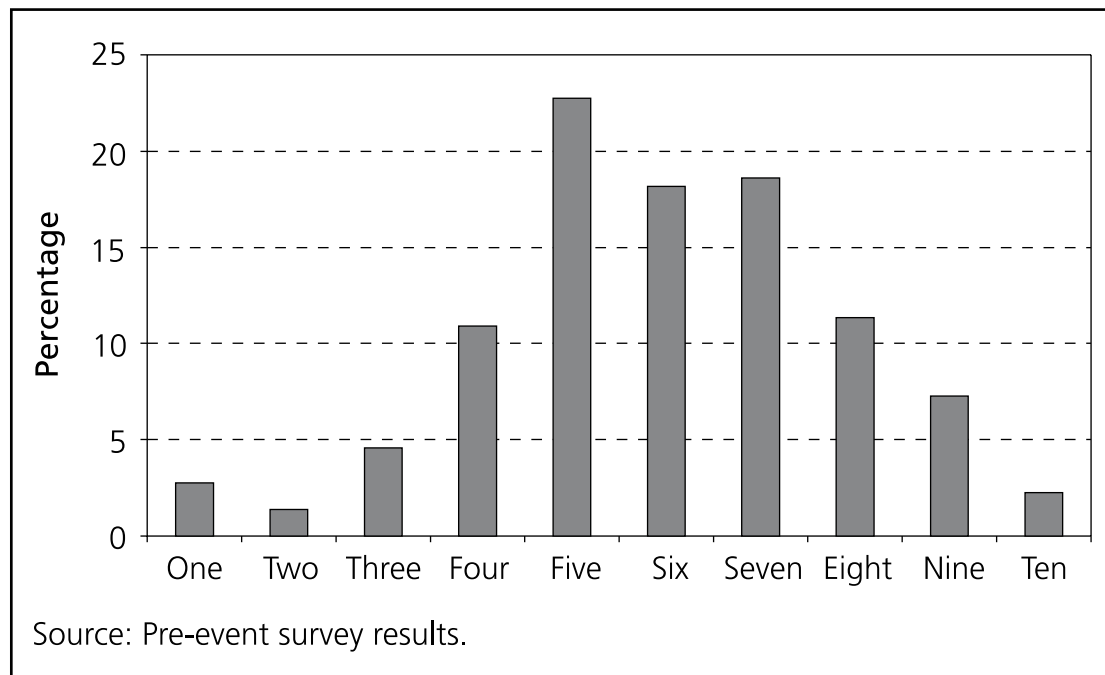
Relatively few respondents (nine per cent or 21 respondents) rated themselves at 9 or 10 on the scale. Of those who did, 86 per cent stated they had had previous training on disability issues, 91 per cent were well established in their job and 48 per cent (10 of 21 respondents) were employed as DEAs. However, only one-third of this group were aware of the term 'disability confidence', even though all

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<sup>7</sup> This, therefore, represents a measure of self-awareness/perception of the understanding of the respondents and may also reflect their confidence in dealing with the issues surrounding the recruitment of those with health conditions and disabilities.

had experience of dealing with customers with disabilities and health conditions and many (86 per cent) also had experience of engaging with employers and promoting the recruitment of those with disabilities and health conditions.

**Figure A.1 Respondent's awareness of disability recruitment issues on a scale of 1-10**



### A.2.1 Pre-event familiarity with 'disability confidence'

Respondents were asked whether or not they were familiar with the term disability confidence. This revealed that levels of awareness were low, with only 27 per cent stating they were familiar with the term. Looking at the characteristics of those who were aware, 17 per cent were DEAs, 13 per cent IBPAs and the remainder made up from 21 other job roles, many had experience of dealing with customers with disabilities (87 per cent) and working with employers to promote these customers (78 per cent) and almost all had had previous training on disability issues (90 per cent).

The respondents who were aware were asked to provide a definition of their understanding of the term. This set of definitions included:

- Understanding the needs of those with disabilities and health conditions and treating them as individuals. Sharing this information and good practice with colleagues.
- Having confidence in promoting those with disabilities to employers and also having the confidence to change misconceived ideas and perceptions.
- Employers having confidence in employing those with disabilities and health conditions. One respondent defined the term in the following way:

*'Disability confident organisations cut costs, reduce risks, recruit from a wider pool of talent, improve customer care for everyone and build brand reputation as they are seen to be in touch with the communities in which they operate.'*

- Another defined being disability confident in relation to both individuals and employers:

*'Disability confidence related to individuals and employers understanding how disability affects all aspects of day-to-day personal and working life and involves employers undertaking practical and achievable solution-based approaches to provide inclusive opportunities for individual employees and progress the wider business.'*

- Knowledge of the legislation concerning the employment of those with disabilities and health conditions.
- Awareness of the benefits to businesses who recruit those with disabilities and health conditions.
- Ensuring those with disabilities are able to work confidently and safely in the workplace, making sure that their needs are catered for by their employer.
- One respondent noted:

*'There are a variety of applications of the term disability confidence, such as employers' confidence, a person's confidence in their own abilities or my confidence in dealing with all issues surrounding disability.'*

The above responses illustrate the differing views respondents held in relation to the meaning of the term disability confidence and highlights the group of people to which it relates.

