

# Moving to Inclusion

## Focus on...Disability

A statistical examination of economic  
exclusion in the South West of England

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**May 2009**





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## OVERVIEW

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- The definition of disability accepted by the Government for the purposes of assessing equality including the Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets is that of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). This defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’.
- 900,000 South West residents were disabled in 2006/2007. At just under one-fifth, the proportion of the South West population with a disability is the same as the Great Britain average<sup>1</sup> (Section 2.2.1).
- More than 450,000 people of working age are disabled in the South West and a further 110,000 have a long-term illness or disability that affects the amount or type of work they can do but are not covered by the legislation (Table 1).
- 15% of the region’s working population has a disability. Disability rates are highest in Plymouth, Cornwall and Dorset (Figure 1).
- Incidence of disability rises with age and almost half of working age disabled people in the South West are aged 50 and over (Section 2.2.4).
- Just over half of disabled people in the South West are in employment. This is considerably lower than the employment rate of non-disabled people but higher than that for disabled people in the UK. The disability employment gap is larger than that for other equality strands and has narrowed in the UK (Figure 2).
- Disabled people are less likely to be employed in managerial and professional occupations than non-disabled people and are more likely than non-disabled people to work part time (Section 3.4.1).
- Almost one-fifth of unemployed people in the region are disabled and the unemployment rate for disabled people is almost twice that for non-disabled people (Figure 5).
- 6% of the working age population are claiming incapacity benefits. This figure varies from 2% for the Isles of Scilly to 10% in Plymouth (Figure 9).
- 45% of disabled people in the South West are economically inactive. This is lower than the national rate but more than three times higher than the regional rate for non-disabled people (Figure 10).

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<sup>1</sup> The General Household Survey offers an alternative estimate of disability in the regional population. According to this source 19% of South West residents had a limiting longstanding illness in 2007, compared to 18% for Great Britain.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Purpose of this report

This report is part of a suite of thematic statistical briefings that individually and collectively present a portrait of economic disadvantage in the South West through the lenses of gender, age, disability and ethnicity. The work updates and extends the quantitative element of the 2003 *Moving Towards Inclusion* report and shares the aims and intended audience of its predecessor, that is to “offer as comprehensive a picture as possible of current levels of disadvantage amongst the population of the South West” with the principal aim of ensuring that ESF activity is informed by robust and accessible evidence.

Whilst those involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ESF programmes remain key audiences for this report, it is also hoped that the focus on equality strands and indicators that provide a regional and sub-regional perspective on the work and education equality domains identified in the 2007 Equalities Review will provide a foundation for further work in this emerging area, by quantifying the scale and nature of inequality in the South West as manifested in differences in labour market performance.

## 1.2 Scope and focus

The 2003 *Moving Towards Inclusion* report provided rich descriptions of the barriers many individuals face to social inclusion. It provided a short history of the social inclusion policy agenda and described some of the problems in defining and researching what it means, or feels like to be excluded. The conceptualizations, barriers and policy issues identified in the 2003 report remain as valid today as they were six years ago and therefore the previous report is commended to those who wish to explore these issues in more detail.

This report, rather, has a quantitative emphasis and its scope and focus is informed to a large extent by the equality strands and domains that make up the Equality Measurement Framework (EMF). The report focuses on the gender, age, disability and ethnicity domains of the EMF. Faith & religion is not included because of the dearth of reliable published labour market data at the regional level – although the Labour Force Survey does collect some information. There is very little information available even at the national level about individuals’ sexual orientation and how this impacts on the extent and nature of labour market participation. Where data allows, attention within these strands has also been paid to more narrowly defined ESF priority groups, with sections on lone parents, older workers and young people at risk

of exclusion as well as black and minority ethnic groups, and people with a disability. The gender section and age section also include an examination of those who do not have Level 2 qualifications.

Given the intended ESF applicability of this report, the focus is solely on the employment and, to a lesser extent, education experiences and outcomes of the working age population, as opposed to the broader dimensions of exclusion and inequity that may impact at younger and older ages. Very broadly therefore the analysis is confined to the productive and valued activities, and education domains of the EMF. Furthermore, data limitations mean it is possible to provide only partial coverage of these two domains due to a lack of regional data. A project setting out the national indicators that will underpin the EMF has yet to set out its prescription, but provisional 'spotlight' national indicators for the productive and value activities domain are: the employment rate, risk of low earnings and the pay gap, horizontal occupational segregation, discrimination in employment and unpaid care and free time. Of these, only the employment rate, the pay gap and the share of managers and professionals in the employed workforce (a measure of horizontal occupational segregation) are readily available from NOMIS. Our analysis supplements these three indicators with indicators of part-time working, job-relating training, unemployment and receipt of out-of-work benefits, economic inactivity and highest qualification.

### 1.3 Analytical approach

The two issues – exclusion and equity – are explored together within the framework. This is done by describing for each indicator, firstly the rate or level (for example, of the employment rate) *across* equality strands, and secondly, the difference – or gap – in 'performance' on each measures *within* an equality stand. This approach is particularly helpful when making comparisons over time and determining whether an improvement, for example in the employment rate in absolute terms from say 70% to 75%, is accompanied by a narrowing of the 'gap' in employment rates of the 'best' and 'worst' performing groups.

The reliability of labour market data for equality strands at the sub-national and especially the sub-regional level is a serious impediment to drawing firm conclusions about the scale of disadvantage or inequity at the local level. This is because the information used to measure progress against many indicators comes from surveys as opposed to the Census or administrative sources. This means that the estimates – and they are only that – are subject to a margin of error. In conventional statistical terminology this is called a 'confidence interval' and refers to the range of values which includes the unknown 'true' value at any given level of confidence. Usually this is 95%, and means that if the survey was repeated 100 times, the survey estimate would lie within the confidence interval 95 times. Confidence intervals, therefore,

summarize the variability in survey estimates and are important when comparing estimates over time, or between localities or within and across equality strands. Technically speaking, if two confidence intervals overlap, then the difference between the two is not statistically significant. This report contains published confidence intervals to illustrate – for the first time – how the variability of survey estimates restricts what conclusions can be drawn from the data.

