

# Deaf jobseeker and employee experiences survey

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# 1. Introduction

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Totaljobs is one of the UK's leading jobs boards, attracting around 6 million jobseekers every month. One of totaljobs' key areas of focus is raising awareness of the challenges facing jobseekers and employees across society.

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## ABOUT THE SURVEY

There are more than 11 million people in the UK with some form of hearing loss and more than 900,000 are severely or profoundly deaf.

This survey was designed to gather information about the experiences of deaf employees in the workplace. There is existing evidence (see [section 8](#)) of the barriers to employment, and keeping employment, that deaf people face. It is hoped this report will add to the body of work to provide further insight into the deaf workforce.

Totaljobs was encouraged to take on this survey based on the positive relationships created with deaf organisations following the publishing of a [blog article](#) featuring two stories of deaf people explaining their workplace experiences.

The survey aims to build a picture of the workplace provisions available for deaf people, the attitudes they encounter when looking for work and while in employment, as well as their hopes and fears for the future.

It is anticipated that the survey will support greater awareness of the employment issues experienced by deaf workers and jobseekers and will help society more broadly understand the significant barriers many deaf people encounter.

We hope the findings of this report will be welcomed by deaf people and enable them to feel that their concerns and experiences are being acknowledged.

For a summary of the key findings, please go to [section 2](#).



# 2. Executive summary

Our findings demonstrate that there is a lack of support for deaf people both while they're seeking employment and while they're employed.

## KEY FINDINGS

Discrimination plays a large part in the working lives of deaf people, and many deaf people are forced to exit employment because of it. Furthermore, attitudes of employers and colleagues can prevent deaf people from fulfilling their potential, and often lead to them feeling isolated at work.

There are also many perceived barriers to employment. While the majority of deaf people feel qualified for a job, they believe that there isn't the appropriate support available to help them secure employment.

All of this is fuelled by a stark lack of deaf awareness across businesses and society.

In total, 437 respondents took part in this survey



**Approximately three-quarters of respondents (72%)** were working either full- or part-time.



**1 in 4 (25%)** deaf people have left a job due to discrimination.



**1 in 5 (19%)** have not told their employer they are deaf or have experienced hearing loss.



**More than half (56%)** have experienced discrimination in the workplace due to being deaf or hard of hearing (HoH). The most common sources of discrimination were from colleagues (62%) and management (53%).



**Three-quarters (74%)** are confident they have the right skills to look for work. However, almost the same number (72%) have received no support in finding a job because of being deaf. Only 13% believe there is enough support available to help deaf people to look for work.



**Two-thirds (65%)** believe developments in technology have made it easier to be deaf in the workplace.



**1 in 4 (25%)** workers stated there is no provision for deaf employees at their workplace and nearly half (47%) said that they did not receive support and guidance from their employer for issues related to being deaf.

# 3. Acknowledgements

Participants were encouraged to take part mainly through a technique of snowballing sampling. Deaf charities, organisations, bloggers, activists and online forums were contacted, given information about the study and asked to share the survey as widely as possible.

Many thanks to the participants who gave their time to complete the survey and to those individuals and organisations who supported the project by disseminating information about the study.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

Action on Hearing Loss  
Association of Sign Language Interpreters  
Bath Deaf Club Association  
British Association of Teachers of the Deaf  
British Cochlear Implant Group  
British Deaf Association  
Bexley Deaf Club  
BID Services  
Bradford Deaf Community Association  
Business Disability Forum  
Cambridgeshire Deaf Association  
Deaf Aware UK  
Deafconnect  
Deafie Blogger  
Deaf Friendly Business Solutions  
DELTA  
Deafinite Interpreters  
dDeaflinks Staffordshire

Deaf - not stupid  
Deaf Parents Deaf Children  
deafPLUS  
DeafSign.Com  
Deaf Umbrella  
Deaf Unity  
Disability Direct  
Deafness Support Network  
England Deaf Rugby Union  
Femaura  
Flashing Lights  
HearFirst  
Hearing Link  
Harrow United Deaf Club  
Hull Deaf Centre  
Interpreters Dorset  
Jorvik Deaf Connections  
Leeds Society for Deaf and Blind People  
Mary Hare History  
Mike Gulliver  
Merseyside Society for Deaf People

National Association of Deafened People  
Nottinghamshire Deaf Society  
Royal Association for Deaf people  
Scottish Council on Deafness  
Scottish Sensory Centre  
Shaw Trust  
Signal  
SignHealth  
Sign Loop  
SLFirst Deaf Magazine  
Soundz Off  
Tayside Deaf Hub  
UK Council on Deafness  
UK Deaf Athletics  
Wales Council for Deaf People  
Your Hearing Helper  
York Deaf Society  
Zebra Access  
Apologies to anyone missed off the list.

# 4. Methodology

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## SURVEY DESIGN

Existing national and international research on deaf employee experiences was consulted to inform the creation of an initial draft survey.

The draft survey was sent to an advisory group made up of deaf charities. The advisory group included Action on Hearing Loss, the British Deaf Association, SignHealth, the Scottish Council on Deafness and the Wales Council for Deaf People.

It was essential to the success of this project that deaf organisations were involved as advisors throughout its entirety to ensure that the survey would represent the deaf community as much as possible.

From the feedback received, multiple drafts were produced, which were then shared for additional feedback. This process was undertaken for several weeks before the survey questions were agreed upon.

The advisory group made clear that the survey had to be accessible to Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) users before they would sign it off. The intention of BSL translation of the survey was to ensure that all BSL users could access it. A text-only survey would only be accessible to BSL users who have a sufficient level of English, which would limit the number of potential responses.

A translation agency was engaged to translate the questions into BSL. However, this first attempt was rejected as the videos only included translations of the questions and not the answers.

A deaf-led company was then engaged to successfully film the BSL translations. The survey was uploaded to eDigital Research and published on 30 June 2016.

**It was essential to the success of this project** that deaf organisations were involved as advisors throughout its entirety **to ensure that the survey would represent the deaf community** as much as possible.

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### THE REPORT

The survey closed on 25 July 2016, at which point 437 eligible participants had accessed it. For the purposes of this report, those living outside of the UK were excluded.

This report consists primarily of percentages, with no statistical analysis. The aim of this report is simply to present and summarise the data.

Complete data tables for each question were not included in the text due to their size and complexity.

As different numbers of people completed different questions, the actual number of data being reported on for each question will be noted in the text as 'N'. For example, if 100 people completed a question, and we report that 50% of those answered 'yes', the 50% figure will be accompanied with (N=100) to show how many respondents this figure is based on.

Where quotes from participants are used, spelling mistakes have been corrected for ease of reading. A glossary explaining some of the terms used in this report can be found in [section 7](#).

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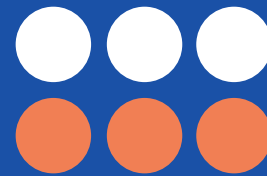
### LIMITATIONS

We are mindful that due to the relatively small sample size, the survey results may not be demographically representative of the deaf population as a whole.

More than half (55%) of respondents identified as wearing hearing aids while approximately one third (36%) said they used BSL. The findings, therefore, are more weighted towards the experiences of hearing aid wearers; the experiences of profoundly deaf, BSL users may differ. This represents an area for potential future research.

There is also an uneven gender and ethnicity split of survey respondents. Females represent 61% of respondents while only 36% are male. Respondents who identified as White English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British represent more than 85% of respondents.

A number of potential survey respondents told us that they'd been out of employment for some time and, therefore, didn't feel they could respond. This resulted in only 3% of respondents being over 65 years in age.



**More than half of respondents identified as wearing hearing aids** while approximately one third said they used BSL.

# 5. Participants

## Identity (Tick all that apply)

N = 437

I am deaf	64.53%	●
I wear hearing aid(s)	55.38%	●
I use British Sign Language (BSL)	36.16%	●
I am hard of hearing	31.12%	●
I have cochlear implant(s)	20.14%	●
I use Sign Supported English (SSE)	18.08%	●
I am deafened	6.64%	●
I wear a bone-anchored hearing aid	1.83%	●
I am deafblind	0.69%	●
Other	2.97%	●

## Current work situation

N = 437

I'm currently employed (full-time)	51.49%	●
I'm currently employed (part-time)	20.37%	●
I'm unemployed and looking for a job	14.87%	●
I'm retired	3.43%	●
I'm unemployed and not looking for a job	1.83%	●
I'm in education	1.37%	●
Other	6.64%	●

## Current job satisfaction

N = 437

Very dissatisfied	8.01%	●
Dissatisfied	10.30%	●
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17.39%	●
Satisfied	29.29%	●
Very satisfied	23.34%	●
Not applicable	11.67%	●

# 52%

of participants were satisfied with their job



66%

 of participants were **35 or older**

### Age

N = 437

Under 16	0.00%	
16-24 years	9.84%	
25-34 years	23.34%	
35-44 years	26.09%	
45-54 years	25.86%	
55-64 years	11.21%	
Over 65 years	2.75%	
Prefer not to say	0.92%	

### Gender

N = 437

Female	61.10%	
Male	36.16%	
Non-binary	0.69%	
Trans	0.46%	
Prefer not to say	1.60%	

61%

 of participants were **female**

## Sexuality

N = 437

Heterosexual	79.18%	●
Gay man	4.12%	●
Lesbian	3.20%	●
Bisexual woman	1.60%	●
Bisexual man	0.23%	●
Other	2.29%	●
Prefer not to say	9.38%	●

## Ethnicity

N = 437

White English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	85.58%	●
Any other White background	4.12%	●
Irish	2.06%	●
Pakistani	1.14%	●
White and Asian	0.69%	●
Indian	0.69%	●
White and Black Caribbean	0.46%	●
Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background	0.46%	●
Chinese	0.46%	●
Any other Asian background	0.46%	●
African	0.46%	●
Caribbean	0.46%	●
White and Black African	0.23%	●
Other Arab ethnic group	0.23%	●
Bangladeshi	0.00%	●
Any other Black/African/ Caribbean background	0.00%	●
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	●
Any other ethnic group	0.00%	●
Prefer not to say	2.52%	●


































86%



of participants were **White British**

## Work sector

N = 314

Healthcare	13.06%		HR	0.32%	
Education	12.74%		PR	0.32%	
Third sector	9.87%		Security	0.32%	
Social care	9.55%		Volunteering	0.32%	
Admin	7.01%		Banking	0.00%	
Retail	6.69%		Insurance	0.00%	
Engineering	3.50%		Sports	0.00%	
Marketing	2.55%		Other	10.19%	
Media	2.55%				
Academia	2.23%				
Manufacturing	2.23%				
IT	1.91%				
Accountancy	1.59%				
Customer service	1.59%				
Hospitality	1.59%				
Sales	1.59%				
Catering	1.27%				
Computer programming	1.27%				
Finance	0.96%				
Arts	0.64%				
Construction	0.64%				
Design	0.64%				
Legal	0.64%				
Logistics	0.64%				
Science	0.64%				
Advertising	0.32%				
Consultancy	0.32%				
Faith-based	0.32%				

# 13%



of participants  
worked in healthcare

## Number of employees in company

N = 314

1 employee (Sole trader)	0.96%	•
2-10 employees	10.19%	•
11-19 employees	6.69%	•
20 -50 employees	15.61%	•
51-80 employees	4.78%	•
81-120 employees	5.10%	•
121-250 employees	8.28%	•
Over 250 employees	46.18%	•
Not applicable	2.23%	•

# 46%

of participants worked in a company with more than 250 employees

## Employer or employee

N = 314

Employer	6.37%	•
Employee	92.68%	•
Not applicable	0.96%	•

# 75%

of participants went into higher education

## Highest level of education

N = 314

GCSE/O Level/Scottish Standard grades	10.51%	•
A Level/AS Level/Scottish Higher grades/Scottish Sixth year studies	9.55%	•
Higher education below degree level e.g. Diploma/HND/NVQ	27.71%	•
First degree e.g. BA, BSc	19.75%	•
Professional qualification of degree standard or above	9.24%	•
Master's/Post-graduate qualification e.g. MBA	17.20%	•
Doctorate/Other higher degree	0.64%	•
None of these	3.18%	•
Prefer not to say	2.23%	•

