



**Business
Disability
Forum**

**Building
disability-smart
organisations**



Walkaway Pound Report

Conducted by the Extra Costs Commission in collaboration
with Business Disability Forum

July 2014 - June 2015

Further to customer strategy consultations with Business Disability Forum (BDF) Partners in October/ November 2014, a priority action was updating 'walkaway pound' research to help businesses justify investment in the accessibility of their products and services.

Collaborating with the Extra Costs Commission - which has examined and made recommendations about how to reduce the 'extra costs' that disabled customers and households face as a direct result of disability (e.g. higher transport, energy and insurance costs) - BDF was able to integrate updated walkaway pound research into the Commission's consumer survey that more than 2,500 disabled people engaged with.

At the time of the interim report launch in March, BDF generated media interest in the headline figure of £1.8 billion per month being lost to businesses as disabled customers and their families and friends 'walked away' from service providers that were not disability smart¹. The research found that more than 3 in 4 disabled customers and their families and friends had moved their business elsewhere as a result of a lack of disability awareness by specific service providers.

BDF is delighted to share the research based around different impairment types and different sectors.

Overall findings

The Commission asked people whether they had left a shop or business because of poor disability awareness or understanding: three quarters (75%) of disabled people and their families said that they had done this (75% of disabled people and 76% of parents or carers). Looking at this across impairment types² (Figure 1), the percentage of people who have left a business can reach 83%. In particular, 83% of those with a memory impairment, 81% of those with a behavioural impairment, 81% of people with autism and 79% of those with a learning disability said they had left a

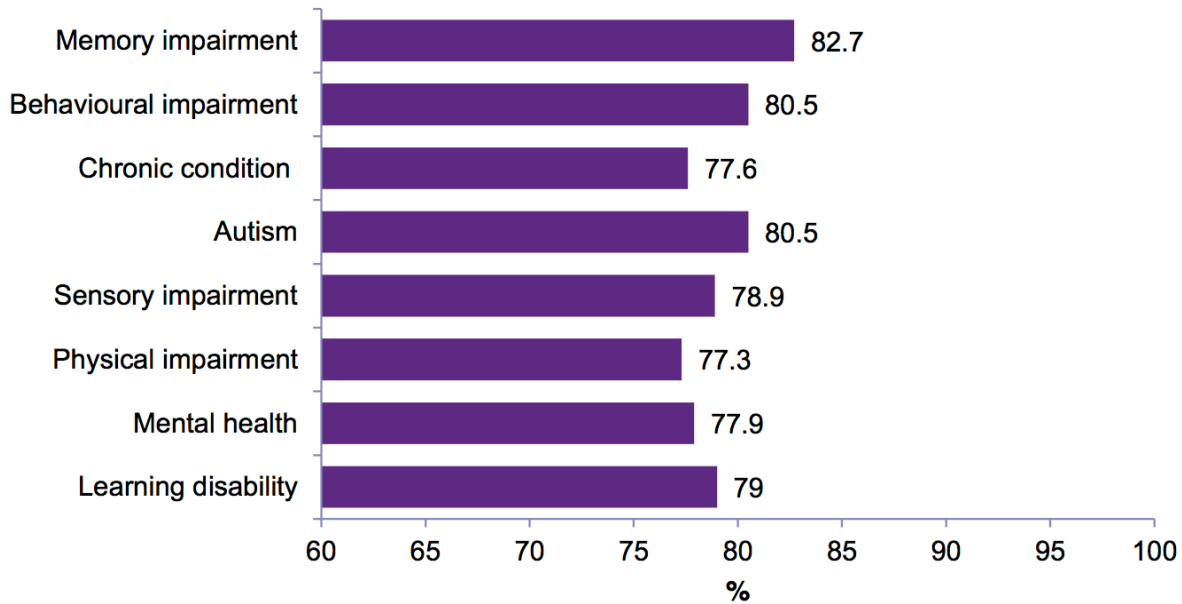
¹ See:

<http://www.bighospitality.co.uk/Business/UK-businesses-lose-1.8bn-a-month-by-ignoring-the-needs-of-disabled-customers>;

<http://www.hospitalityandcateringnews.com/2015/03/disabled-people-walk-away-poor-service-uk-businesses-lose-1-8bn-month/>

business for this reason.