## 2. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

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### 2.1 Definition and measurement

The definition of disability accepted by the Government for the purposes of assessing equality including the Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets is that of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). This defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. The impairment must affect one of the following: mobility; manual dexterity; physical coordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects; speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; perception of the risk of personal danger. The disability must have lasted or be expected to last for at least 12 months.

Some surveys – including the Labour Force Survey - also ask people whether they have a long-term health problem or disability that affects the *amount* or *type* of work they can do<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.2 Prevalence

#### 2.2.1 General population

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) use estimates of disability derived from the Family Resources Survey as these are ‘most closely aligned to the DDA definition of disability’<sup>3</sup>. According to this definition (and source), 900,000 South West residents were disabled in 2006/2007. The proportion of the South West population with a disability (18%) is the same as the Great Britain average<sup>4</sup>. In 2006/7, un-standardized rates were highest in the North West and Merseyside (21%) and lowest in London (15%)<sup>5</sup>.

#### 2.2.2 Working age population

According to the Labour Force Survey, over 450,000 people of working age are covered by the provisions of the DDA in the South West (Table 1) and a further 110,000 have a long-term illness or disability that affects the amount or type of work

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<sup>2</sup> For further information on disability estimates and definitions see the DWP ‘Users Guide to Disability Estimates and Definitions’ (2004) <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/ih2003-2004/IH128userguide.pdf> or the full report <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/ih2003-2004/IH128.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Personal communication from the ODI on 20 April 2009.

<sup>4</sup> The General Household Survey offers an alternative estimate of disability in the regional population. According to this source 19% of South West residents had a limiting longstanding illness in 2007, compared to 18% for Great Britain.

<sup>5</sup> Limiting longstanding illness, General Household Survey, 2007

they can do but are not covered by the legislation. While the number of DDA disabled people of working age in the region has increased in recent years (along with the working age population as a whole) the proportion of the working age population with a disability has remained constant<sup>6</sup> at around 15% (Table 1). This is consistent with the National Statistician's observation that "disability prevalence rates [in the UK] have been stable for the last decade"<sup>7</sup>.

**Table 1: Disability in the South West and UK**

| Year           | South West     |             | United Kingdom |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
|                | Number         | Rate        | Rate           |
| 2005           | 439,000        | 14.6        | 15.3           |
| 2006           | 453,600        | 14.9        | 15.3           |
| 2007           | 465,400        | 15.2        | 15.3           |
| <b>2007/08</b> | <b>452,200</b> | <b>14.7</b> | <b>15.3</b>    |

Source: Annual Population Survey downloaded from [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

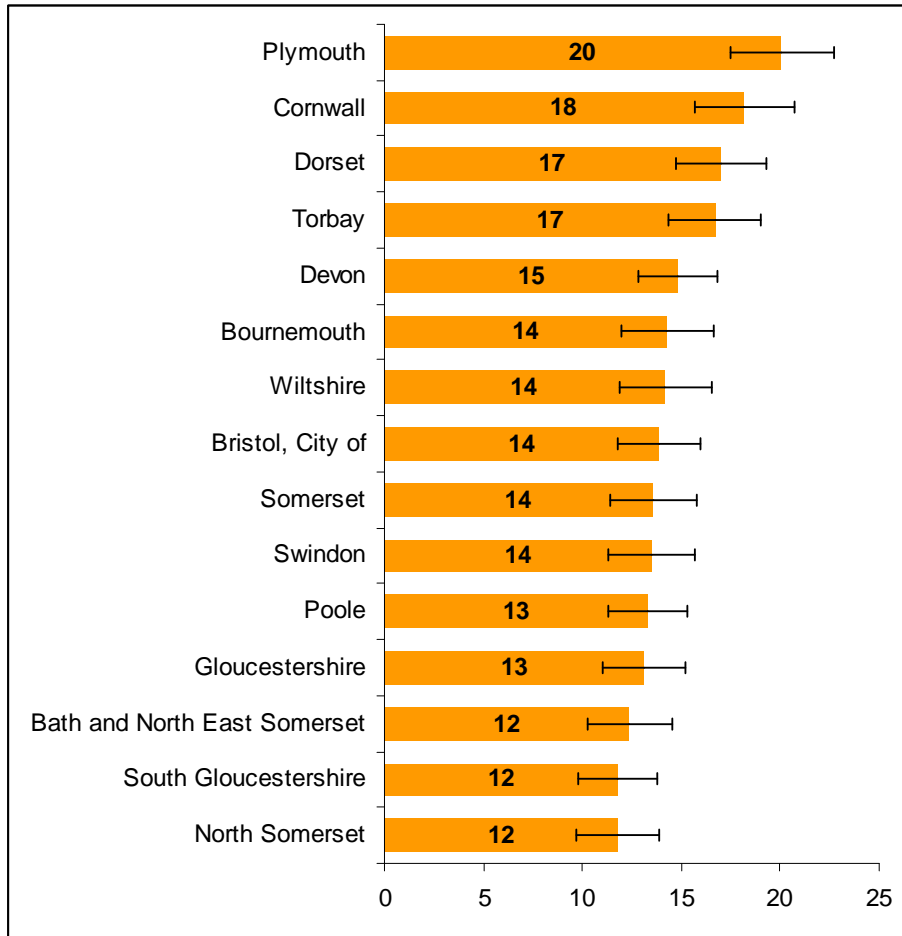
### 2.2.3 Local authority area

The incidence of disability among the working age population varies considerably across higher tier local authority areas of the South West (Figure 1) although a degree of caution is needed when interpreting the estimates due to the (relatively) large confidence intervals attributable to them. Notwithstanding this, disability rates are statistically higher in Plymouth, Cornwall and Dorset than North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset (Figure 1).