## Job location

N = 314

Greater London	18.15%	●
Midlands	15.29%	●
North West England	12.10%	●
South East England	11.15%	●
South West England	10.51%	●
Yorkshire and Humber	7.32%	●
Scotland	6.69%	●
East Anglia	5.73%	●
North East England	4.78%	●
Wales	4.14%	●
Northern Ireland	0.96%	●
Not applicable	1.91%	●
Other	1.27%	●

# 40%

of participants were from the south of England

## Annual salary

N = 314

I do not receive an annual income	0.96%	●
Less than £10,000	13.69%	●
£10,000 - £19,999	27.07%	●
£20,000 - £29,999	26.43%	●
£30,000 - £39,999	10.19%	●
£40,000 - £49,999	6.69%	●
£50,000 - £59,999	2.87%	●
£60,000 - £69,999	0.64%	●
£70,000 - £99,999	0.96%	●
£100,000 - £124,999	0.32%	●
£125,000 - £149,999	0.00%	●
More than £150,000	0.32%	●
Prefer not to say	9.87%	●

# 67%

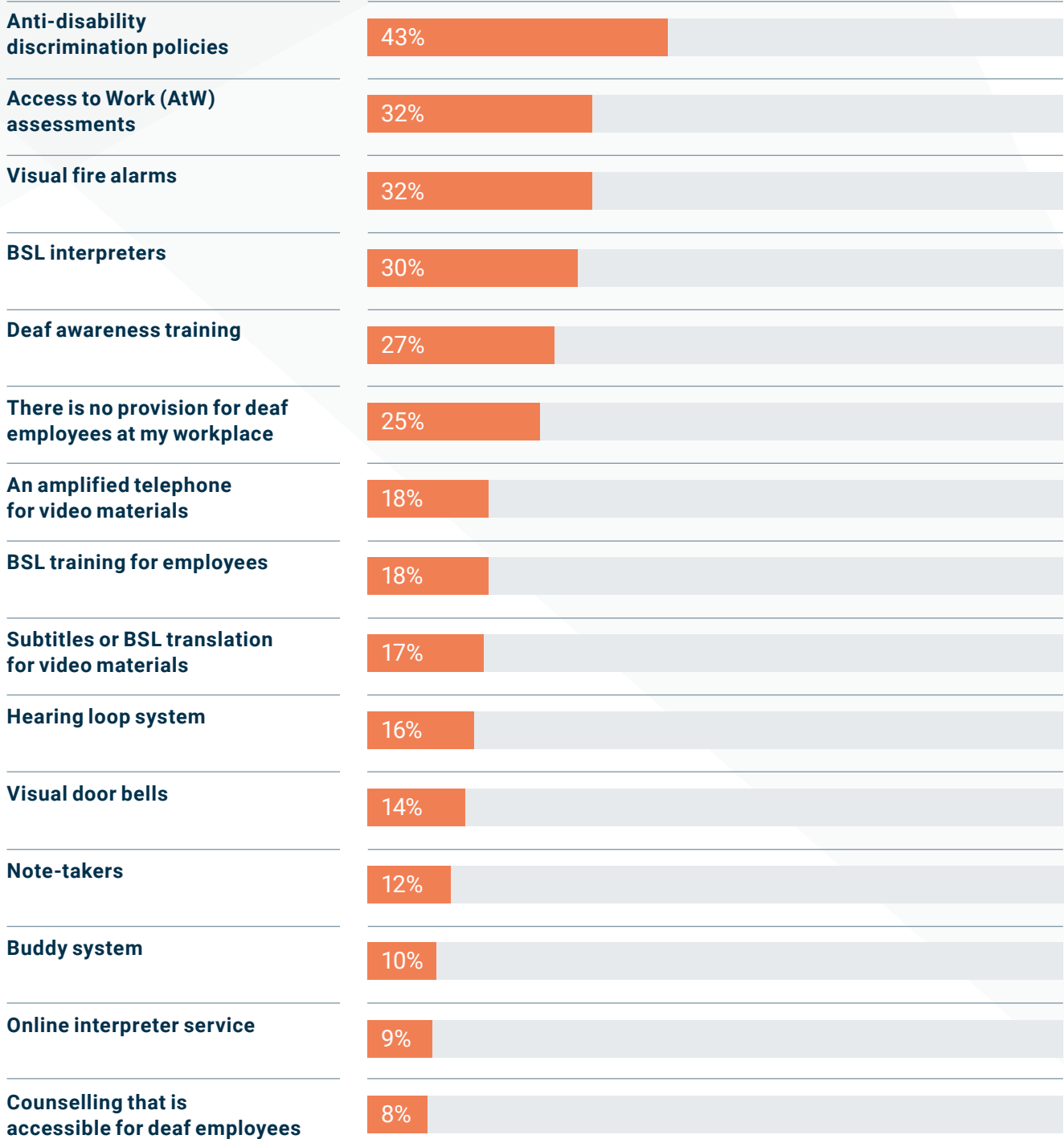
of participants earned less than £30,000 a year

# 6. Findings

01 | N = 314

## Does your employer provide any of the following?

(Tick all that apply)



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## FURTHER COMMENTS

“ I get BSL interpreters and note takers for training but this is provided by AtW. The Deaf awareness training is provided by myself because I kept fighting for it.

“ There are no provisions however they have said if I ever need anything like this to simply ask for it. They are providing me with my own office so that I don't have to do muted conversations in the middle of the open plan office.

“ My employer is willing to provide any support necessary which I have declined. I choose to rely on hearing aids and communication tactics.

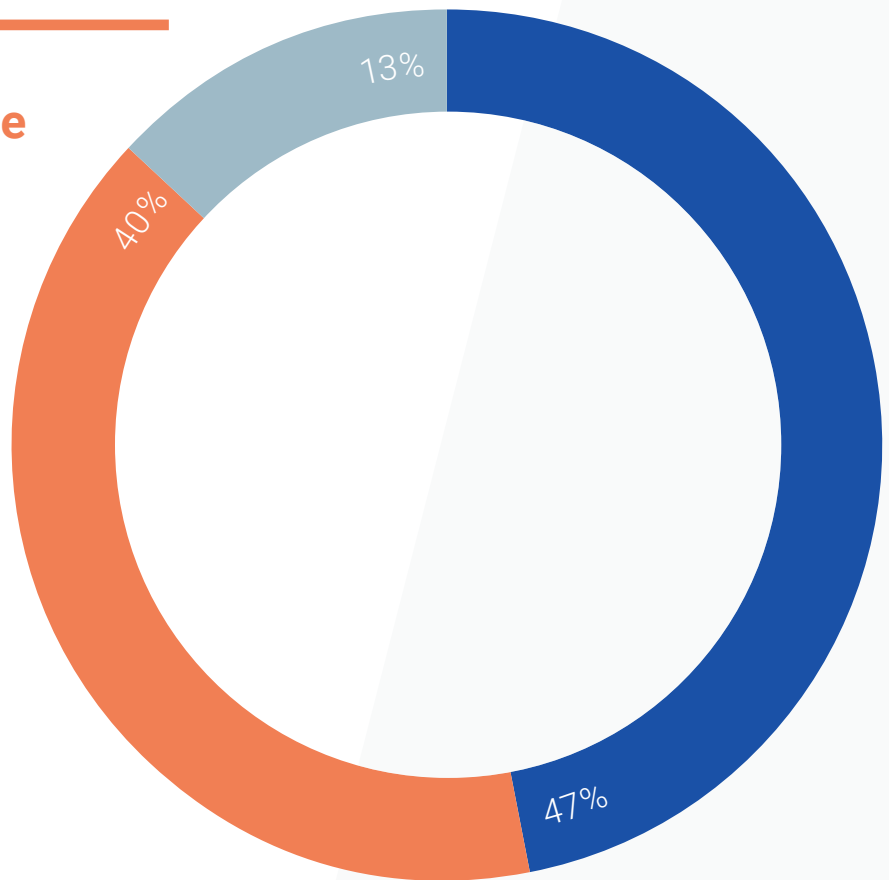
“ I have worked for my company for 13 years and asked them time and time again to provide me with support with my deafness. It's only just these last few months that they have started putting some things into place after writing a grievance to them.

“ There is no help for me at work. I had no hearing at all and **they told me that I had to wait** for other staff to tell me when call systems and residents needed me.

02A | N = 314

**Do you receive support and guidance from your employer for issues related to being deaf?**

- No
- Yes
- Not applicable



**FURTHER COMMENTS**

“ I have only recently been diagnosed with hearing loss. My employer has been very supportive over my time off for medical appointments. We have not yet addressed the subject of support needs such as AtW but this is more due to me getting to grips with my hearing aid before deciding if I actually need additional support.

“ I have AtW support to provide me with BSL interpreters for telephone and face to face meetings.

“ It is not so much support but if I identify a need, my manager will back me up (i.e. I wanted a mobile phone that was t-loop enabled, so I found it and my manager told IT to buy it).

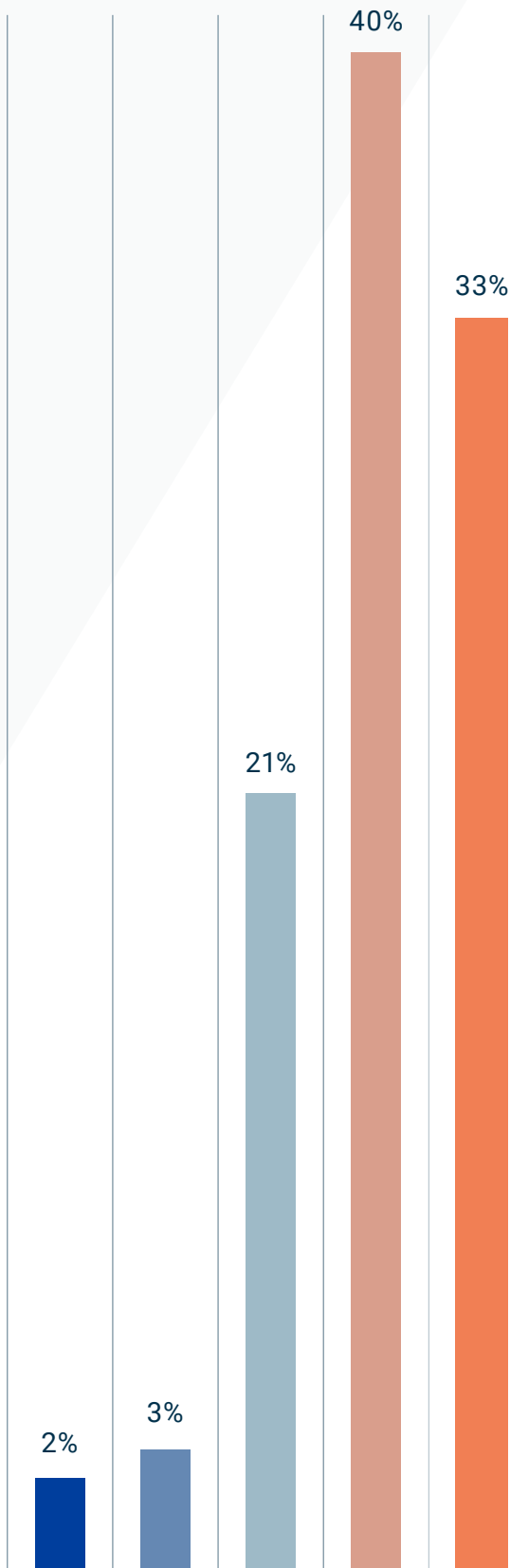
“ All staff Deaf and hearing use BSL, we all are treated as equals. The hearing support the Deaf if we struggle with our English. We have an excellent team.

“ They don't know what to do. I feel isolated because of this.



02B | N = 126

How satisfied are you with the support and guidance you receive?