### **A.2.2 Experience of dealing with disability issues**

Many respondents (80 per cent) had had experience of dealing with customers with disabilities as part of their role. A smaller proportion (66 per cent) had experience of engaging employers to promote the recruitment of people with health conditions or disabilities, with 50 per cent of those respondents feeling that this engagement had been productive. Of the respondents who had experience of engaging with employers:

- 21 per cent (47 respondents) worked with employers in a particular sector
- 14 per cent (30 respondents) worked specifically with large employers, 11 per cent (25 respondents) with medium sized employers and ten per cent (23 respondents) with small employers.

Of those who had experience of working with employers on disability issues relating to employment, three-quarters stated they had had previous training on disability issues and around two-thirds (65 per cent) were not aware of the term 'disability confidence'.

### A.2.3 Training on disability issues

Sixty-nine per cent of respondents (151 people) had had previous training on disability issues. Many (72 per cent) felt that this has been useful to their role. The various training courses covered include a very wide range, from those which are aimed at raising general awareness to those which focused on specific disabilities, such as brain injuries, mental health awareness and learning difficulties.

It was apparent that more focused disability training had also been undertaken by those in particular roles, such as the DEAs, IBPAs and National Sales team. Many other types of disability training were also listed, including: Pathways to Work, DDA awareness, equal opportunities, health issues and problems, drug and alcohol problems and counselling skills. However, it is notable that no staff reported that they had received any training on the DED.

A number of different formats have been used to deliver training, including: e-learning, formal training courses, in-house training, watching videos, workshops, in-house conferences with external speakers, classroom events, work shadowing and knowledge development through disability groups and networks. The survey did not explore the relative merits of each of these methods.

## A.3 Event expectations

Respondents were asked about their expectations of the Realising Potential Event. On the whole, respondents stated that they hoped it would improve their confidence, understanding and awareness of disability issues, therefore enabling them to work more effectively with both disabled customers and their prospective employers. A summary of their responses is given below:

- **Confidence** – respondents would like to gain more confidence in a number of areas including: working with disabled customers; sharing knowledge and understanding with employers; promoting those with disabilities to employers and in turn improving employers' confidence in employing these customers. Examples of responses included:

*'An opportunity to explore creative ways to pro-actively engage with employers and support the development of robust recruitment programmes to reflect the inclusion of people with health conditions or disabilities.'*

*'Improved 'disability confidence' among employers in the region; helping more employers fill 'hard to fill' vacancies and address skills shortages by helping them to improve opportunities for people with disabilities; help improve staff awareness of how to support employers in this way.'*

*'To perhaps change employers' perceptions of what employing a person with a disability is. Hopefully open doors to more jobs for those who some may feel are disadvantaged in the workplace, but in reality can be more determined and willing to learn.'*

*'Greater confidence in approaching employers in this subject area. Being able to provide positive examples.'*

*'More confidence in dealing with employers in all sectors and of all sizes.'*

- **Knowledge, awareness and understanding** – respondents wished to learn about potential information which they could draw upon when dealing with employers and increase their knowledge of real-life examples, thereby making it easier to relate to disabled customers and assist in reducing the barriers they face. Comments included:

*'To ensure my team are fully aware of the potential of this customers' group. To give them a better knowledge to sell to employers the benefits and to support the field staff in helping these customers back to work.'*

*'A greater knowledge of diversity to be able to use this when engaging with employers in order to achieve job outcomes for our Priority Group Customers.'*

*'Better understanding of the issues faced by customers with health conditions and knowledge of ways to help them and employers.'*

*'To be confident in promoting the advantages of employing Disabled people and both the financial and practical support on offer to employers.'*

*'Greater understanding of employer concerns in relation to the recruitment of jobseekers with a disability/health condition and, therefore, a greater understanding of how to utilise this knowledge.'*

*'A better understanding on the subject to become more confident in handling employer questions on the disability agenda.'*

*'Greater understanding of model of good practice that can be shared across the region.'*

- **Interaction with employers** – a large number of respondents also stated they hoped the event would give them the tools to liaise more effectively with employers. This set of responses included:

*'Successful intervention with local employers to help my customers into work, with suitable adjustments for their health, and achieving retention of this work.'*

*'Better liaison with employers and more success in persuading them to take on customers with a disability.'*

*'Hoping it will be the first stepping stone to really engage locally with employers on the IB agenda. We now have caseloads of IB customers through Pathways so it is the right time to do this.'*

*'More employers signed up to Two Ticks or LEPs and willing to work with us on recruiting priority customers, doing pre-employment training with us or offering work trial, permitted work, etc.'*

## A.4 Pre-event summary

The pre-event survey respondents held a range of roles which involved a wide scope of responsibilities. In many cases this involved experience of dealing with customers with disabilities or health conditions and, to a lesser extent, working with employers to promote the recruitment of these customers. Awareness of the issues surrounding the employment of those with disabilities and health conditions varied quite considerably and to some extent was dependent on the role of the respondent and awareness of the term 'disability confidence' was particularly low. However, respondents all showed a willingness to increase their knowledge, understanding and confidence of disability issues and actively wanted to build more effective relationships with customers and their prospective employers.

## A.5 Post-event evaluation

Following the event, attendees were asked to complete a post-event online survey. In total, 233 respondents were asked to complete the survey, of which 157 (67 per cent) provided a response. The findings are presented below, alongside comparative analysis with the pre-event findings, to identify changes in levels of awareness concerning disability issues.