<sup>6</sup> The estimates are subject to confidence intervals of  $\pm 0.6$  percent.

<sup>7</sup> Dunnell, K. (2008) Diversity and different experiences in the UK. National Statistician's Annual Article on Society. Office for National Statistics  
[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/nojournal/NSA\\_article.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/nojournal/NSA_article.pdf)

**Figure 1: Prevalence of disability within the working age population; higher tier local authority area, September 2007 to October 2008, South West**



Source: Annual Population Survey (NOMIS)

#### 2.2.4 Demographic characteristics

The incidence of disability rises with age. During 2007/8, 6% of working age South West residents aged 16 to 24 years had a disability, compared with 13% of 25 to 49 year olds and 25% of residents aged between 50 and state pension age.

Furthermore, the age distribution of disabled working age residents in the South West is older than that of non-disabled residents, with almost half (46%) of working age disabled people being 50 and over compared to one-quarter (24%) of non-disabled people. White working age South West residents were more likely to be disabled than those from a non-white ethnic group (15% compared to 9%). The proportion of men and women with a disability was the same, at 15%.

## 3. EMPLOYMENT AND JOB QUALITY

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### 3.1 Introduction

In this section:

- UK trends in the employment of disabled people;
- The employment gap in the South West;
- Disabled people and job quality.

### 3.2 UK employment trends

As with other equality strands, official estimates for the employment of disabled people are drawn from the Labour Force Survey. The official measure used to monitor progress towards the PSA target includes only those who are covered by the provisions of the DDA 1995<sup>8</sup>.

Important notice: Annual Population Survey employment estimates for 'disabled' people generated by NOMIS include people who are 'work-limiting disabled only'. To generate estimates consistent with the PSA target, both 'DDA disabled' and 'DDA and work-limiting disabled' options need to be selected in the variable menu and the combined employment level and rates calculated manually.

The PSA [number] target calls for an increase in the employment rate of disabled people and a reduction in the difference between the employment rate of disabled people and the overall rate. According to DWP's *Opportunity for All: Indicators Update 2007*, the employment rate for disabled people increased by nine percentage points between 1998 and 2007 with the employment gap narrowing by eight percentage points over the period<sup>9</sup>. Employment rates for disabled people are lower than those for any other DWP-defined disadvantaged group<sup>10</sup> and the 'employment gap' wider (DWP, 2007).

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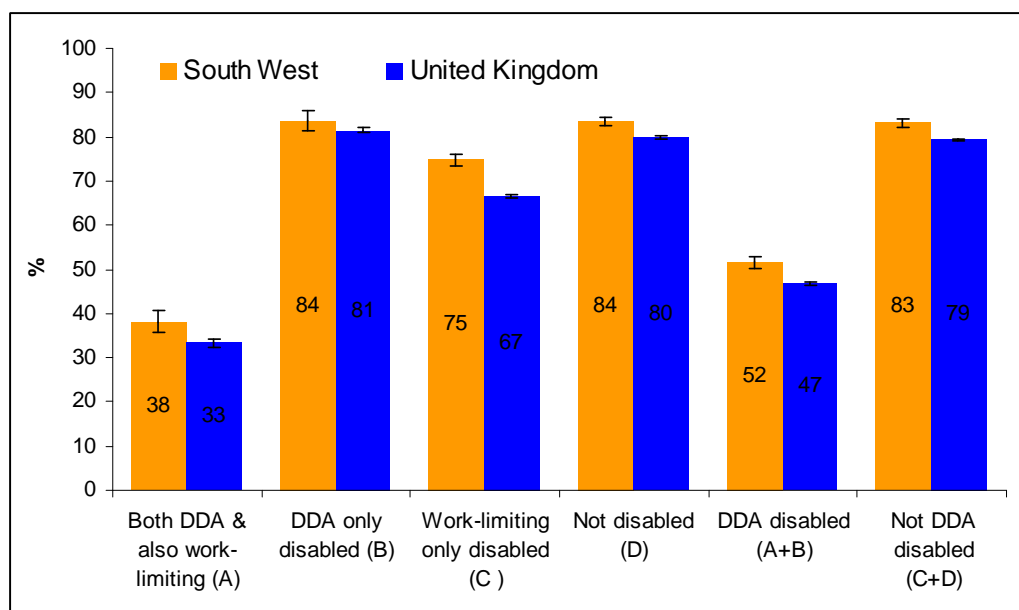
<sup>8</sup> See page 23 of [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr\\_csr07\\_psa8.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pbr_csr07_psa8.pdf) and page 54 of <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/ofa/reports/2007/OpportunityforAll2007.pdf>. Note: As the definitions have change so Box 1 is incorrect. <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/ih2003-2004/IH128userguide.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) also monitors the employment situation of disabled people. See <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/research/indicators/b1.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> The others are the over 50s, ethnic minorities, lone parents and the lowest qualified.

The official employment rates quoted above, however, are not without controversy. A recent DWP-sponsored report produced by Berthoud<sup>11</sup> claims that the Labour Force Survey 'DDA' definition used by the DWP and other government departments ('DDA disabled' in Figure 2) offers a "seriously misleading exaggeration of the actual employment rate of disabled people". This is because the definition of disability used includes people with low levels of impairment (DDA only disabled in Figure 2) and with minimal employment disadvantage. Applying a more precise and narrow definition of disability - to include those who are both DDA disabled and work-limiting disabled - generates UK employment rates for disabled people that are 14 percentage points lower than the 'conventional' measure. This Labour Force Survey-based result of 33% is broadly comparable to the 29% that Berthoud generated from Family Resources Survey data when advocating a similar, narrow measure.