Very dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Satisfied

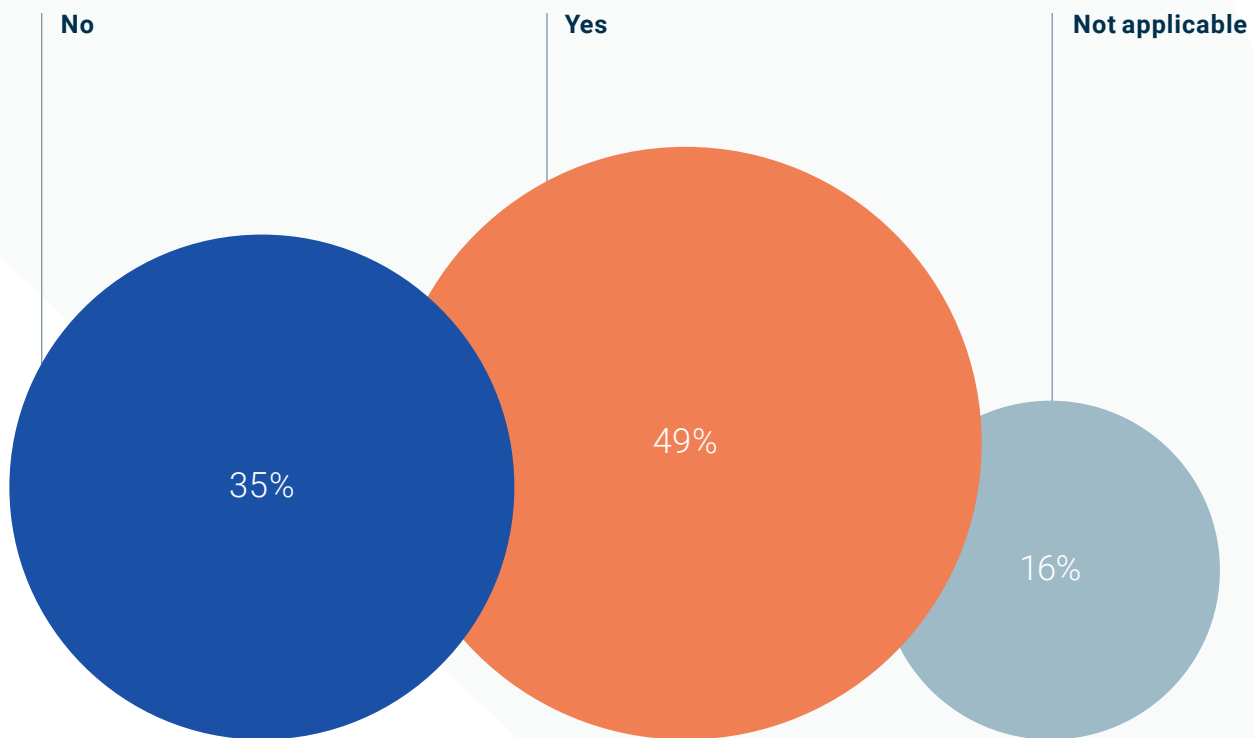
Very satisfied

73%

of participants who received support and guidance were satisfied with what they received

03 | N = 314

## Do you receive support and guidance about your work that is fully accessible?



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ It would be good if my main form of contact was email on which I rely very much but a quick phone call can often resolve issues much quicker - the quality of reception is very dependent on how clearly the other person speaks.

“ I do not have a minicom so am not able to use a phone and have to rely on others to make a call for me. People make me feel like a burden.

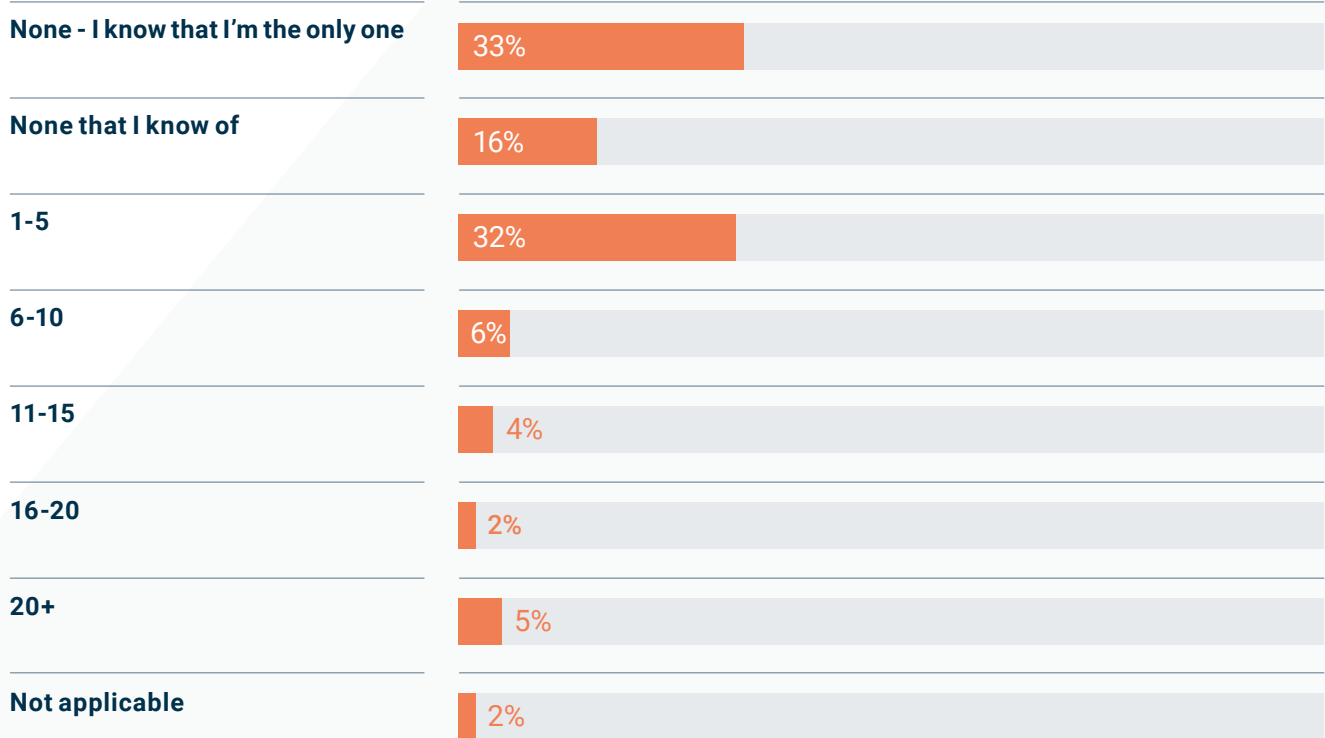
“ I have a company iPhone which enables me to text my boss and co-workers as well as being able to email and FaceTime.

“ I only have two hours of support from AtW weekly as agreed to have a weekly meeting of summary and update news etc. If something urgent or important is announced, they normally tell me via Skype messaging.

“ My company is very big so there are HR and IT resources who are more accommodating with support for me and other people who have different needs, not just Deafness.

04 | N = 314

## How many other deaf colleagues do you have in your workplace?



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ Can be lonely being the only deaf person in a company.

“ They have never had a Deaf colleague before and were extremely ignorant about Deaf issues. My first manager made everyone attend deaf awareness training.

“ In actual fact, I don't think I've ever worked with a hearing impaired colleague. So it's a learning curve for me and the company.

“ I am the only deaf BSL user in an organisation that employs 3,000 staff.

“ I work for a charity. We have both a Deaf team and a Hard of Hearing team.

**05A** | N = 437

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**Have you ever experienced discrimination in the workplace due to being deaf or hard of hearing?**

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■ No

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■ Yes



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Of respondents who faced discrimination,

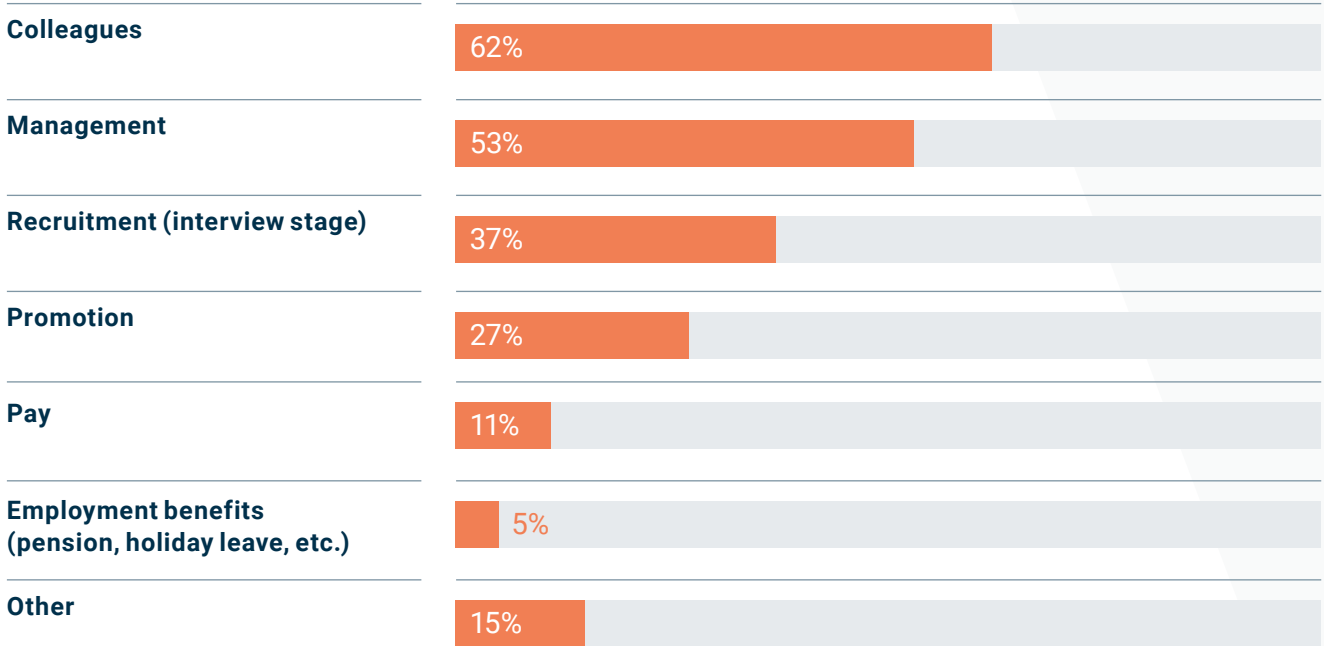
**62%**

was from colleagues

**05B** | N = 245

## Which areas have you experienced discrimination in?

(Tick all that apply)



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ In my last company, some opportunities bypassed me due to my deafness. Also I managed to obtain a promotion but it was always a case of me having to prove I can do the job first whereas hearing co-workers didn't have to prove themselves before getting promoted.

“ At interviews some employers have said that I am not suitable for the job because I need to be able to use a phone when out and about. Colleagues have often left me out of conversations or asked me to do a specific job to get me out of the way rather than talking to me.

“ I feel no allowances were made for the impact the deafness has when being judged as networking and collaborating. My manager actually said he noticed I got tired before the end of the day and my contributions dropped off and therefore he saw that as lack of motivation. He totally did not understand how difficult it is to hear.

“ People not fully understanding that listening and lip-reading require a lot of effort and do not allow for the fatigue caused by this. Not bothering to repeat themselves when I say I have not heard and not giving me time to give my opinions in meetings.

“ Not being informed of work matters that cover me and exclusion from numerous situations that concern me. My regional manager embarrassed and humiliated me by banging on a window when I had my back to him, I was in a different room and colleagues and candidates witnessed him banging to tell me to be quiet. My line manager said it was unnecessary.

