

## Employing Graduates with Disabilities: A Survey of 300 Employers (2008)

A piece of research conducted by TNS mrbi on behalf of AHEAD.



An Roinn Fiontar, Trádála agus Fostaíochta  
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment



EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND:  
helping develop employment by  
promoting employability, the business  
spirit and equal opportunities and  
investing in human resources

# Table of Contents

- Introduction
  - Background & Objectives
  - Research Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusions

# Introduction

# Background & Objectives

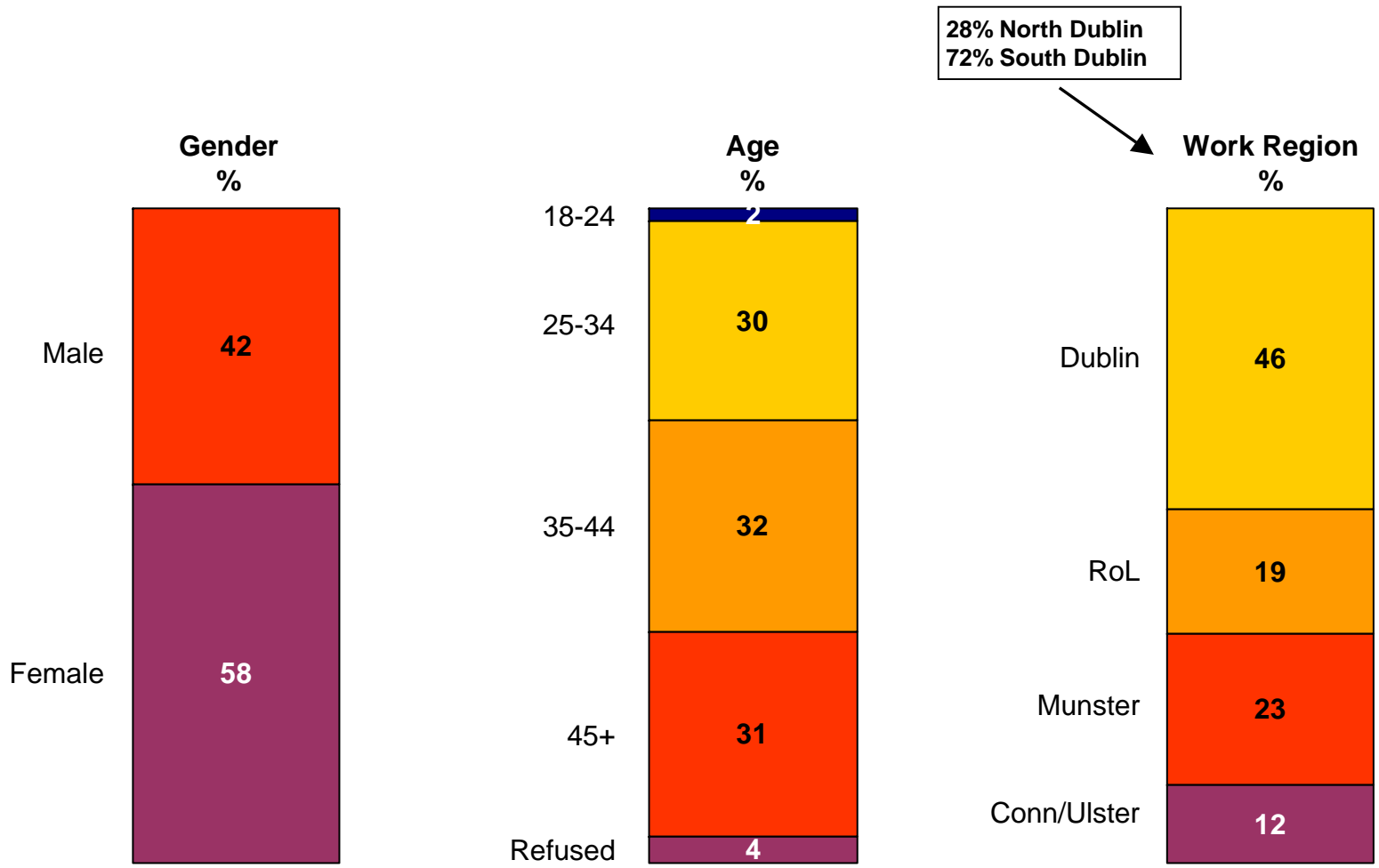
- AHEAD has commissioned TNS mrbi, the independent market research company, to conduct research on their behalf.
- AHEAD, the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote full access to and participation in third level education for students with disabilities in Ireland. It also promotes access to employment for graduates with disabilities.
- The overall objective of this research was to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of employers towards those with a disability entering into the workforce, with a view to establishing the main barriers involved.
- This is the first piece of stand alone research that has been conducted in Ireland with regard to employer attitude to graduates with disabilities in the workplace.