**Figure 2: Employment rates by disability definition; South West and United Kingdom, September 2007 to October 2008**



Source: Annual Population Survey (NOMIS)

Research has shown that disabled peoples' job prospects vary widely according to their condition and the type and severity of their impairments with only 26% of those with depression in employment compared with 63% of those with difficulty in hearing<sup>12</sup>. These findings are consistent with Berthoud's<sup>13</sup> findings: certain

<sup>11</sup> Berthoud, R. (2006) The employment rates of disabled people. Department for Work and Pensions. Research Report No. 298 <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2005-2006/rrep298.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Dunnell, K. (2008) Diversity and different experiences in the UK. National Statistician's Annual Article on Society. Office for National Statistics [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/nojournal/NSA\\_article.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/articles/nojournal/NSA_article.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Berthoud, R. (2006) The employment rates of disabled people. Department for Work and Pensions. Research Report No. 298 <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2005-2006/rrep298.pdf>

conditions, and especially mental health, were more associated with poor employment prospects than others (e.g. skin conditions); certain types of impairment (e.g. locomotor and intellectual) were more disadvantaging than others (e.g. hearing and disfigurement); and the more severe an individual's impairment, the poorer their job prospects were.

Berthoud was also able to isolate the employment penalty associated with disability by employing multiple regression techniques. This showed that as disabled people tended to have some unfavourable demographic and economic characteristics (i.e. tended to be older and less well qualified) the average employment probability of disabled people would have been seven percentage points lower, at only 69%, even if they had not been disabled. Therefore, the average employment disadvantage associated with impairment – the employment gap – was lower than that implied by a 'simple' comparison of un-standardized rates.

The regression technique also allowed him to isolate the relative importance of disability, and demographic and economic characteristics in determining an individual's probability of being in work. This led to three findings: firstly, economic influences have a stronger impact on the outcomes for severely disabled people than among non-disabled people or mildly disabled people; secondly, most disabled people have very poor probabilities of securing work<sup>14</sup>; and thirdly, there is such a wide variation in the extent of disadvantage associated with impairment, depending on the particular combination of conditions, impairments and severities reported that there is no obvious way of differentiating between "those who can work' and those whose employment chances had virtually been wiped out as 'those who cannot'".

*Severely impaired people with a degree and living in a prosperous area have a good chance of employment. But if they had left school early and live in an area with few job opportunities, their job prospects are much worse even than those of non-disabled people with the same adverse characteristics.<sup>15</sup>*

### 3.3 Employment of disabled people in the South West

Just over 230,000 DDA disabled South West residents were in work during September 2007 to October 2008, making up almost 10% of the employed workforce. If the 80,000 people in work with a work-limiting illness or disability are added to the equation this proportion rises to 13%.

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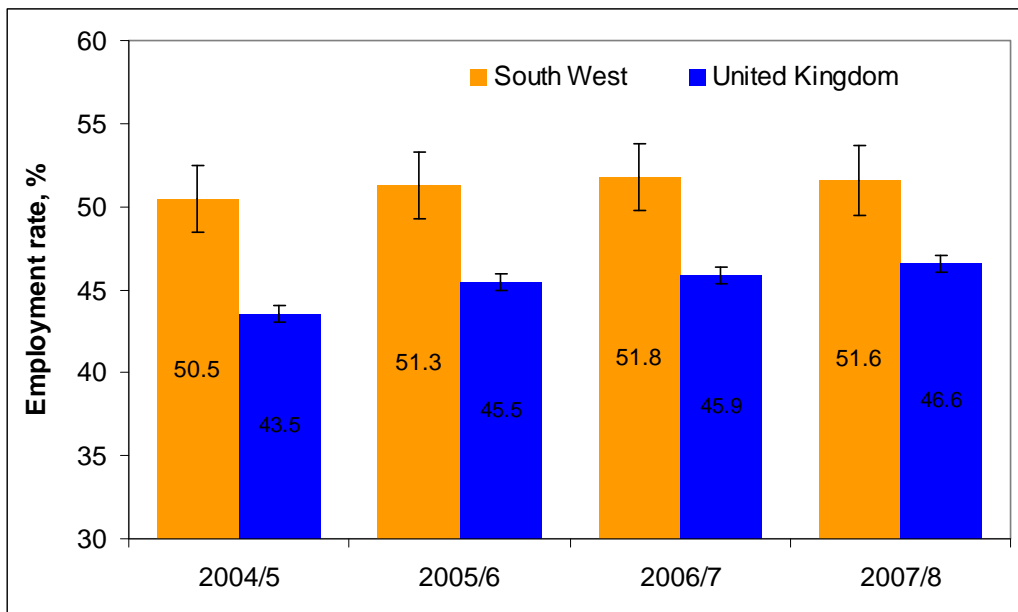
<sup>14</sup> Half of disabled people aged between 19 and 64 had a probability of securing work of less than 22%.

<sup>15</sup> Berthoud, R. (2006), *The employment rates of disabled people*. Department for Work and Pensions. Research Report No. 298 <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2005-2006/rrep298.pdf>

Just over half (52%) of the South West's working age population that have a disability are in work. This compares to 47% of disabled people nationally and 83% of non-disabled people in the South West (Figure 3).

As year-on-year changes in the employment rate at the regional level tend to be smaller than the confidence intervals associated with the estimates, it is not possible to ascertain whether the employment rate for disabled people in the South West has improved over time (Figure 3) although we conclude that the regional rate is statistically higher than the UK average.