06 | N = 437

## Have you ever left a job due to discrimination towards you because of your deafness?

- No
- Yes
- Not applicable

### FURTHER COMMENTS

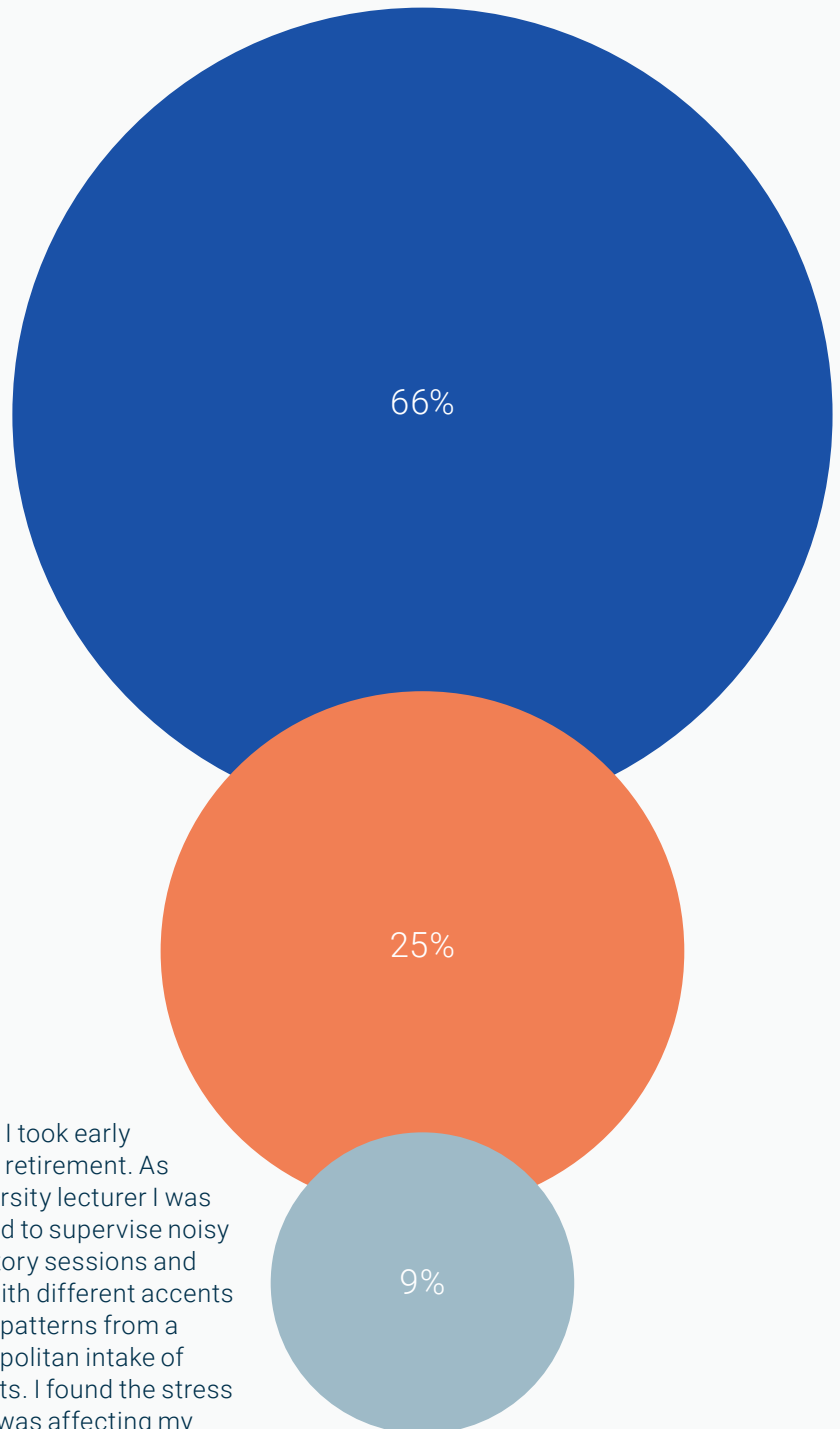
“ Many jokes were told in my “absence” about me, with the joke-tellers not realising I was in the same room, or friends were in the same room and passed along how hilarious my colleagues thought I was when I communicate.

“ I was released from my job as a legal secretary because despite Access to Work, I was unable to hear audio dictation to be able to do my job.

“ I left my previous job to take maternity leave as a hearing person. I then lost my hearing and couldn’t get back in. I even applied for teaching assistant posts as a way to get back in ... in the hope that I would eventually get back into teaching. I reached the interview stage four times and four times I was unsuccessful for jobs that I was over qualified for. I had walked into my previous two teaching posts as a hearing person. It was so demotivating. I feel they thought I was too big a risk...

“ Very lonely in workplace and no one makes an effort to communicate.

“ I took early retirement. As a university lecturer I was required to supervise noisy laboratory sessions and cope with different accents and lip patterns from a cosmopolitan intake of students. I found the stress of this was affecting my general health.



07 | N = 437

## Have you ever been in a job and not told your employer that you are deaf or have experienced hearing loss?

- No
- Yes
- Not applicable

### FURTHER COMMENTS

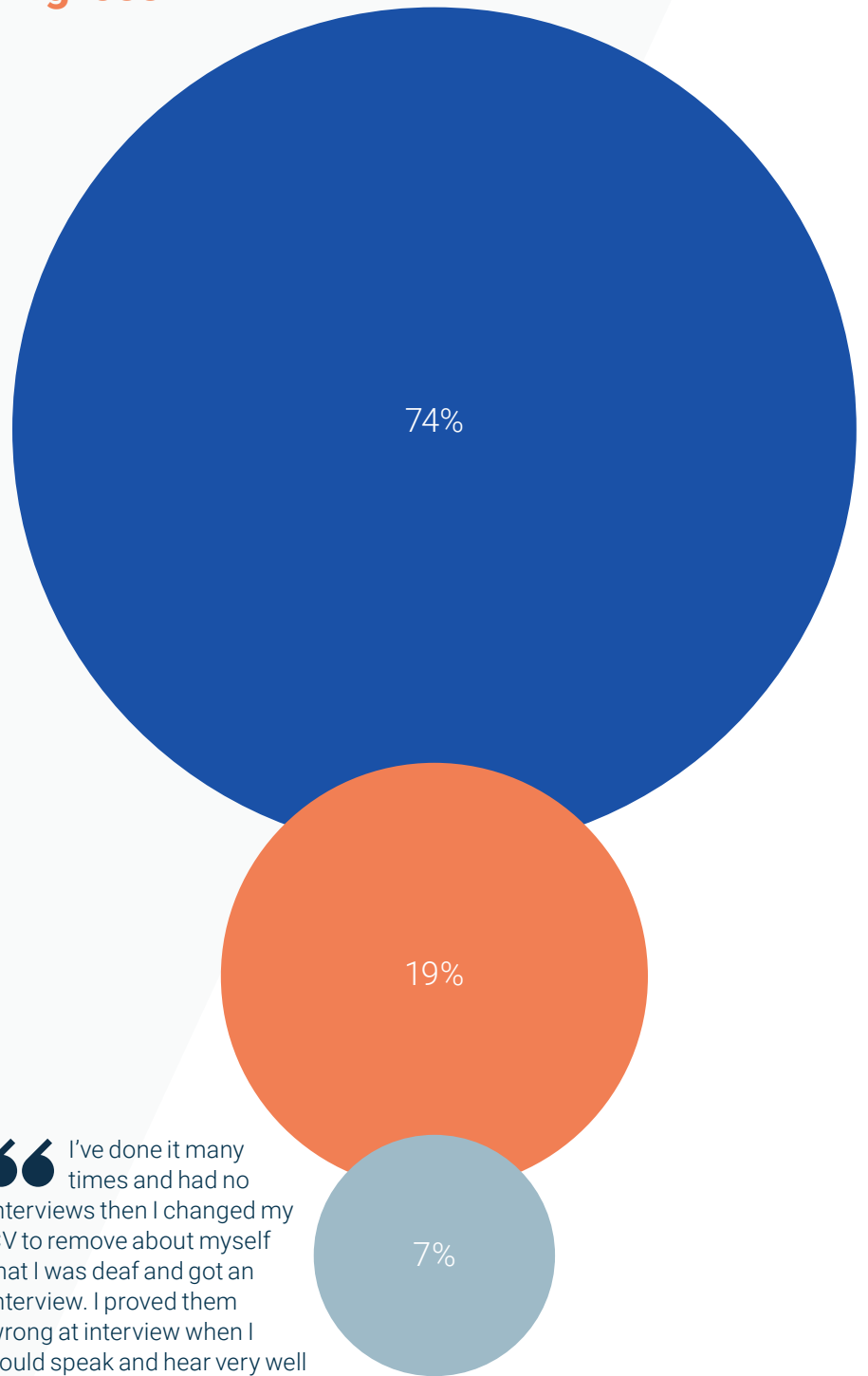
“ I don't want to be defined by my deafness and as it is only in one ear, I find I can manage it generally without fuss. I do tell people when I need to or if it becomes obvious.

“ Because I did not want to compromise my recruitment and I manage the condition quite well and compensate. There is enough age discrimination in the real market today (I'm 57) I cannot afford to lose an opportunity by being discounted as a 'Deaf old dad' as I was in my last job!

“ I applied for a job and went along for the interview. I did not tell them I was Deaf - the interview went well and they offered me the job on the spot. When I told them I had 'hearing loss' the attitude changed totally and the interviewer ripped up my application in front of me and said "you have wasted my time, it is not the policy of this company to employ people like you".

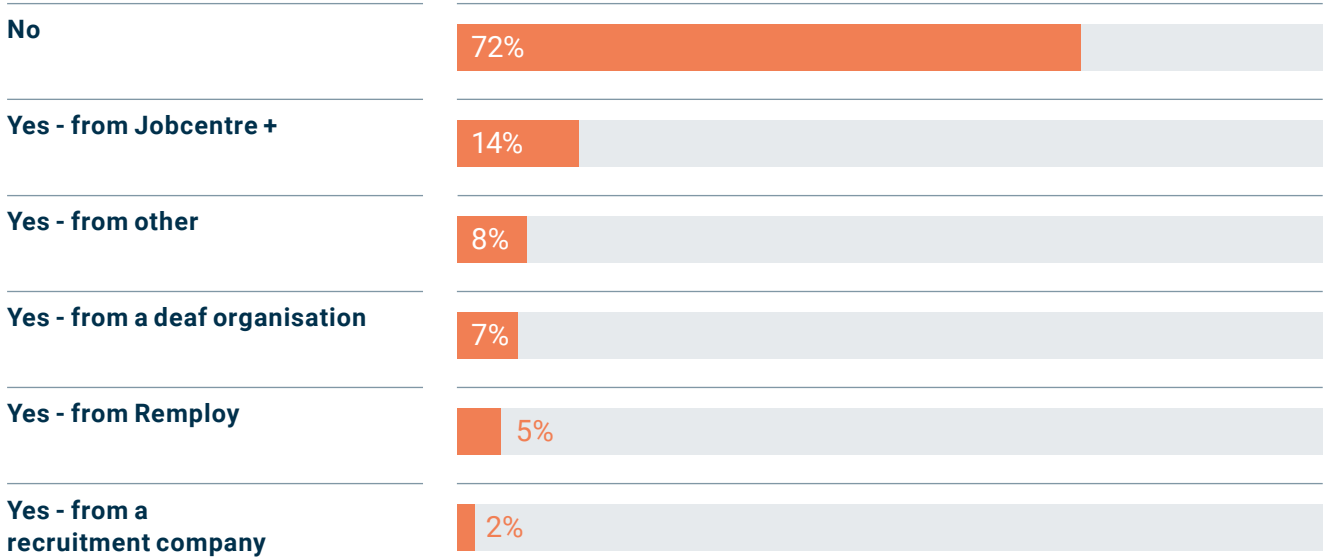
“ I was afraid of being treated differently.

“ I've done it many times and had no interviews then I changed my CV to remove about myself that I was deaf and got an interview. I proved them wrong at interview when I could speak and hear very well with cochlear implant face to face.



08 | N = 437

## Have you ever received any support in finding a job because of being deaf? (Tick all that apply)



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ I got referred to Remploy by a Jobcentre. And I put down my brother’s mobile number on my CV in case any employers/agency ring so my brother can speak on my behalf and explain to them that I’m deaf and please to email me instead of phone call. However in the result of it, only few employers have emailed me and others didn’t as it must have put them off.