Figure 1. Percentage of people with different types of impairment who have left a business because of poor disability understanding.

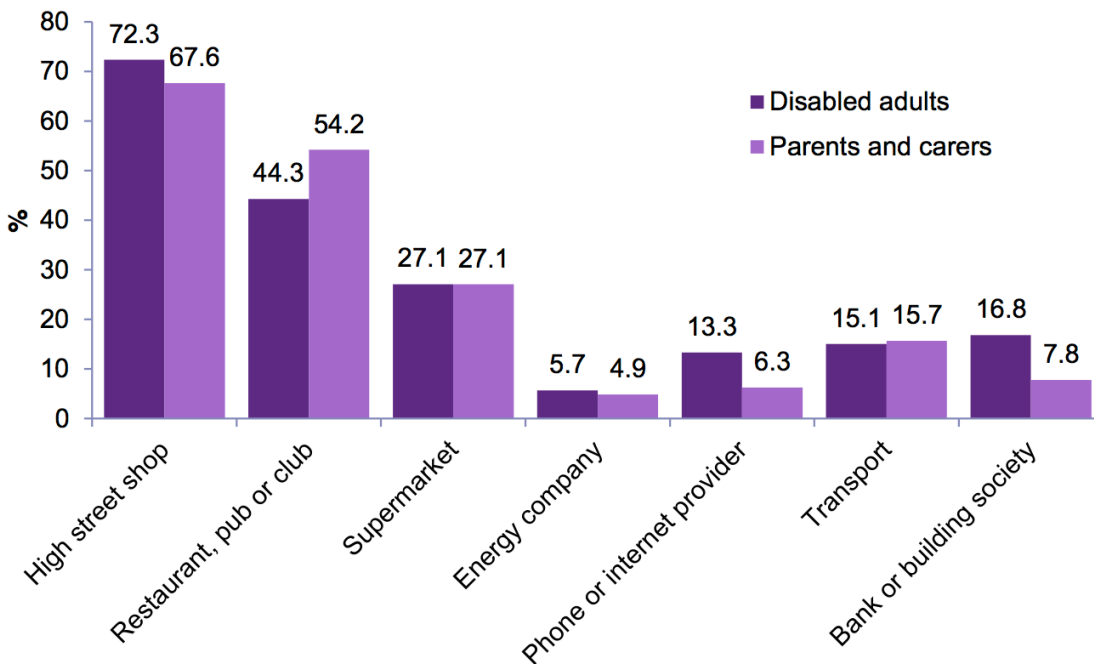


² Some overlap exists since 65% reported two or more impairments which may inflate these results.

When this is reviewed in relation to types of businesses:

- Seven out of ten (70%) had left a high street shop
- Half (50%) had left a restaurant, pub or club, and
- A quarter (27%) had left a supermarket (Figure 2).
- Twice as many disabled people (13%) as parents or carers (6.3%) said they had left a phone or internet provider and
- Twice as many had left a bank or building society (17% versus 8%).

Figure 2. Types of businesses that disabled people and parents and carers had left because of poor disability awareness or understanding.



“I left all of the above businesses, not out of anger but because I could not sustain coping with their facilities/attitude, despite my trying to explain.”

“<Bank> suggested that I should find another bank (because they could not address disability issues). Either bank staff are untrained or they are poorly trained.”

There were some significant differences between different impairment types and disabled people and parents or carers when it came to the types of businesses people had left. For example:

- Significantly more disabled people than parents with all types of impairment had left a phone or Internet provider (Figure 3)³.
- Significantly more disabled people with certain impairments had left a bank or building society (Figure 4) or a supermarket (Figure 5) and;
- Significantly more parents and carers of people with certain impairments had left a restaurant, pub or club (Figure 6).