### A.5.1 Profile of participating delegates

The profile of post-event survey respondents slightly differed to that of the pre-event survey, with a decrease in IBPAs and DEAs and an increase in LMRAs.

**Table A.3 Jobcentre Plus role**

| <b>Role at Jobcentre Plus</b>          | <b>Number</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|--|---------------|------------|
| Post-event survey                      |               |            |
| LMRA                                   | 42            | 26         |
| IBPA                                   | 20            | 13         |
| DEA                                    | 14            | 9          |
| District External Relations Manager    | 9             | 6          |
| Not available <sup>1</sup>             | 7             | 4          |
| Personal Adviser                       | 6             | 4          |
| Employment Engagement Manager          | 5             | 3          |
| National Sales Team Personnel          | 4             | 3          |
| Regional Employment Engagement Manager | 3             | 2          |
| District Marketing Manager             | 3             | 2          |
| Third Party Provision Manager          | 2             | 1          |
| Labour Market Review Adviser           | 2             | 1          |
| Floor Manager                          | 2             | 1          |
| Employer Engagement Team               | 2             | 1          |
| District office                        | 2             | 1          |
| District Manager                       | 2             | 1          |
| Adviser services manager               | 2             | 1          |
| Account Manager                        | 2             | 1          |
| Other                                  | 28            | 18         |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>157</b>    | <b>100</b> |

Note: The percentage total may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

<sup>1</sup> To avoid asking for the same information twice, respondents were only asked to state their role in the pre-event survey. Each respondent was given an identifier number, which was then matched with their corresponding pre-event response to identify their role. Information about roles were also obtained from delegate attendance sheets. In some cases, neither of these sources of information were available and so it cannot be presented here.

## A.6 Delegates' assessments of the events

### A.6.1 Event expectations and assessment of content and delivery

Respondents were very positive in their assessment of the content and delivery of the event. As Table A.4 reflects, the majority of respondents (85 per cent) thought that the amount of information presented was correct and almost all (95 per cent) stated that the information had been adequately explained.

**Table A.4 Quantity of information delivered at the event**

|                    | Numbers    | %          |
|--------------------|------------|------------|
| The correct amount | 134        | 85         |
| Too little         | 9          | 6          |
| Too much           | 14         | 9          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>157</b> | <b>100</b> |

Source: Post-event survey.

Of the nine respondents who thought that the explanation was inadequate, five out of the nine felt that there was too little information and six cited that the event had failed their expectations. This was largely due to a lack of appropriate tailoring of the event material, where respondents stated that the facilitators had not fully understood the nature of the audience. However, four still believed that they benefited from participating in the event and only three stated that they would like further training on disability confidence issues. This indicated that although the event may not have fulfilled their set of expectations, further training in this area is not required for this group.

### A.6.2 Main message of the event

To gain an insight into the lessons learnt at the event, respondents were asked to comment on the main messages delivered on the day. Respondents answered positively and were keen to note ways in which their awareness and confidence could benefit disabled customers and affect the ways in which employers think about and react towards, potential disabled employees. Responses can be categorised within three headings: disability confidence, engaging with employers and knowledge and awareness. Each of these is discussed below:

- **Disability confidence** – many respondents stated that they now felt more disability confident as a result of the event. Responses of this nature included:

*'Making us [i.e. Jobcentre Plus staff] more disabled confident. Raising the awareness of the importance/benefits to employers of employing disabled people and how Jobcentre Plus can support both our disabled customers and employers.'*

*'Encourage disability confidence in our own organisation. Promote business benefits to employers of employing people with disabilities. Challenge inappropriate behaviour/actions.'*

*'Understanding and delivering disability confidence can support all parties using Jobcentre Plus services. Employers are customers, Jobcentre Plus need to use 'business' language to work in effective partnership.'*

*'To educate employers and ourselves to be disability confident and promote employability of disabled people.'*

*'Employers becoming disability confident. By understanding disabled people. By not being afraid of disabled people. By not assuming. Employers should only take a disabled person if they consider that person can do the job, taking in to account the disability.'*

*'Disability confidence benefits the whole business.'*

- **Engaging with employers** – as well as increasing confidence amongst employers, respondents recognised the need to effectively promote disabled customers to their potential employers. Respondents learnt that this could be achieved in a number of ways. Responses which fell into this category included:

*'Disability doesn't mean being in a wheelchair, and there are great benefits to having a diverse workforce.'*

*'To look at situations/processes through the eyes of a disabled applicant.'*

*'That there is a solution to most issues and companies need to consider people's health condition during the recruitment process.'*

*'Disabled people can return to the workplace if reasonable adjustments are made. Employers should be more flexible and consider these candidates as they could be missing out on suitable qualified people through disability.'*

*'Employers should not exclude people because of disability. They should be looking for a diverse workforce and we should help them to accomplish this.'*

*'Provide disability confidence helping to engage with employers for successful recruitment of people with health conditions and disabilities.'*

*'Considerations which need to be made for people with disabilities, the types of messages we can use to convince employers.'*

*'To look closely at what we do mostly without thinking, to ensure that we make all aspects of recruitment and sustaining employment possible for all types of disabilities that people may have.'*

- **Knowledge and awareness** – respondents stated that they had learnt more about disabled customers and the issues they face during the recruitment process. Responses included:

*'Awareness of difficulties experienced by people with disabilities in finding work, e.g. on line applications difficult to complete for people with sight problems. Awareness of discrimination in the work place against disabled people. The importance of getting employers engaged in employing disabled people.'*

*'The Disability Discrimination Act. Everyone is entitled to a fair chance irrespective of the disability.'*

*'Everyone has the ability to realise their full potential, some people will need a bit more help than others but you need to treat everyone with respect.'*

*'Everyone is of value. Each person's skills are different and should be allowed and enabled to reach their potential.'*

*'Our knowledge of employer disability issues needs to be constantly challenged and refreshed.'*

*'People with disabilities can work and want to work. Many need only minor adjustments or considerations to do so. Valuable untapped labour supply.'*

### **A.6.3 Utility of lessons learnt**

Almost all (95 per cent) respondents believed that they would be able to put into practice the lessons they learnt at the event. Only a small proportion (12 per cent) thought that there were irrelevant or unhelpful aspects of the event.

Those who felt that the event had included irrelevant aspects provided the following explanations: the employers described on the day did not relate to the ones often faced; the content surrounded issues faced when dealing with large companies, when smaller businesses are also important to consider; some of the content was aimed at an audience with higher level positions; the event did not take into account the business nature of the audience and did not provide the necessary tools to overcome the problems in their daily business; and the content of the event was not sufficiently tailored to the individual roles of the audience, including those who do and do not deal with employers.

Respondents also commented on the most useful aspects of the event. Responses included: the hints and tips to overcome employer's negative attitudes towards disabled customers; having a disabled facilitator was very effective and he was an excellent speaker; examples of how disabled workers have contributed to major employers; learning about the changes businesses need to make to become more accessible to potential and current disabled employees; statistics were a real eye opener; made people think about what can be done to assist disabled customers through the recruitment process; ways to promote disabled customers to employers; information on legislation and regulations; interaction with other

staff and discussing what can be done locally; thought provoking aspects; hearing the employer's points of view; encouragement to place yourself in the shoes of a disabled customer and dispelling myths and focusing on positive messages.

#### **A.6.4 Recommendations for future events**

Just over a third (38 per cent (60 people)) of respondents thought that the event could have been improved, where responses included:

- It would have been better to extend the event into two days to avoid being saturated with information.
- More interaction and audience participation to maintain interest and promote more effective learning.
- Tailoring the event to reflect the needs of the audience, and the types of employers they work with would be useful.
- The layout of the room could have been improved; it did not lend itself to easy communication.
- Use more focused workshops or role play would be effective.
- More information needed on how to promote disabled customers to employers.
- Needed more of an opportunity for the audience to reflect on the main messages delivered and ask questions.

### **A.7 Comparative analysis of pre- and post-event levels of awareness<sup>8</sup>**

Respondents were asked to rate themselves on a scale of one to ten on their awareness of the issues surrounding the recruitment of individuals with health conditions and disabilities. Prior to the event, the most common ratings included: 5 (23 per cent), 7 (19 per cent) and 6 (18 per cent). Encouragingly, there had been a considerable shift in the ratings given by the respondents after the event. This difference can be seen in Table A.5 and Figure A.2. A large proportion (78 per cent) rated themselves between 7-10 post-event, i.e. towards the higher end of the awareness scale, compared to only 39 per cent prior to the event.

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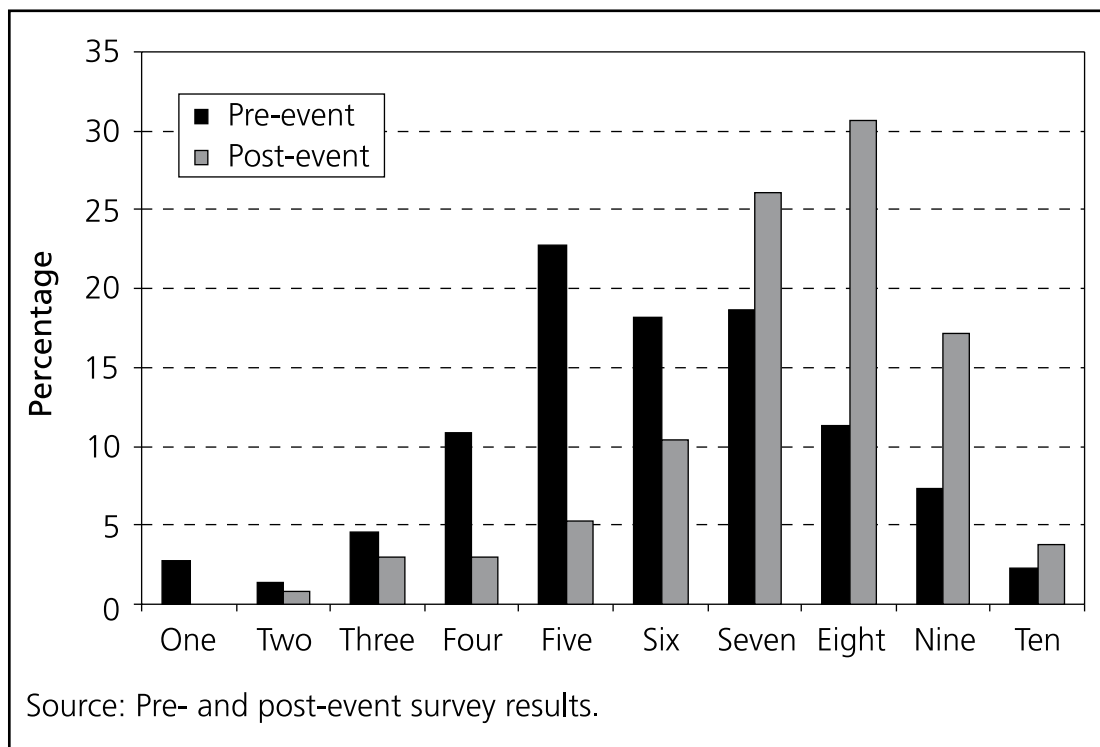
<sup>8</sup> Please note that in this section post-event survey results have only been used for those people who had also completed the pre-event survey.