“ I asked Jobcentre to refer me to Shaw Trust so I have been with them over 4 years! They help me with interviews and applying and give me a confidence boost!

“ I used to get help from RNID Employment Service before they closed it due to funding withdrawal.

“ The Jobcentre told me I was unemployable because I am deaf/HOH and have physical impairments. They tried to make me do call centre jobs despite being unable to hear phones. They couldn’t make me apply for manual work which was their usual fall-back for deaf people. I eventually got help through Scope’s Leadership Recruitment programme - a paid internship scheme I heard about from Deaf BSL using friends who had used it.

“ Capability Scotland helped me find my first job ever. Since then I finally secured the job I wanted in the end because my first job helped build up my CV and more skills.

72%

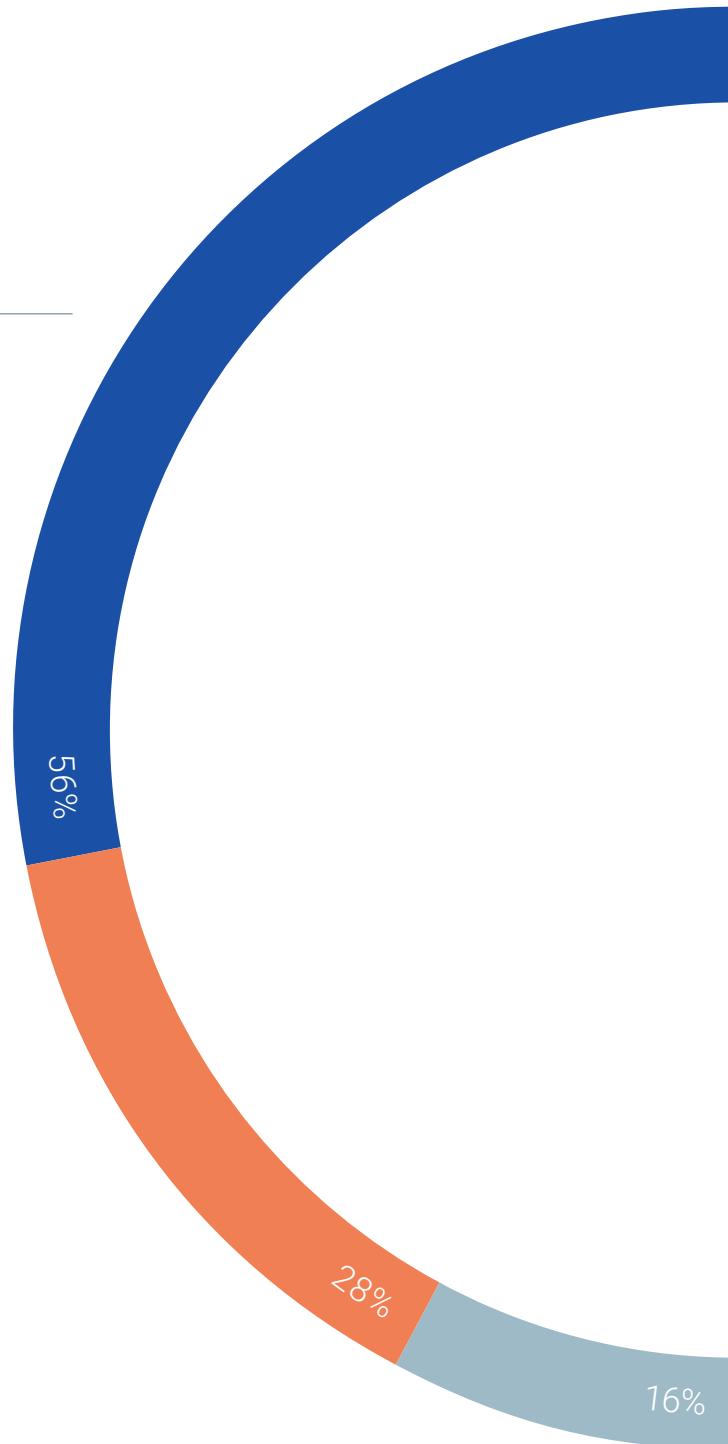
of respondents hadn’t received support finding a job for being deaf



09 | N = 437

## Do you actively look for companies who are experienced in employing deaf people when applying for a job?

- No
- Yes
- Not applicable

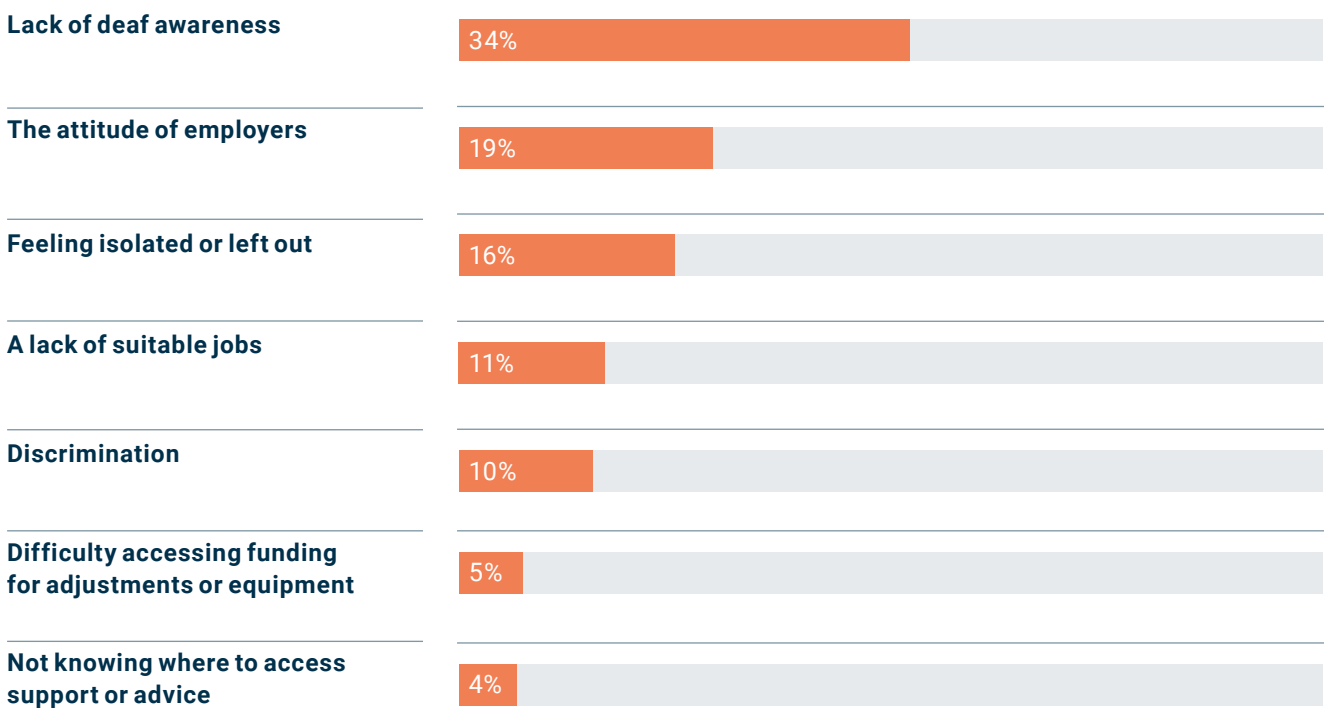


### FURTHER COMMENTS

- “Because you know they’ll have a basic level of awareness and a positive outlook.”
- “I pass over some jobs when “excellent telephone manner” is required. A company experienced with deaf employees will understand the assistive or alternative technologies available and have less bias against a deaf potential employee.”
- “They are hopefully more aware of deaf issues, they would make reasonable adjustments (e.g. job carving so no telephone work required), hopefully more sympathetic and understanding managers and employees.”
- “Because my bad experiences in the past have made me more wary of companies who employ me and may not be honest with me or treat me differently because of my deafness. So I prefer going to a company that is more deaf-friendly but that is very rare now.”
- “In theory I’d expect them to have a clue about basic things like fire alerting and telephony. Sadly this isn’t always the case.”

10 | N = 437

## In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge facing deaf people in the workplace?



### EXCLUDING THE OPTIONS ABOVE, IS THERE ANOTHER CHALLENGE THAT DEAF PEOPLE FACE IN THE WORKPLACE THAT YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT?

“ Self-confidence.

“ Communication barriers.

“ Unsuitable work environments.

### TELL US WHY YOU RANKED 'LACK OF DEAF AWARENESS' AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE DEAF PEOPLE FACE IN THE WORKPLACE?

“ Most people just aren't deaf aware because they likely have little-to-no experience of interacting with deaf people.

“ People are ignorant towards deafness. Because you don't look disabled they see deafness as annoying.

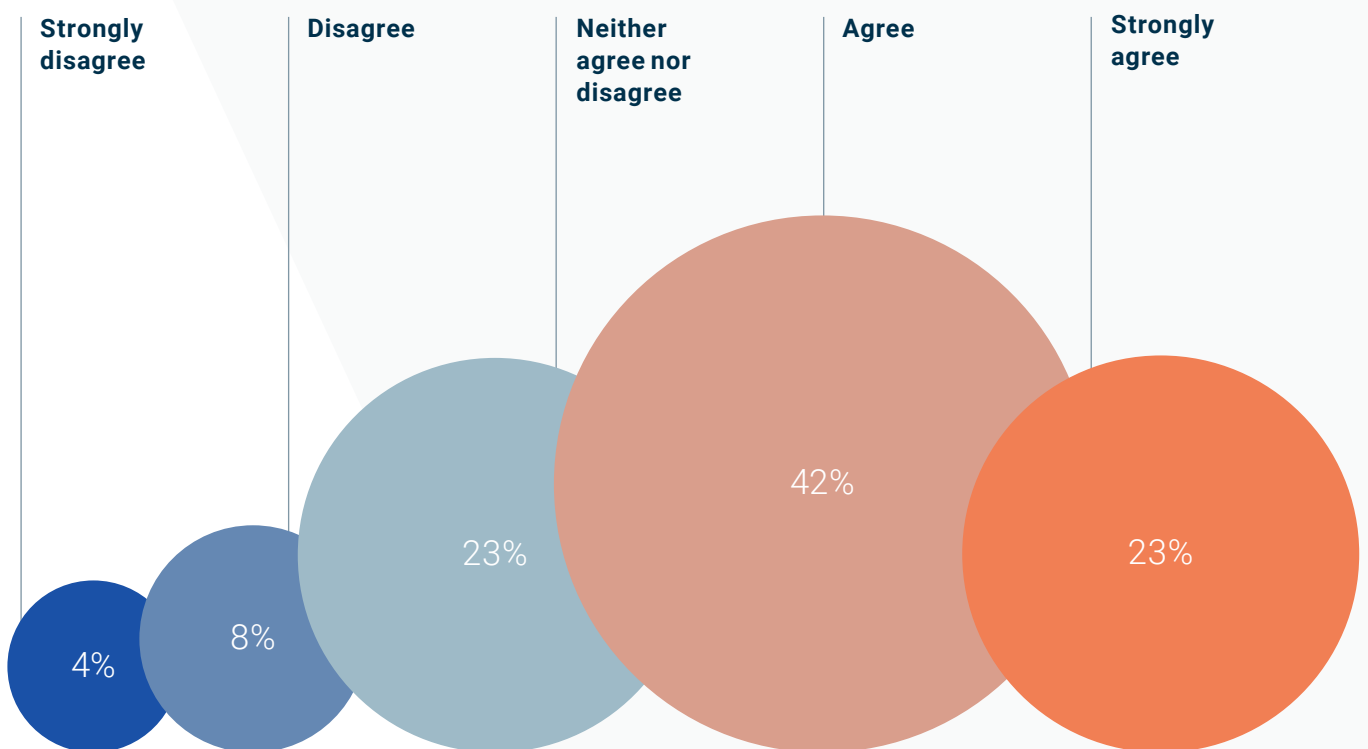
“ A lack of awareness affects all aspects of work including getting the job in the first place.