³ Caution advised in interpreting some of these results as the sample is small, specifically for disabled adults with a behavioural impairment (n = 40), disabled adults with a learning disability (n = 82) and parents of children with a memory impairment (n = 92).

Figure 3. Disabled people and parents/carers with different impairment types who had left a phone or Internet provider.

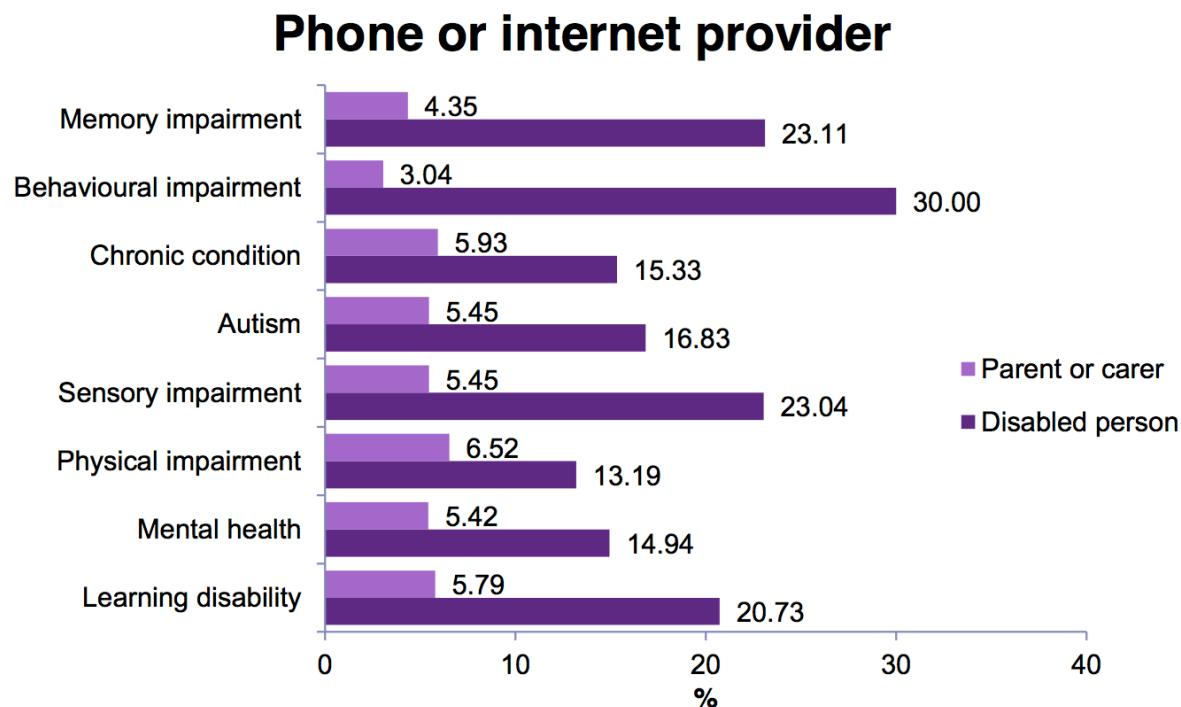


Figure 4. Disabled people and parents/carers with different impairment types who had left a bank or building society