**Table A.5 Pre- and post-event levels of awareness of the issues surrounding the recruitment of individuals with health conditions and disabilities**

| Scale            | Pre-event awareness | %          | Post-event awareness | %          |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| One (unaware)    | 6                   | 3          | 0                    | 0          |
| Two              | 3                   | 1          | 1                    | 1          |
| Three            | 10                  | 5          | 4                    | 3          |
| Four             | 24                  | 11         | 4                    | 3          |
| Five             | 50                  | 23         | 7                    | 5          |
| Six              | 40                  | 18         | 14                   | 10         |
| Seven            | 41                  | 19         | 35                   | 26         |
| Eight            | 25                  | 11         | 41                   | 31         |
| Nine             | 16                  | 7          | 23                   | 17         |
| Ten (most aware) | 5                   | 2          | 5                    | 4          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>220</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>134</b>           | <b>100</b> |

Source: Pre- and post-event survey results.

**Figure A.2 Pre- and post-event levels of awareness of the issues surrounding the recruitment of individuals with health conditions and disabilities**



Source: Pre- and post-event survey results.

Feedback was also given on the effect that the event had had on increasing awareness about the issues surrounding recruitment faced by those with disabilities and health conditions and engaging with employers. Almost all respondents (95 per cent) felt that they had a heightened awareness about the issues surrounding the recruitment process and a similar proportion felt they had more confidence to engage with employers on disability issues relating to employment. Both of these findings are especially encouraging as prior to the event many respondents commented that they would like to both effectively engage with employers about disability issues and develop their knowledge and awareness.

### **A.7.1 Familiarity with ‘disability confidence’**

Prior to the event respondents were asked whether or not they were familiar with the term ‘disability confidence’. Around one in four (27 per cent) were familiar with the term. In contrast, all but four respondents were able to produce a definition post-event.

The responses were fairly similar to those given prior to the event, focusing to a large extent on the confidence to be able to promote disabled customers effectively, understand their needs and overcome recruitment barriers to realise the potential of those with disabilities and health conditions.

The ‘disability confidence’ of employers was mentioned, but comments about the confidence of the Jobcentre Plus staff themselves remained more common. This illustrated the significance respondents placed on the promotion of disabled people and health conditions within their own role, as opposed to the confidence of the employer.

## **A.8 Event outcomes**

In order to assess the impact of the event on employers, respondents were asked if they have seen any considerable changes in the attitudes and behaviour of employers. Very few (11 per cent or 18 in total) had seen changes in behaviour and attitudes, however, it was likely that sufficient time had not elapsed to warrant this change.

Very few respondents (four per cent or six in total) had witnessed resistance from employers to the promotion of disability confidence. Those who had come up against resistance commented that employers were either reluctant to take on disabled employees as it would adversely affect their attendance targets or did not feel they were able to make the necessary changes for severely disabled people.

Only nine (six per cent) respondents had seen an increase in the level of recruitment of those with disabilities and health conditions (six per cent or nine in total). Again, this was likely to have been a reflection of the need to wait longer to assess the real impact of the event.

### **A.8.1 Benefits of participation**

Nearly all (95 per cent) of the respondents agree that they had benefited from participating in the event. Of those who did not, not all also thought that the event could be improved (five of the eight respondents did). Those who stated the event could have been improved felt that the content should have been more tailored towards the audience and felt more interaction would have been beneficial.

Many respondents (92 per cent) also believed that the event would help them in their role. The roles of those who did not feel it would help (total of 13 people), included LMRAs (five people), DEAs (two people) and District Marketing Managers (two people). However, it is important to note that only a small proportion of respondents would have strongly preferred the event to have been designed and delivered differently and therefore, the consensus was that the event had been beneficial and helpful.

As well as learning about disability issues and employers, respondents were also asked if they had learnt more about the roles of their colleagues. Many (86 per cent) stated that they have gained a better understanding of their colleagues' roles.

## **A.9 Looking forward**

Respondents were asked to comment on whether they would like further training on disability issues. One-third (33 per cent) agreed that they would benefit from further training. Amongst those that did feel they needed extra training, areas of need identified were: the need for a refresher event on an annual basis; training specifically focused on mental health customers; general updates on legislation and regulation; more details of how employers assess disabled people at application and interview stage; training on how to promote those with disabilities and health conditions to employers; how to combat negative attitudes from employers; need to extend this type of training for all staff; and how to increase disability confidence internally across Jobcentre Plus training and recruitment activity.