“ No one knows how to treat you, or talk to you. They have no understanding how hard a typical day at work is for us, we have to concentrate so much more.

“ Because the majority of hearing people are not aware how this can affect deaf/hard of hearing people every day and usually have little or no knowledge of BSL.

11 | N = 437

## Developments in the technology available, (e.g. computers, tablets, smartphones, apps), have made it easier to be deaf in the workplace



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ I am a computer programmer and I work from home. Technology allows me to do this effectively. I communicate via email and Skype (text). It is far better than when I worked in an office and I had to try and understand what people were saying.

“ Yes, in my case as a designer. I was thankful email was around when I started my job in 2000. Now we also have messenger too. I dread to think how I would cope without it.

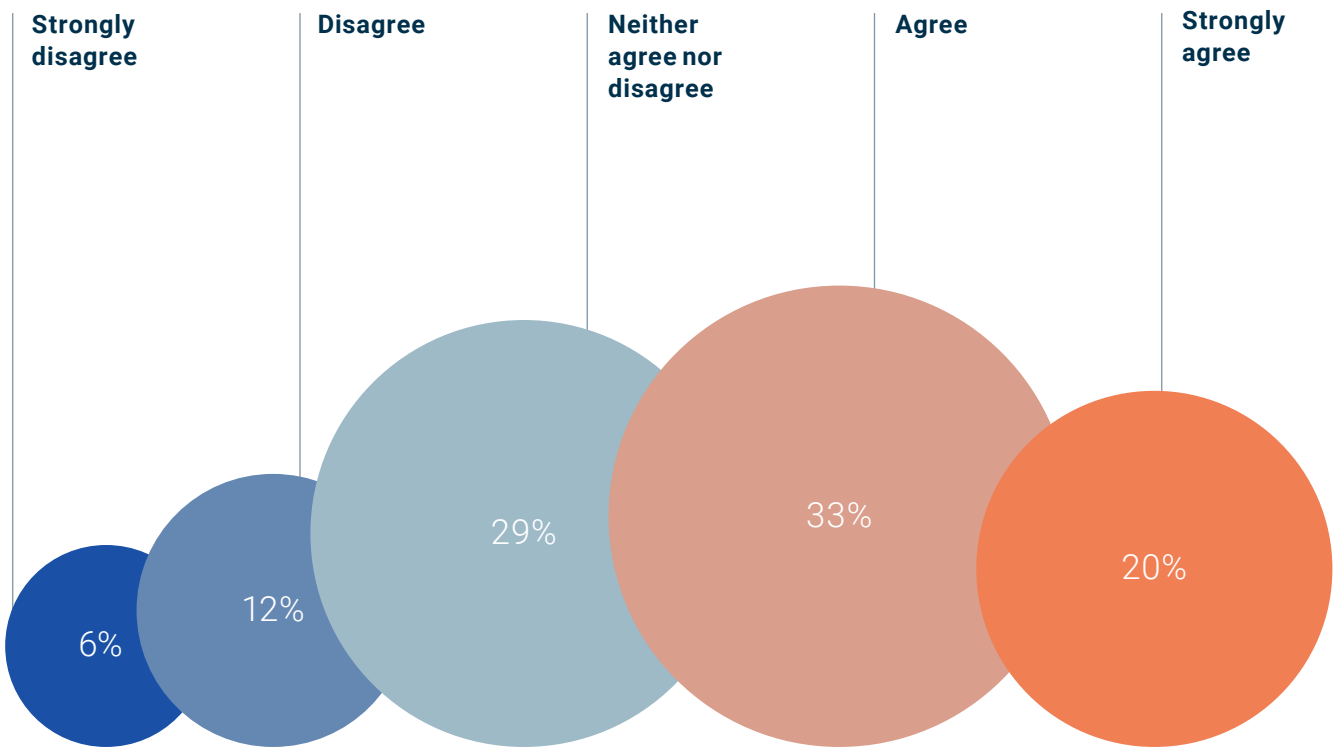
“ Some equipment really does make a difference if you have a supportive manager who will help you apply for it, however it does depend on management attitude. Also with huge cutbacks in grants for adaptations it is harder to get the equipment needed to allow deaf people to make their lives easier/ enter the workforce.

“ Technology is a great leveller but it comes down to the attitude of the employers that needs to be dealt with.

“ Technology isolates everyone, as they interact with the screen instead of each other! This is bad for Deaf Awareness and learning about other people and their lives in real time. Communication between people is vital! This breaks down barriers. Ironically, technology creates a barrier at work.

12 | N = 437

## Colleagues make the effort to communicate with you in an appropriate way for your needs



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ Most of them act like I am a hearing person and get annoyed when I say I don't understand what you are saying. Their response is then often 'oh it doesn't matter'. Having said that I have some really great colleagues also who do their very best and even learned sign language to be able to communicate with me.

“ Some are better than others. Electronic communication levels the playing field to a degree.

“ Wish colleagues would make an effort to communicate with me directly instead of relying on interpreters. If they don't practice their signing, how will they improve?

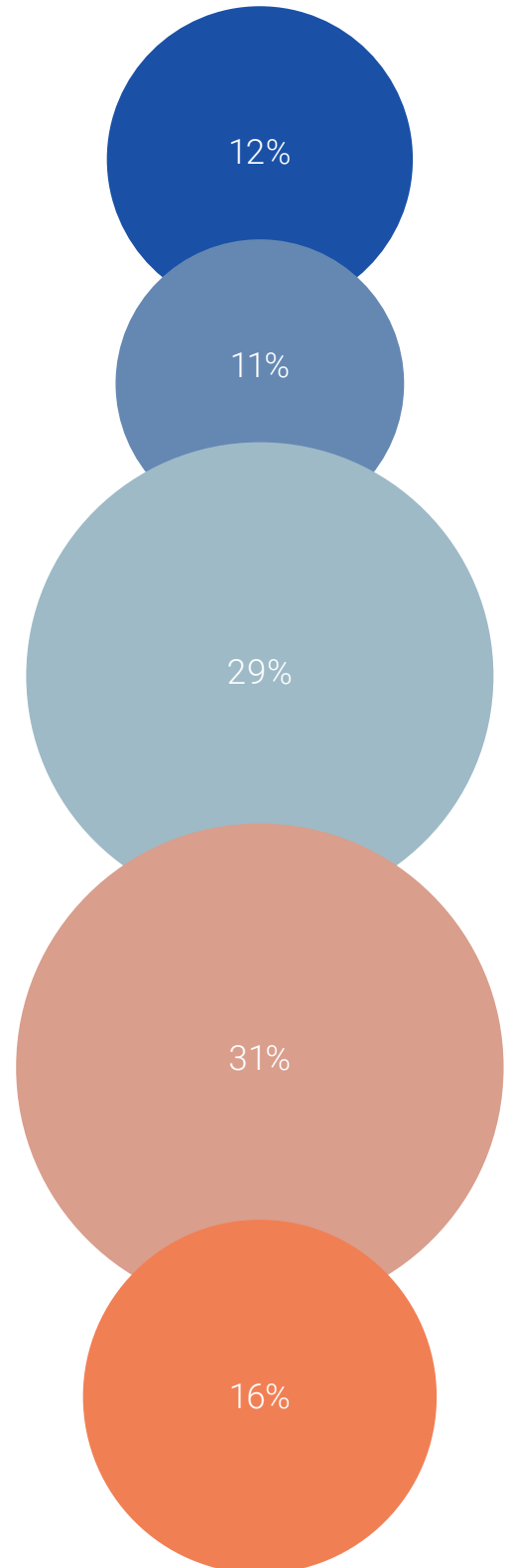
“ It has to be me who needs to be more proactive, insisting for my right to access the communication support provided by a BSL interpreter, and asking for information which is often limited and outdated.

“ This is only because I work with deaf people and we support each other. Previous employers found my hearing loss embarrassing and they were uncomfortable talking to me about it. I felt disadvantaged and defensive as I constantly had to explain if I didn't hear properly. Nobody ever sought advice or information, or told me about Access to Work. I either had to find out everything myself or I didn't get it. I have since learned to manage my own hearing loss and tell people upfront exactly how to help me.

13 | N = 437

## Your employer has made reasonable adjustments for your deafness

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ It took an extremely long time to get the equipment that AtW recommended because my manager had no previous experience with ordering equipment and when she asked for help other departments would not order it for her and take it from her budget afterwards so it took over a year to get things in place and that was only because I got a senior matron involved who was truly a great support to me and as soon as she said get it - people ran.

“ No real assessment was made or support given in my workplace to adapt to my hearing loss. When I made suggestions on what I would find easier and helpful I was knocked down immediately and told it was not suitable even though it was just something simple such as taking handover in a quieter area, so I could hear better.

“ In some retail jobs, the role I've shared with others involves answering customer calls. I have been excused from having to do this but encouraged to try when there is no one else available. There has been no assistive technology installed, but this is understandable as a part time worker in a store with several phones. Online training was provided, but the videos were not subtitled. I was promised a transcript but I left the position before this materialised.

“ In the absence of AtW funding my employer met the difference and ensured all my needs were met.

“ Access to Work helped my employer to make adjustments for my deafness.

14 | N = 437

## I feel positive about the future of deaf employees in the workplace

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

### FURTHER COMMENTS

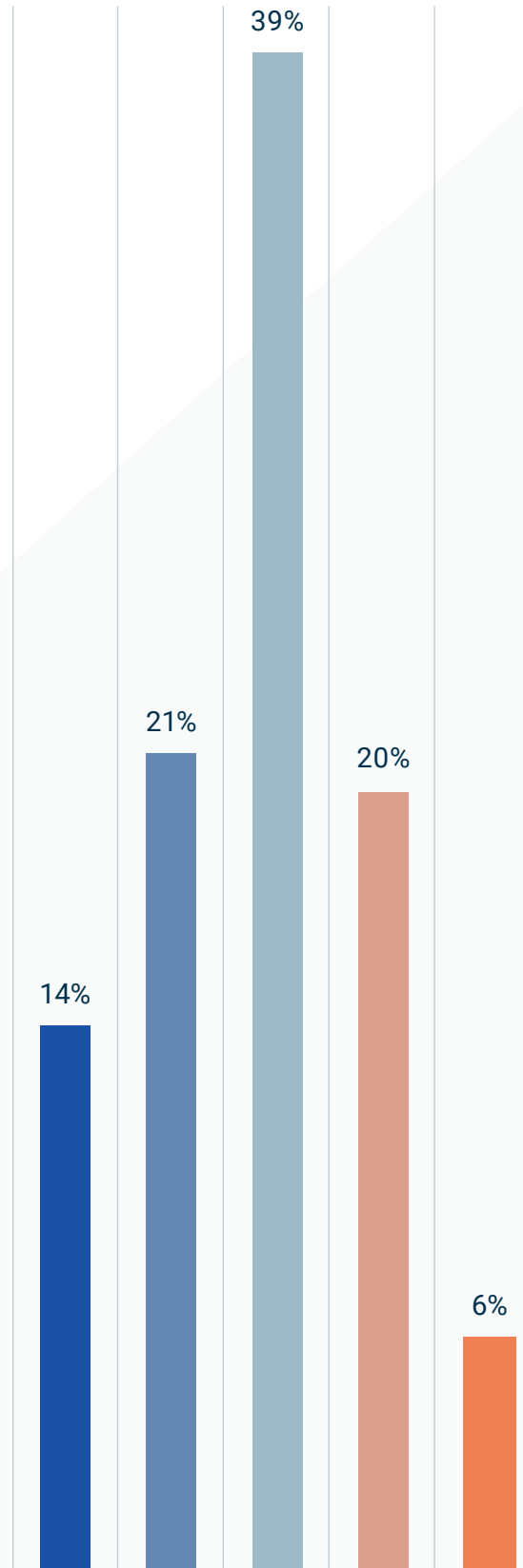
“ There are still many Deaf people struggling to gain employment. I feel that if my job was a different role to the one I have I may not be so fortunate.

“ Legislation is there to help with discrimination, but when did you ever know of it being enforced?