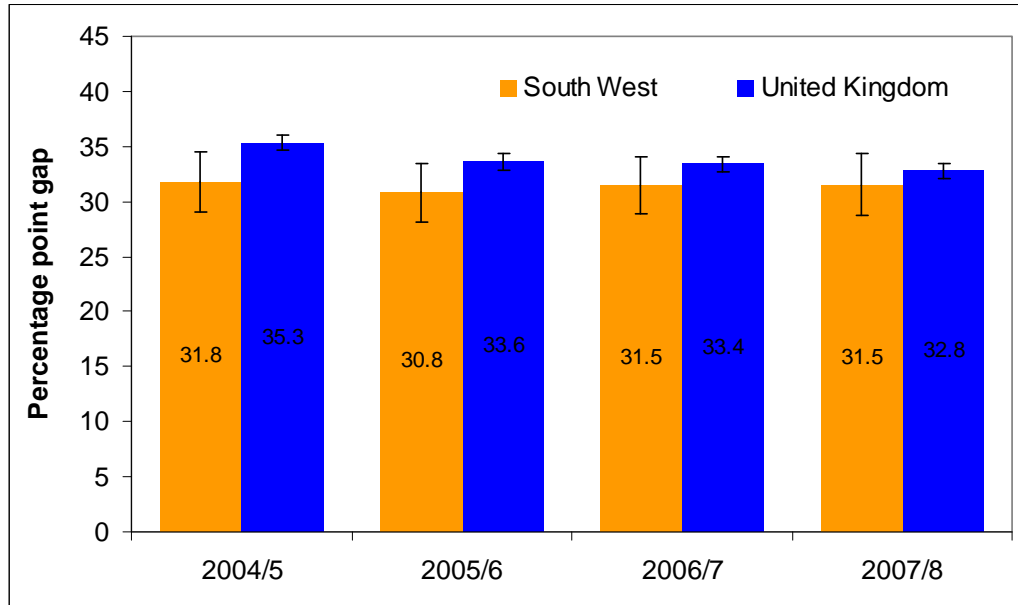
**Figure 3: Employment rate for disabled people, October to September, 2004, 2008, South West and United Kingdom**



Source: Annual Population Survey (NOMIS)

The disability employment gap in the South West currently stands at a fraction less than 32 percentage points (Figure 4). This is a larger gap than for any other equality group. Furthermore, if – as has been advocated – a narrower definition of disability is applied, the employment gap rises to 45 percentage points. There is evidence to suggest that the UK disability employment gap has narrowed slightly over the last three years (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Employment gap for disabled people, October to September, 2004 to 2008, South West and United Kingdom**



Source: Annual Population Survey

### 3.4 Disability and job quality

#### 3.4.1 Employment in managerial and professional occupations

The percentage of employed individuals employed in managerial and professional occupations is one indicator of the extent to which different groups access high status and high skill positions. In the South West, 28% of employed individuals were employed in these occupations during September 2007 to October 2008.

Disabled people in the South West are statistically less likely to be employed in managerial or professional occupations than non-disabled people (24% compared to 28%) and are also statistically less likely to be working in these occupations than disabled people in the UK (25%).

#### 3.4.2 Part-time working

Almost two-fifths (38%) of employed disabled people in the South West worked part time in September 2007 to October 2008. This compares to 29% of non-disabled people in the region and 32% of disabled people in the UK.

## 4. WORKLESSNESS

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### 4.1 Introduction

In this section:

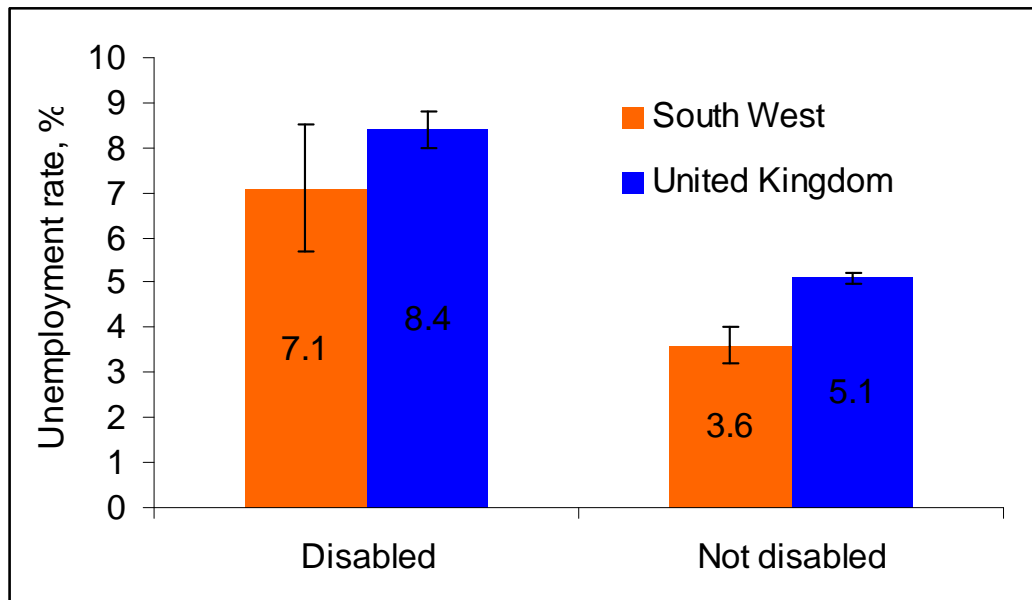
- Unemployment;
- Out-of-work benefits;
- Economic inactivity.

### 4.2 Unemployment

During September 2007 to October 2008, on average 17,800 disabled South West residents of working age were looking for work – almost one-fifth (18%) of the unemployment total.