## **A.10 Conclusions**

### **A.10.1 Pre-event**

The pre-event survey highlighted the following:

- Awareness of disability issues and health conditions was limited, with the largest proportion of respondents rating their awareness at level 5 (out of 10).
- The majority of respondents had direct experience of dealing with customers with disabilities, although fewer staff had experience of engaging with employers on promoting the recruitment of people with health conditions or disabilities.

- Many respondents have had previous training on disability issues. Despite this, many were also keen to learn further lessons from the forthcoming event including: increasing knowledge and confidence and how to engage more effectively with employers on disability issues.

### **A.10.2 Post-event**

The post-event exercises highlighted the following:

- Respondents' awareness of the issues surrounding recruitment and disability issues had improved considerably. Many respondents feel that they would be able to put into practice the lessons learnt.
- The vast majority of respondents felt the event had either met or exceeded their expectations. It was generally felt that the right amount of information was delivered.
- Respondents particularly enjoyed the participation of a disabled facilitator, who both directly and indirectly had a positive effect on the perceptions of the respondents, by demonstrating strong presentational skills and confidence.
- Few respondents have seen considerable changes in the take-up of disabled customers or in the general behaviour or attitudes of employers. However, it is likely that is too early to assess the real impact of the event.
- In future, it would be useful if the similar events were more tailored to the audience, were extended over a longer period to avoid saturation and gave respondents more opportunities to interact and participate with each other and the event facilitators.

# Appendix B

## Realising Potential context

### B.1 Purpose of Able to Work: Realising Potential

Able to Work: Realising Potential was a year long project which ran between March 2007 and February 2008. Its purpose was to:

- promote more and better job opportunities for disabled people and people with health conditions;
- give Jobcentre Plus teams practical tools to work confidently with employers (staff training);
- provide an introductory vehicle for Jobcentre Plus to develop new employer relationships and deepen existing ones (business seminars); and
- challenge employers to adopt best practice recruitment models.

In addition, the project aimed to test best practice in the mechanics of engaging employers with disabled people and intermediary organisations at a local level.

### B.2 Jobcentre Plus training

Employers' Forum on Disability is an employers' organisation focused on disability in the workplace. Funded and managed by employers, its 400 members represent organisations that employ around 25 per cent of the UK workforce. The Forum's Chief Executive Officer, Susan Scott Parker, agreed to design and personally deliver a practical training day for Jobcentre Plus' employer-facing staff in each district. Her brief was to:

- help Jobcentre Plus teams see recruitment through the eyes of the employer (demand led); and
- provide practical tips on better ways to work with employers to get job opportunities for disabled people (become a skilled and trusted intermediary).

The training day did not cover disability awareness or the legal framework: it was assumed that all staff would have had this as part of their core training. Instead, the aim was to give staff a practical grasp of how disability affects every aspect of business. In essence, it was hoped to give the staff who work with employers the tips and techniques to make it easy for an employer to say 'yes' to recruiting a disabled applicant.

*Realising Potential's* learning objectives were to:

- help staff understand and use the business case for becoming a disability confident organisation;
- describe the needs and expectations of employers and what Jobcentre Plus and intermediaries need to do;
- see the job applicant through the eyes of the employer;
- describe how employer recruitment processes work;
- anticipate and counter objections to hiring disabled people.

These objectives assumed that trainees were already disability aware and whilst this was a reasonable assumption for disability experts, several of our districts felt that most of their delegates would benefit from a disability awareness briefing before attending Realising Potential training. Amanda Wadsworth, Jobcentre Plus North West Region's Disability Champion, provided disability awareness training for 205 of Realising Potential's trainees.

# Appendix C

## Invitation to Realising Potential Jobcentre Plus event

Dear Colleague

As you know, you have been nominated as a delegate for the **Realising Potential** event on xxx. The event is sponsored by the:

- National Employment Panel;
- Office for Disability Issues;
- Employers' Forum on Disability;
- Jobcentre Plus National Sales Team; and
- Jobcentre Plus Senior Management Team in Devon & Cornwall.

We are lucky to have **Susan Scott Parker, Chief Executive of the Employers' Forum on Disability**, and **Forum Associate, Rick Williams**, to lead the event.

This will be a full day and we hope that you will find it challenging, enjoyable and above all useful!

### **Event objectives**

By participating in the event, delegates will become better able to:

- understand and use the business case for recruiting people with health conditions and disabilities;
- describe the needs and expectations of employers and what Jobcentre Plus and intermediaries need to do;
- see the job applicant through the eyes of the employer;
- describe how employer recruitment processes work;

- anticipate and counter objections to hiring disabled people;
- understand the significance and benefits of the DDA; and
- **be more disability confident in talking to employers**

### **Pre-event learning**

Before the event you will find it useful to visit the e learning material on the DWP intranet at: [http://intranet/development/training/diversity/02\\_disability/02\\_00\\_disability\\_index.htm](http://intranet/development/training/diversity/02_disability/02_00_disability_index.htm)

A resource pack will be provided for each delegate.

If you have any particular requirements for attending the event, please let us know.

Karol Doveston  
Project Manager

# Appendix D

## Pre-event participant topic guide

### Introduction

SQW has been commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to evaluate the Able to Work: Realising Potential Pilot events. These events are being provided by the National Employment Panel (NEP) with the objective to promote the business benefits of disability confidence among employers and those Jobcentre Plus (JCP) staff who work with employers. Employers' Forum on Disability (EfD) has partnered the NEP and JCP, and is responsible for co-designing and facilitating the events.