“ I think it's going to be very slow before Deaf people feel they are just like their hearing counterparts with regards to equal access to everything and people stop discriminating thinking there is no way you can do the job as well as they can because of your deafness.

“ The EU referendum has left the door open for the UK government to erode the rights of the disabled.

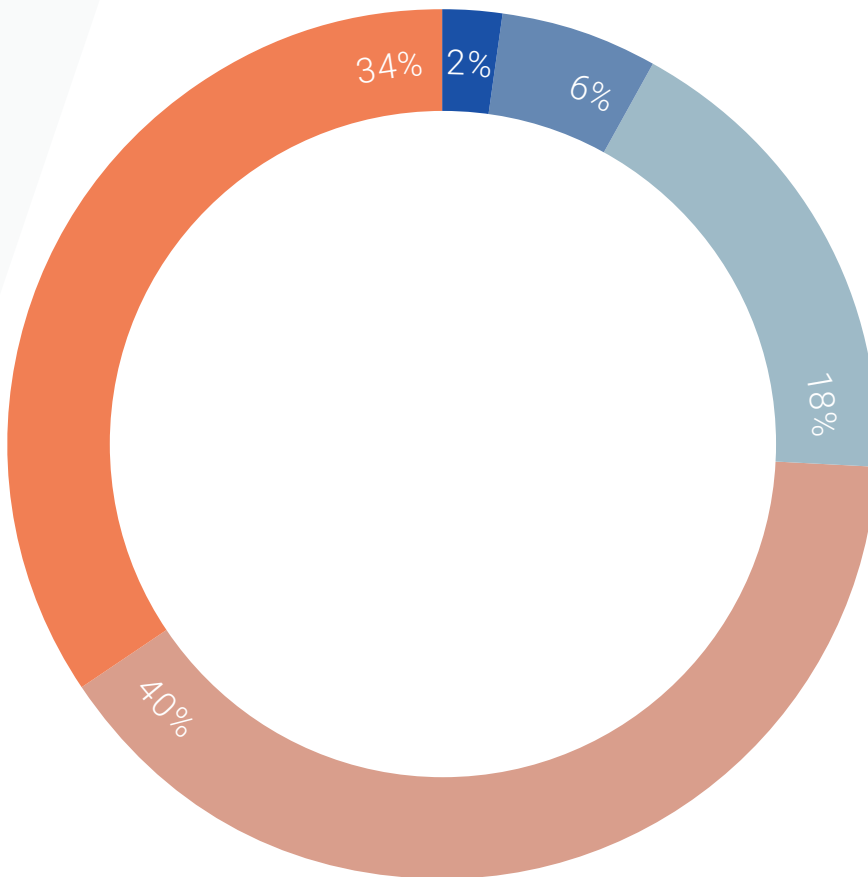
“ I am unsure about the changes to Access to Work, but I like to think that attitudes towards deaf people will improve over time.



15 | N = 437

## I am confident I have the skills (job applications, interviews) to look for work

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ Job application is hard because this required BSL translation and written down via BSL Interpreter or Deaf Advisor. The interview - I can manage fine because I have no fear if I got the job or not. It is no matter for me because I am currently employed but if I want to work for someone then this is different.

“ I am very qualified and have a vast experience. I just struggle to find a job which can adapt to my deafness and have had to reduce considerably my ambitions and job prospects.

“ Although, I have difficulty with application forms, I need English translation via BSL for reading the application and filling in the form. I had no AtW and I would receive no support, Jobcentre do not provide interpreters.

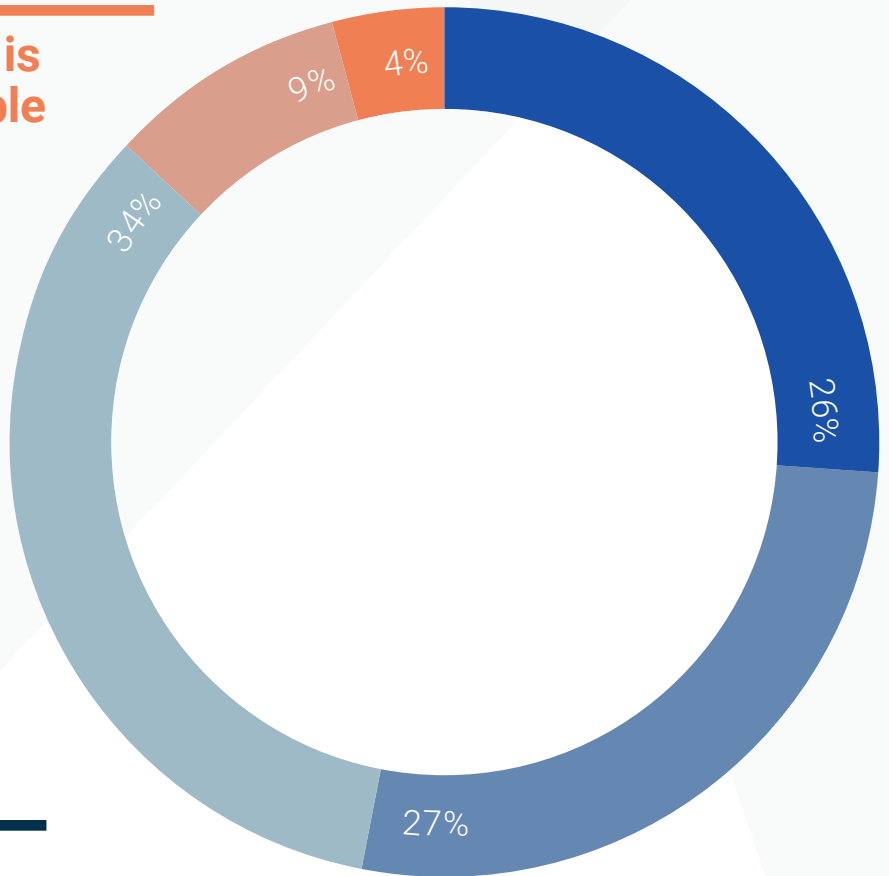
“ I have worked so hard to build a relevant skill set and experience which makes me marketable to hiring managers. The only thing is the lack of awareness on what a deaf employee can do, especially with the AtW scheme.

“ I only apply for roles that are suitable for me with my hearing loss. This means that I do not apply for the roles that I was trained to do i.e. secretary and administration.

16 | N = 437

## As a deaf person, there is enough support available to look for work

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ Disability Support Workers are being phased out and replaced by people who are not fully aware of disability issues or have in-depth knowledge of these issues. This is a disgraceful situation, as disabled people need adequate support from someone fully trained and not just been to a seminar on disability issue awareness.

“ I don't think there is enough support. It all depends where you live. And the money spent to go there and back home. Not everyone can afford it but luckily I can - however, it's a problem because it depends on what benefits you can get to access the support.

“ Useless - my parents pay for interpreters.

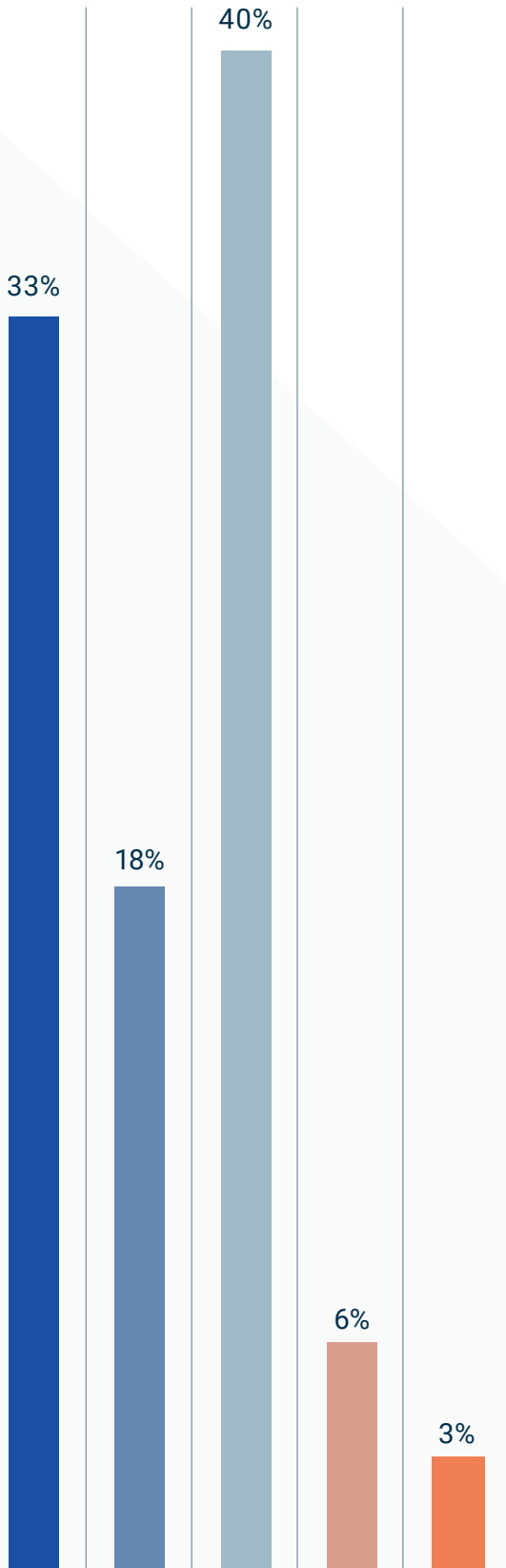
“ A lot of recruitment companies and employees require you to call them and refuse email communication. They don't understand it's extremely difficult to communicate by phone, and it makes you feel written off. Although they aren't allowed to say because of disability discrimination, some companies won't employ a deaf person.

“ We need Access to Work to provide support from the start in searching for jobs, making calls for applications, interviews so on.

53%

of respondents said there isn't enough support available to look for work





17 | N = 437

## Support from organisations (such as Jobcentre, recruitment agencies, etc.) has provided me with the right support to find work

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ I have never had appropriate support from Jobcentre or recruitment agencies as my knowledge is more in-depth than theirs regarding deafness. “Teaching Grandma to suck eggs” comes to mind.

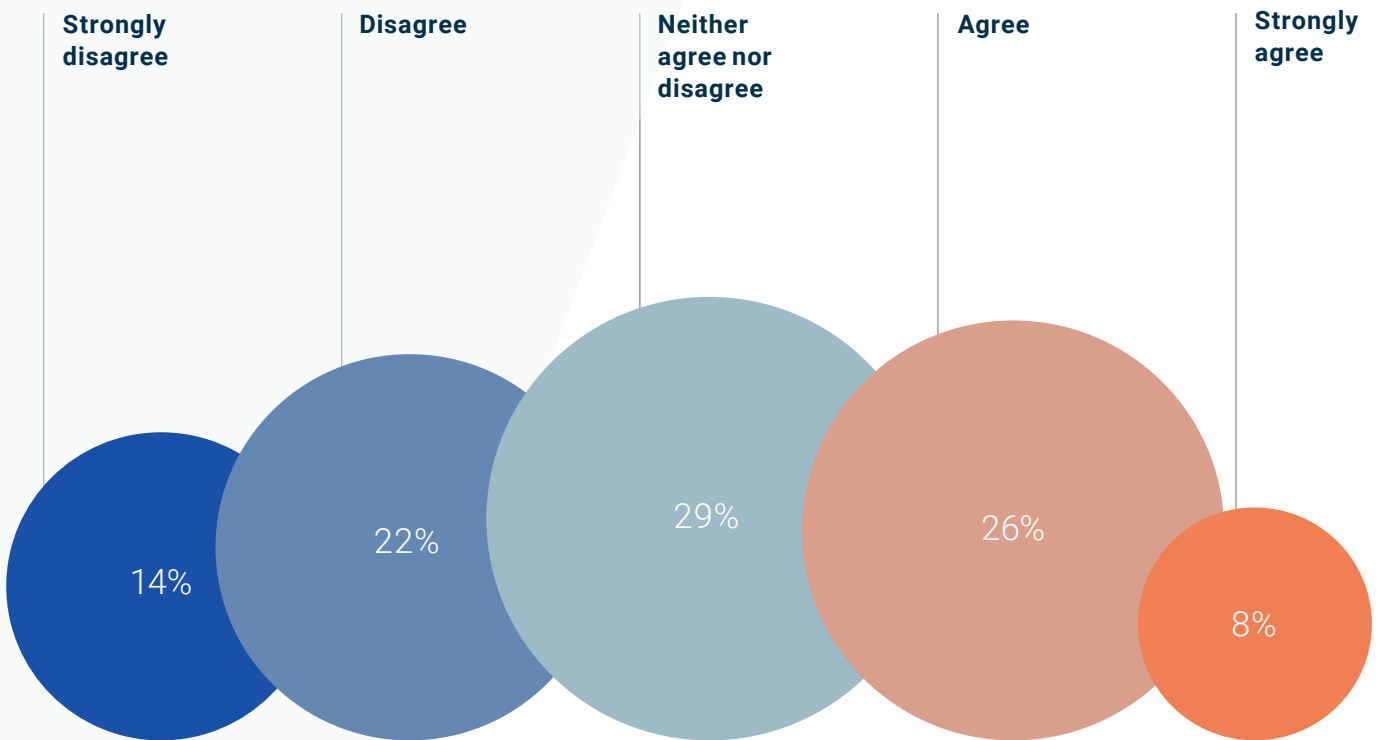
“ Depends on the attitude and awareness of the staff from Jobcentre. Some don't really know fully about providing interpreters due to Equality Act 2010.