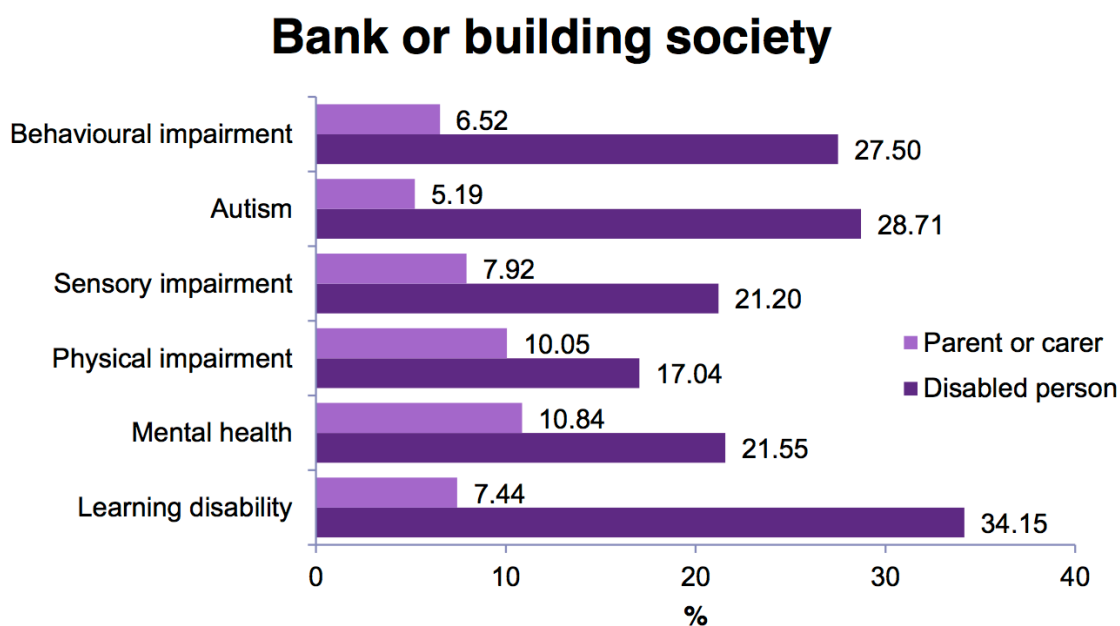


Figure 5. Disabled people and parents/carers with different impairment types who had left a supermarket

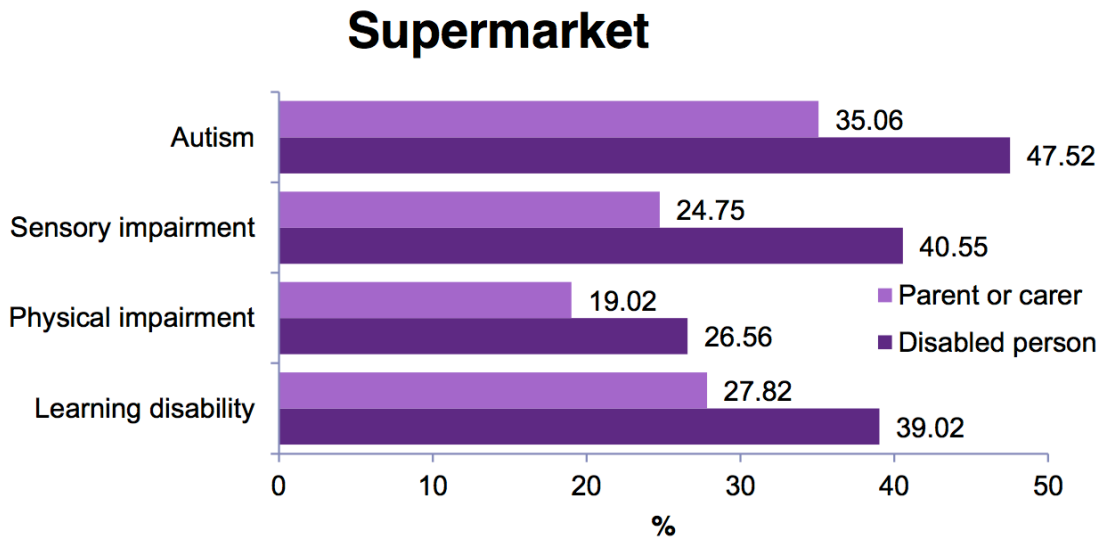
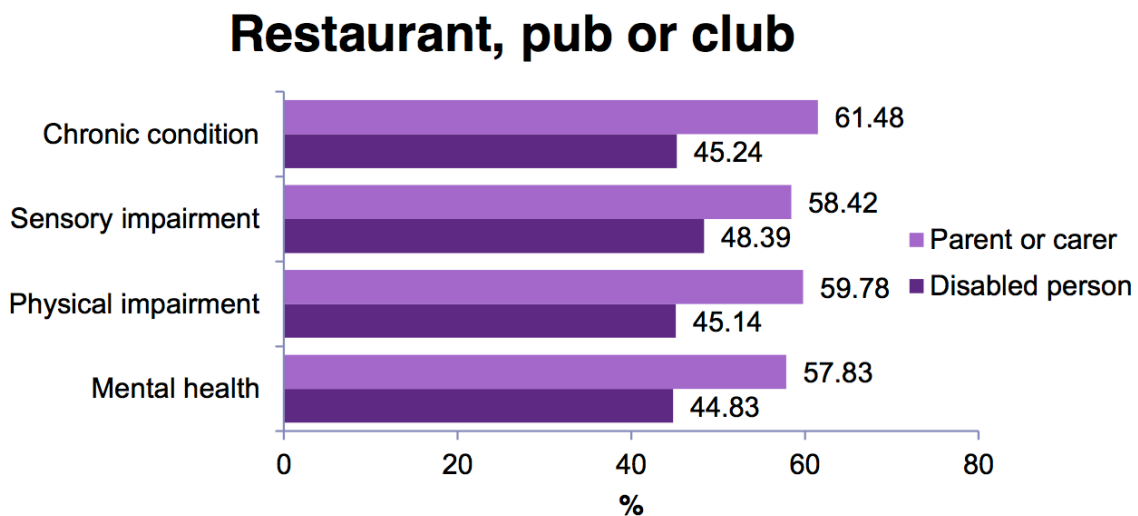