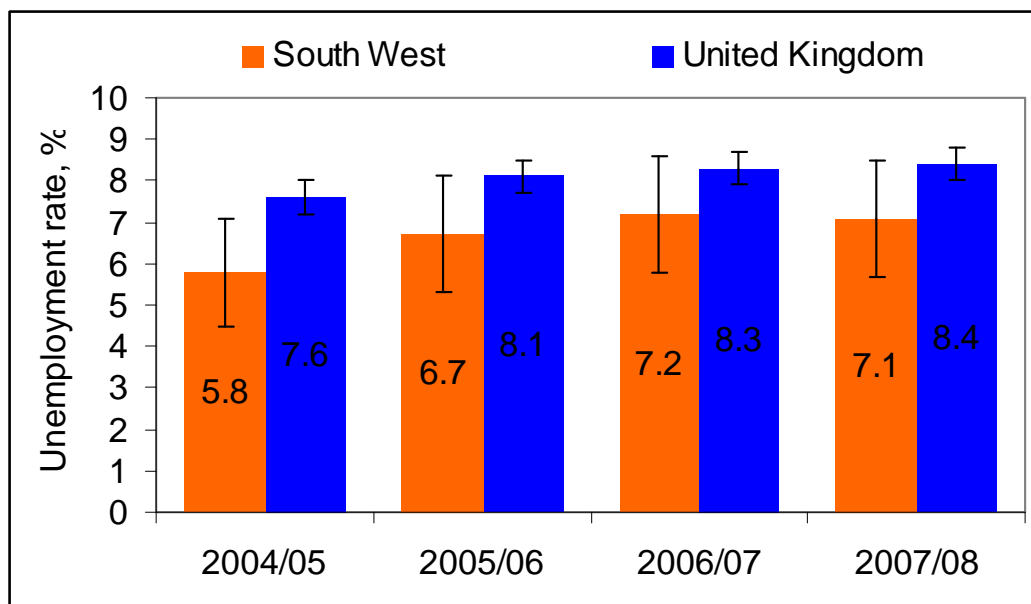
The unemployment rate for disabled people (7.1%) was almost twice that for non-disabled people (3.6%) in the South West but was not statistically different from the unemployment rate for disabled people in the UK (Figure 5). Unemployment rates for disabled people have not changed significantly in statistical terms over the last four years (Figure 6).

**Figure 5: Unemployment rate for disabled and non-disabled people, September 2007 to October 2008, South West and United Kingdom**



Source: Annual Population Survey (NOMIS)

**Figure 6: Unemployment rate for disabled people, September to October 2004/5 to 2007/8, South West and United Kingdom**

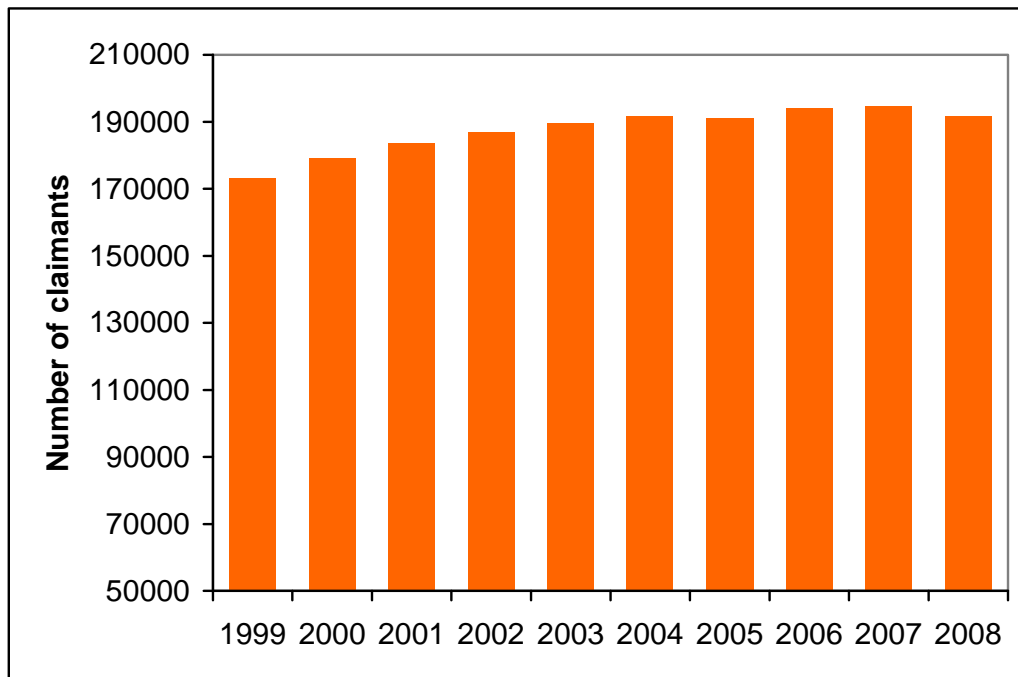


Source: Annual Population Survey (NOMIS)

### 4.3 Out-of-work benefits

The DWP does not publish benefits data by disability status, but they do publish figures for the numbers of people claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) including their age and gender. In August 2008, almost 200,000 people were claiming IB in the South West – with men accounting for a larger share (59%) of the total than women (41%). Almost two-thirds (64%) of IB claimants were aged 25 to 54 and over one-quarter (29%) were aged over 55. The number of IB claimants has risen slowly since 1999 but was lower in August 2008 than 12 months previously (Figure 7).