The evaluation aims to assess the success of the JCP staff events, specifically looking at JCP staff perceptions of the training process, the practical actions that follow and the extent to which JCP staff benefit from their participation in the programme.

### Background information

1. What is your position at JCP? How long have you been in this role?
2. What are your primary responsibilities?
3. Do you feel that there is anything that could be improved to assist you with carrying out your job?

## Pre-event awareness and employer interaction

4. How aware do you feel about disability issues? Are you confident with your present level of understanding?
5. What do you understand by the term, disability confidence?
6. How much experience do you have of dealing with customers with health conditions or a disability? (Both in current or previous job)
7. Do you have experience of engaging with employers on promoting the recruitment of people with health conditions and disabilities?
  - a. What was the nature of your interaction?
  - b. Has interaction been limited to certain areas or certain employers?
  - c. To date, do you feel that JCP's promotion of the recruitment of people with disabilities has been successful? What outcomes has it produced?
  - d. Have you encountered any particular difficulties in engaging with employers on disability issues?
8. Have you received any previous training on disability issues? If so, please describe. Was this been beneficial to you?

## Event expectations

9. What are your expectations of the Realising Potential event? What are you personally hoping to get out of it? (E.g. heightened awareness/understanding; enhanced confidence; learning new approaches)
10. Following the event, and after having the opportunity to put into practice some of the lessons you have learned, are there any outcomes that you'd hope to achieve? (E.g. a more informed local JCP workforce; improved relations with employers; changes in employers' attitudes towards employing people with health conditions and disabilities; changes in the level of employment amongst disabled people)

SQW would like to thank you for your support and contribution to this research.

# Appendix E

## Post-event participant topic guide

### Introduction

SQW has been commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to evaluate the Able to Work: Realising Potential Pilot events. These events are being provided by the National Employment Panel (NEP) with the objective to promote the business benefits of disability confidence among employers and those Jobcentre Plus (JCP) staff who work with employers. Employers' Forum for Disability (EfD) has partnered the NEP and JCP, and is responsible for co-designing and facilitating the events.

The evaluation aims to assess the success of the JCP staff events, specifically looking at JCP staff perceptions of the training process, the practical actions that follow and the extent to which JCP staff benefit from their participation in the programme.

### Evaluation of the event

1. What were the main messages delivered at the Realising Potential event?
2. What was your view on:
  - a. The delivery of the event itself by the facilitators?
  - b. The content of the event?
  - c. Did it cover enough/too much information?
3. Do you think that the key issues were adequately explained?
4. What were the most helpful parts of the event?

5. How could the event have been improved?
6. To what extent did the event exceed/meet/fail to meet your objectives?
7. Has the event helped you to achieve the outcomes that you wanted?
8. What are the main lessons you are taking away from the event?
9. Overall, do you think you have benefited from participation?
10. Do you think the lessons delivered will help you with your role?
11. Do you feel the changes that you have experienced have been solely due to the Realising Potential event? Have there been any external influencing factors?
12. Would you like future disability related training sessions on any particular issues?
13. Do you anticipate that you will have future disability related support requirements? If so, what might these be?

### Post-event levels of awareness and confidence

14. Do you feel that the approaches suggested at the event are feasible and appropriate?
15. Will you feel comfortable and confident about using the approaches suggested?
16. What do you now understand as the key aspects of disability confident employer engagement?
17. Since the event:
  - a. Has your awareness changed about the employment of disabled people?
  - b. Has your interaction with employers changed? Do you feel more or less confident?
  - c. Have you handled employer relations around health conditions and disability differently? If so, how?
  - d. Have you implemented the approaches suggested at the event? Please give any examples.
  - e. Has your understanding of the roles of your colleagues changed (improved? worsened?)?
18. In your view, has there been sufficient time to implement the new approaches? Is it too early to see and monitor outcomes? Would another analysis, after more time has elapsed, be beneficial in order to evaluate the event and the extent to which it has been able to bring about change?
19. Do you think the events have had/could have any wider benefits?

20. If you are managing staff, has attending the event helped you support staff with health conditions and disabilities? Have there been any benefits to you in developing those of your staff who work with disabled customers?

### Engagement with employers

21. Has there been any change in the level of recruitment of disabled people since the event?

22. Have you encountered any resistance from employers to the new approaches? What barriers have you had to overcome?

23. Have you faced any other barriers in implementing the new approaches?

24. Since the Employer event have you witnessed any changes in employers' attitude and behaviour regarding employment of disabled people?

25. Do you think the approaches suggested at the event will help engagement with employers more generally rather than exclusively on disability issues?

SQW would like to thank you for your support and contribution to this research.



# Appendix F

## Post-event JCP DM topic guide

### Introduction

SQW has been commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to evaluate the Able to Work: Realising Potential Pilot events. These events are being provided by the National Employment Panel (NEP) with the objective to promote the business benefits of disability confidence among employers and those Jobcentre Plus (JCP) staff who work with employers. Employers' Forum on Disability (EfD) has partnered the NEP and JCP, and is responsible for co-designing and facilitating the events.

The evaluation aims to assess the success of the JCP staff events, specifically looking at JCP staff perceptions of the training process, the practical actions that follow and the extent to which JCP staff benefit from their participation in the programme.