Figure 6. Disabled people and parents/carers with different impairment types who had left a restaurant, pub or club.



The level of revenue that ‘walks away’

The Commission asked those who had left a business how much they used to spend, every month, at the place they had left. They were asked to think about the most recent time they had left a business if they had left more than one place. Table 1 shows the median spend as the median provides a more reliable indicator by taking into account high numbers that may have skewed results. Parents and carers appear to have spent more in most areas, but this may be because they are reporting the amount spent on behalf of the whole family.

Table 1. Median spend at the business that people had left because of poor disability awareness or understanding.

Type of business	Median spend: Disabled adults	Median spend: Parents and carers
High street shop	£40	£50
Restaurant, pub or club	£40	£50
Supermarket	£200	£250
Energy company	£84	£100
Phone or internet provider	£40	£50
Transport provider	£30	£40
Bank or building society*	£600	£50

*People were asked to give the amount that they used to deposit at the bank every month.

If we were to extrapolate these figures to the whole population of disabled people⁴, we could estimate that 8.4 million adults may have walked away from business because of poor disability awareness. This, in turn, could equate to £1.8 billion lost to businesses in a month (Table 2).

Table 2. Estimates of population and loss of money to businesses if disabled customers left that business.

Type of business	Number of disabled people in the population who could have left this business	Potential loss of money for business per month
High street shop	6,048,000	£241,920,000
Restaurant, pub or club	3,696,000	£147,840,000
Supermarket	2,268,000	£453,600,000
Energy company	504,000	£42,336,000
Phone or internet provider	1,092,000	£43,680,000
Transport provider	1,260,000	£37,800,000
Bank or building society*	1,428,000	£856,800,000
TOTAL		£1,823,976,000

* We asked how much they used to deposit at the bank or building society every month.

⁴ Data used from the Family Resources Survey (2012-13)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/325491/family-resources-survey-statistics-2012-2013.pdf

The impact of 'walking away' on family and friends

The Commission was also interested to know whether disabled people and their families had influenced other people they knew to change businesses because of their negative experience. Four in ten (43%) said that their friends or family left a business too although a third (36%) said they did not know if this had happened. Figure 7 shows that this can reach as high as 50% of people with a sensory impairment saying that their friends and family had left a business too.

Figure 7. Percentage of people who said family and friends had also left a business because of poor disability understanding.