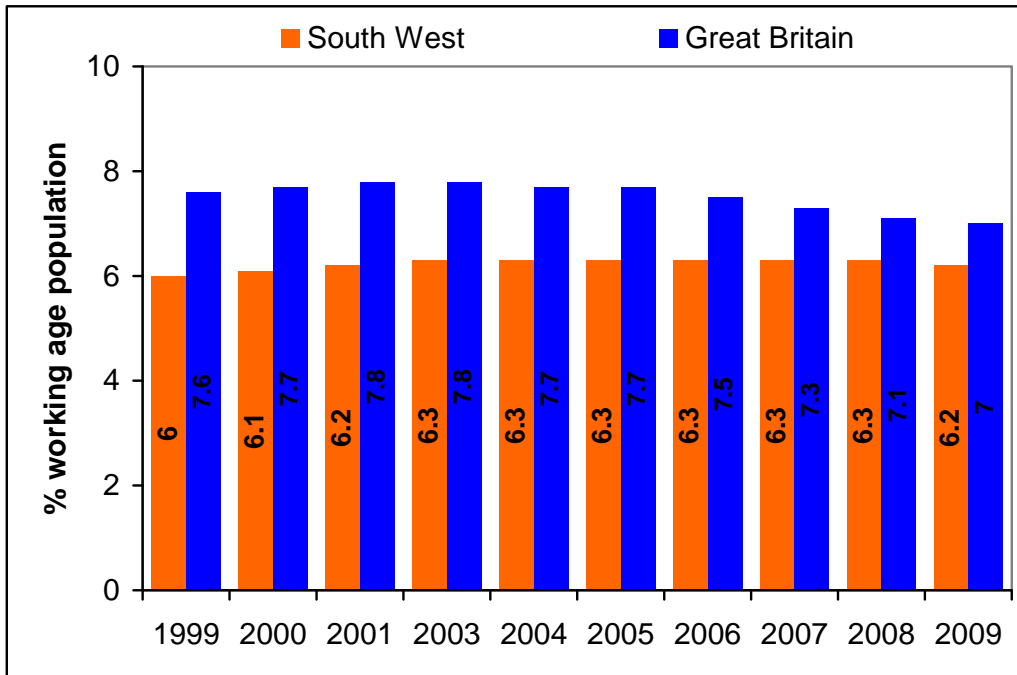
**Figure 7: Incapacity Benefit client group, August, 1999 to 2008**



*Source: DWP Benefits Data (NOMIS)*

6% of the economically active population in the South West are claiming IB (Figure 8). This figure is below the national average and has remained constant over the last 10 years. The IB claimant rate nationally, however, has fallen in each of the last four years.

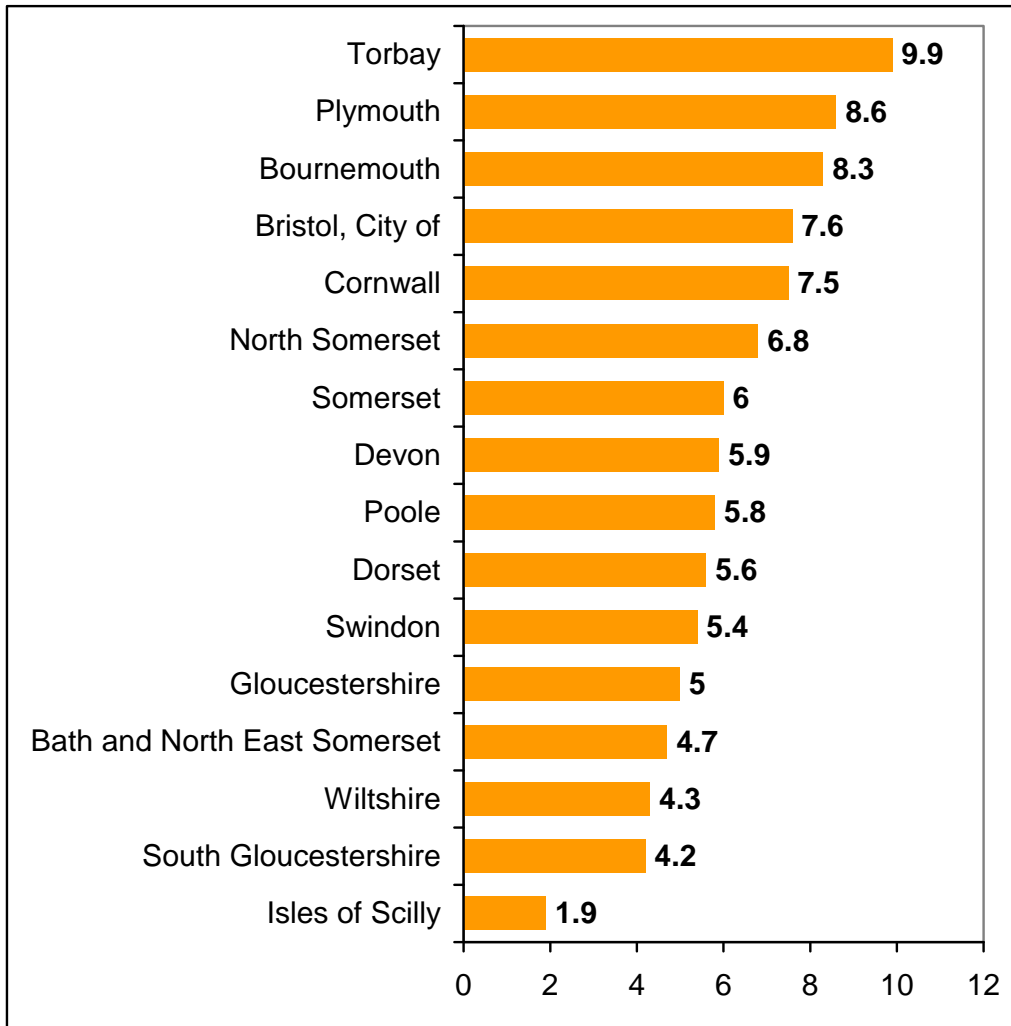
**Figure 8: Incapacity Benefit claimant group as a percentage of working age population, August, 1999 to 2008, South and Great Britain**



Source: DWP benefits data (NOMIS)

The percentage of the working age population claiming IB varies considerably across local authority areas within the South West – from 2% on the Isles of Scilly to 10% in Torbay. In addition to Torbay, Plymouth, Bournemouth, City of Bristol and Cornwall all have a higher percentage than the national average (7%).