“ Support provided by Jobcentre is very, very poor and time wasting. Recruitment agencies only respond if you are a good fit for the roles they are recruiting for their clients. They are driven by bonus and commission from their clients. Overall they are only really representing their clients not job seekers.

“ Jobcentre Plus is atrocious - they have no deaf awareness at all!! Their treatment of deaf people is disgraceful. Recruitment agencies have never helped me find a job and my hearing loss has baffled them - they didn't know what to do with me. I have a Master's Degree in Business Administration and 25 years' corporate experience at senior level - I have no desire to work as a cleaner just because I have hearing loss!

18 | N = 437

## I know where to find support which will help me find a job



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ There are some places you can go, but the job centre has now cut all Disability Support Workers and replaced them with general staff. This will in turn lead to lack of adequate support/ understanding for people with disabilities - probably leading to sanctioning when they are made to feel like they're not co-operating, but what in actual fact is happening is the person isn't adequately trained to understand the issues the disabled person really faces.

“ I don't know who can help me apart from people I met in charity gatherings. Information is not relayed by any public services that are dealing daily with deaf and hard of hearing people. Leaving them to struggle to find information and fight even harder to find a job and fit in.

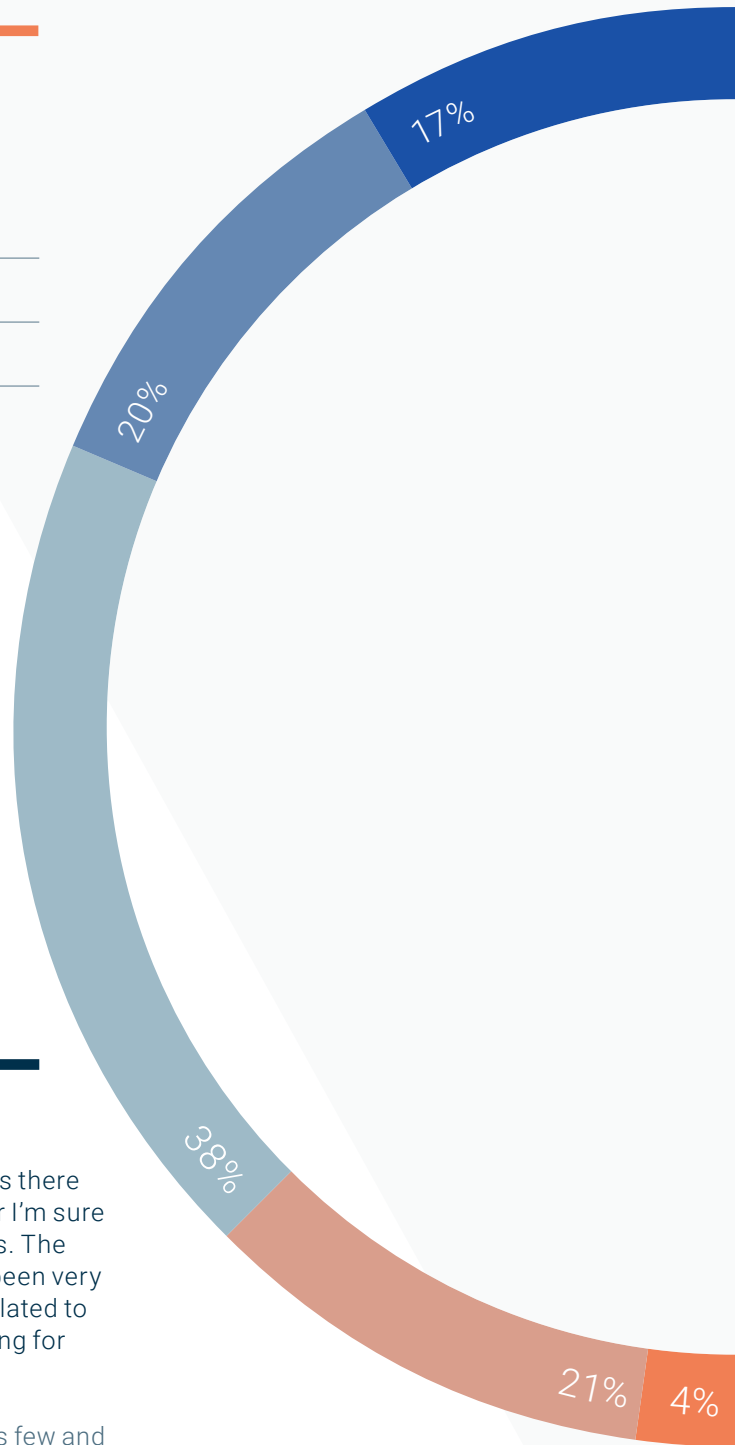
“ I will use Jobcentre but I am not confident about the support they give to deaf people. I will use Facebook and some online deaf organisations and groups to help me search for new job.

“ I am aware of things like National Careers Service, but have found every encounter with them throughout the years to be ineffective. It may be useful for someone just starting out in work, but I have never gained anything from a session with them. There is a job club in my town which I have attended but is not that effective as the sessions are short and the staff have too many demands on their time to effectively support everyone. I am unaware of any support for deaf people in my local area.

19 | N = 437

## There is specialist support available to deaf people to assist with job seeking

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree



### FURTHER COMMENTS

“ There is support for deaf people but I don't think there are enough people who understand deaf awareness.

“ Not enough specialists to work with deaf people. And where are they? I don't see enough marketing and promotion that the support is available for us.

“ There are only a few of them and they seem to be funded by small grants (not by Jobcentres which they should be) which means they are only temporary services.

“ Don't know if it's there or not. However I'm sure there are organisations. The hearing aid clinic has been very helpful with matters related to me being hard of hearing for all matters.

“ There is, but it is few and far between and many Deaf people are unaware of where support is. Also many companies use email and this does not give access to those with poor reading and writing skills. There needs to be more BSL videos.

# 7. Glossary

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## **ACCESS TO WORK (ATW)**

A programme run by the Department of Work and Pensions that provides support to disabled people to help them overcome work-related obstacles arising from their disability, if it is likely to last for 12 months or longer.

## **BONE ANCHORED HEARING AID**

A new type of hearing aid that enters its sound output into the cochlea by vibrating the mastoid bone (the large bony mass just behind the ear) instead of by directing amplified sound at the ear drum.

## **BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL)**

A form of sign language developed in the UK and fundamentally different from American Sign Language.

## **COCHLEAR IMPLANT**

A device that can be surgically implanted into a person's cochlea to stimulate it to cause hearing. It consists of a tiny receiver which is placed under the skin in the bony part behind the ear.

## **DEAF WITH A CAPITAL "D"**

Used to refer to people who are culturally Deaf. These people actively use BSL; they see themselves as being culturally Deaf and part of the Deaf community.

## **DEAFBLIND**

Having a severe impairment of both hearing and vision.

## **DISCRIMINATION**

Unequal or unfair treatment that can be based on a range of grounds, such as age, ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

## **THE EQUALITY ACT 2010**

Provides protection against discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity for people who are disabled.

## **JOBCENTRE PLUS (JOBCENTRE)**

A government-funded employment agency and social security office whose aim it is to help people of working age find employment in the UK.

## **MINICOM**

A small electronic typewriter and screen linked to a telephone system, enabling people with hearing or speech difficulties to send and receive messages.

## **NATIONAL CAREERS SERVICE**

The publicly funded careers service for adults and young people (aged 13 or over) in England. Launched in April 2012, it brings together elements of previous publicly funded careers services for adults and young people.

## **SIGN SUPPORTED ENGLISH (SSE)**

Another form of sign language used in Britain. SSE uses the same signs as BSL but they are used in the same order as spoken English. SSE is used to support spoken English, especially within schools where children with hearing impairments are learning English grammar alongside their signing, or by people who mix mainly with hearing people.

# 8. Resources

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## GETTING HELP FROM THE JOB CENTRE

This information can help deaf people understand the level of service a Jobcentre should offer and what they can do if it's not yet fully accessible.

Read more [here](#).

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## TELLING YOUR EMPLOYER YOU HAVE HEARING LOSS

This information can help deaf people understand their rights in the workplace and the different types of support available, so that they can talk to your employer with confidence.

Read more [here](#).

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## BDA CALLS FOR REFORM OF EQUALITY ACT

Read BDA's Submission Paper - "Equality Act 2010 and Disability - To the House of Lords' Select Committee" [here](#).

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## HIDDEN DISADVANTAGE

Action on Hearing Loss conducted a survey to explore the employment experiences of people with hearing loss. The survey asked respondents about their employment experiences, the types of support and adjustments people made use of at work and views on barriers to employment.

Read Hidden Disadvantage [here](#).

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## THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

You'll find this factsheet useful if you want an outline of how the Equality Act 2010 protects people who are deaf or have a hearing loss from discrimination.

Read the factsheet [here](#).

# 9. Advisory group



A national charity since 1911

## **ACTION ON HEARING LOSS**

Action on Hearing Loss is a national charity helping people confronting deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss to live the life they choose.

<http://actiononhearingloss.org.uk>



## **BRITISH DEAF ASSOCIATION**

The British Deaf Association (BDA) is the largest Deaf-led charity in the UK. The BDA's stands for Deaf Equality, Access, and Freedom of choice, and their primary goal is to achieve legal status for BSL.

<http://bda.org.uk>



## **SIGNHEALTH**

The Deaf Health Charity SignHealth is a national charity that aims to improve the health and well-being of deaf people.

<http://signhealth.org.uk>



Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD)

A society where deaf people have equal access, rights and citizenship

## **SCOTTISH COUNCIL ON DEAFNESS**

SCoD is the lead organisation for deaf issues in Scotland.

<http://scod.org.uk>

## *Wales Council For Deaf People*

## **WALES COUNCIL FOR DEAF PEOPLE**

Wales Council for Deaf People are an umbrella association of organisations both voluntary and statutory working in the field of hearing loss and representing people who are Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and Deaf/blind.

<http://wcdeaf.org.uk>

The logo for totalJobs, featuring the word "totalJobs" in white lowercase letters on a bright green rectangular background.

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**This report and other related documents  
can be downloaded from [totaljobs.com/insidejob](http://totaljobs.com/insidejob)**

If you require the survey raw data,  
please contact [martin.hofschroer@totaljobsgroup.com](mailto:martin.hofschroer@totaljobsgroup.com)

For reaction to the survey data from journalist Charlie Swinbourne, visit:  
<http://totaljobs.com/insidejob/deaf-employee-experiences/>

This project was undertaken in loving memory of Shirley Hofschroer,  
a dedicated BSL teacher and assessor.

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