### Pre-event awareness and interaction

26. How would you describe your level of your awareness about the issue of 'disability confidence'? (Ask to highlight on a 1 – 10 scale)
27. How would you describe the level of your staff's awareness about the issues of 'disability confidence' prior to the event?
28. Prior to the event what was the level of confidence with which JCP staff interacted with employers in assisting recruitment of people with health conditions and disabilities?
29. Had employer facing staff received any previous training on disability issues?

## Evaluation of the event

30. Did you attend the Realising Potential event? (if YES, proceed to Q6; if NO proceed to Q10)
31. What were the main messages delivered and lessons learned at the event?
32. What is your understanding of the term 'disability confidence' now, having participated in the event? (Ask to highlight on a 1 – 10 scale)
33. What was your view on:
- The delivery of the event itself by the facilitators?
  - Event content and the adequacy of explanation of the key issues?
34. What has the feedback been from JCP staff that participated? Were they satisfied with the event content?

## Outcomes

35. Since the event have you witnessed the following amongst JCP staff (for each question probe on whether changes were observed among a few individuals or were more widespread) :
- Heightened awareness about disability confident employer engagement?
  - Changes in the way in which employer relationships are handled?
  - Changes in JCP staff attitudes and confidence towards engaging with employers to assist recruitment of people with health conditions and disabilities?
  - Evidence of approaches that were suggested at the event being put into practice?
36. Since the event do you perceive there to have been any changes in employers' attitudes and behaviour with regard employing people with a disability?
37. Have you witnessed any changes in the level of recruitment of disabled people by employers since the event?

## Overall comments

38. To what extent do you think that the event has met its objectives? Has it added value to the support that JCP staff provide for employers with recruitment of people with health conditions and disabilities?
39. Have any external factors (i.e. other training programmes / employer behaviour) contributed to any of the behavioural changes that you have witnessed, or can outcomes be directly attributable to the event itself?

40. Do you perceive there to be any barriers (internal or external) to the promotion of disability confidence to employers? If so, which changes are being hindered by these barriers and what can be done to overcome them?

### Future focus

41. Can the events be improved (content/delivery) in future? If so how?

42. Do you think there is a need for future training sessions? Are there any other future support requirements?

43. In your view, has sufficient time elapsed to be able to monitor outcomes of the events? Would another analysis after a longer period of time be beneficial to evaluate the success of the event and the extent to which it has been able to stimulate change? If so, what would you consider to be an appropriate length of time?

SQW would like to thank you for your support and contribution to this research.



# Appendix G

## Pre-event on-line survey

**Background Information****1. Identifier Number**

This is the four digit number supplied to you in the email.

**2. Event Location**

Select an answer

**3. Role at JCP****4. Length of time in role**

Less than a year



One to five years



Over five years

**5. Primary responsibilities****Pre-event awareness and employer interaction**

**6. On a scale of one to ten what would you regard as your level of awareness about the issues surrounding recruitment of individuals with health conditions and disabilities?**

Select an answer

**7. Are you familiar with the term 'disability confidence'?**

Yes



No

If Yes, please indicate what you understand by the term.



**Event expectations**

**13.** What are your personal expectations of the Realising Potential event?

**14.** What outcomes would you like to achieve following the event once you have had the opportunity to put into practice some of what you will learn?

# Appendix H

## Post-event on-line survey

**Background Information****1. Identifier Number**

This is the four digit number supplied to you in the email.

**Evaluation of the event****2. What were the main messages delivered by the event?****3. Was the information delivered at the event:**

- Too much  
 Too little  
 The correct amount

- Adequately explained  
 Inadequately explained

**4. Do you think you will be able to put into practice the lessons you have learnt when engaging with employers?**

- Yes  
 No

**5. Which parts of the event did you find most helpful?**

6. Did you feel that any parts of the event were irrelevant or unhelpful?

- Yes  
 No

If so, please describe

7. Do you think the event could have been improved?

- Yes  
 No

If so, how?

#### Post-event levels of awareness and confidence

8. On a scale of one to ten what would you now regard as your level of awareness about the issues surrounding recruitment of individuals with health conditions and disabilities?

Select an answer

9. What do you now understand by the term 'disability confidence'?

10. Since the event do you feel that you have:

|   | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. A heightened awareness about the issues surrounding the recruitment of people with health conditions and disabilities? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. More confidence to engage with employers on disability issues?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Developed a better understanding of the roles of your colleagues?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### Engagement with employers

11. Since the event have you witnessed any changes in employers' attitudes and behaviour regarding employment of people with health conditions and disabilities?

- Improved attitude and behaviour
- Worse attitude and behaviour
- No significant change

12. Has there been any change in the level of recruitment of disabled people since the event?

- Increase in the level of recruitment
- Decrease in the level of recruitment
- No significant change

13. Have you encountered any resistance from employers to the promotion of disability confidence?

- Yes
- No

If so, please provide details.

**Overall comments**

14. Did the event exceed/meet/fail to meet your objectives?

- Exceed  
 Meet  
 Fail

15. Overall, do you think you have benefited from participation?

- Yes  
 No

16. Do you think the lessons delivered will help you with your role?

- Yes  
 No

17. Would you like future training sessions on disability confidence issues?

- Yes  
 No

If so, which issues?