**Figure 9: Percentage of the working age population claiming IB by local authority areas, August 2008, South West**

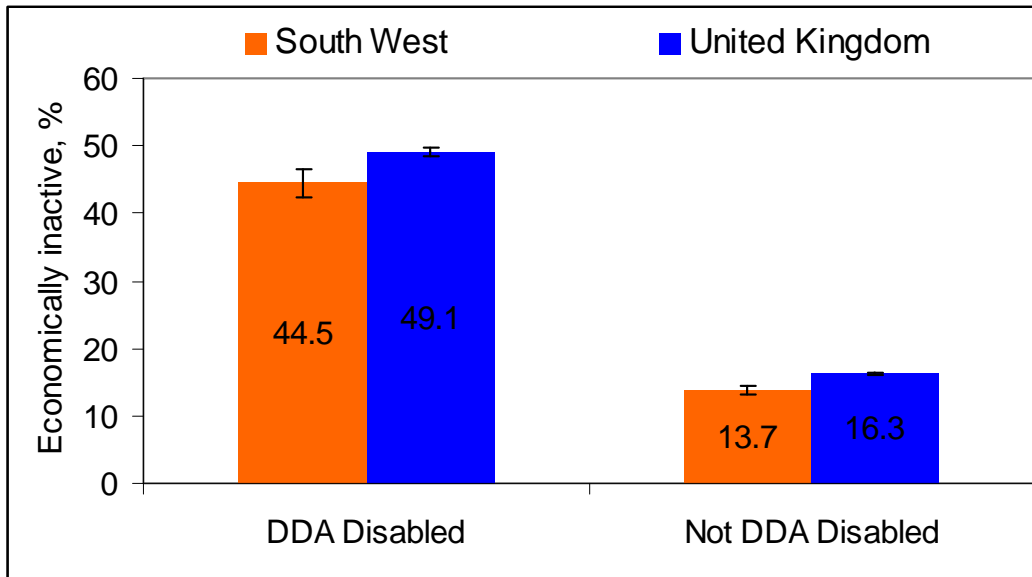


Source: DWP benefits data (NOMIS)

#### 4.4 Economic inactivity

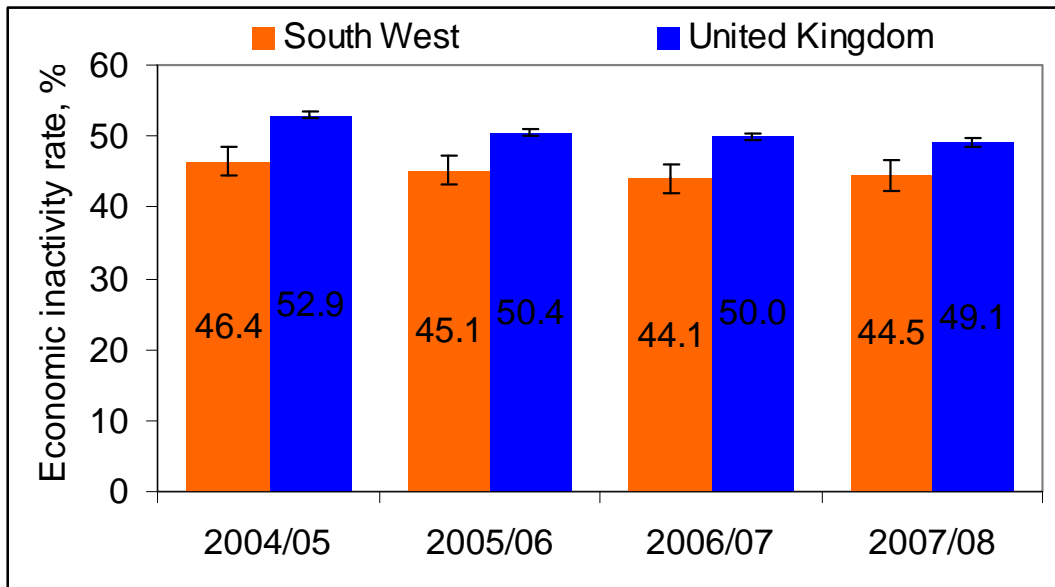
Over 200,000 disabled South West residents of working age were economically inactive during September 2007 to October 2008. Disabled South West residents are considerably more likely to be economically inactive than non-disabled people of the same age but are less likely to be economically inactive than disabled people in the UK as a whole (Figure 10). The economically inactive rate of disabled people has declined nationally since 2004/5 but changes over time at the regional level are not statistically significant (Figure 11). Disabled people make up just over one-third (36%) of the economically inactive population of working age.

**Figure 10: Economic inactivity rates by disability status, September 2007 to October 2008, South West and United Kingdom**



Source: Annual Population Survey (NOMIS)

**Figure 11: Economic inactivity by disability, September 2007 to October 2008, 2004/05 to 2007/8, South West and United Kingdom**



Source: Annual Population Survey (NOMIS)

The vast majority of economically inactive disabled people are either retired (62%) or are sick or disabled (30%), compared to 64% and 2% of non-disabled people.

Unsurprisingly, people who are DDA disabled account for 90% of those who give sickness or disability as the main reason for their economic inactivity.