# Research Methodology

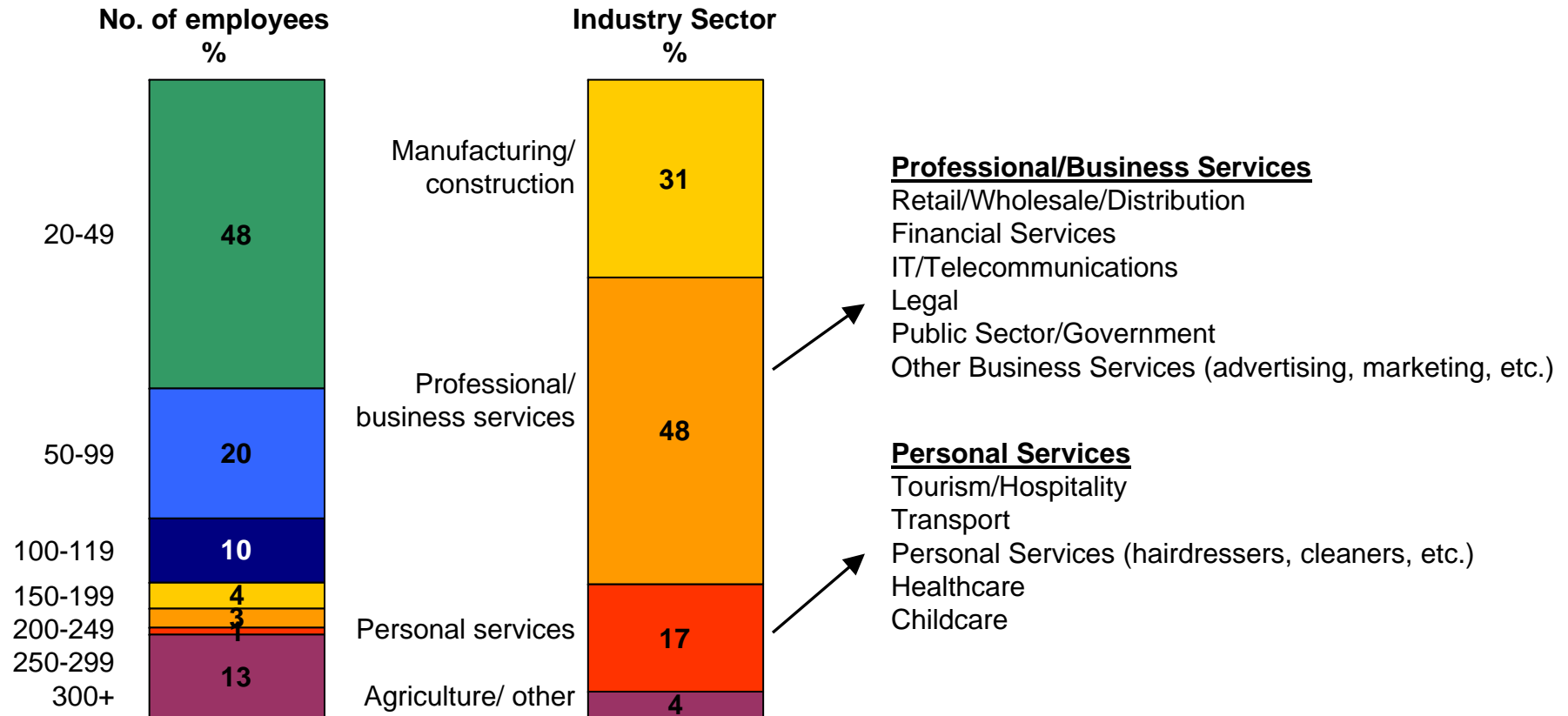
- A quantitative approach was adopted using our in-house CATI (Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing) facility. TNS mrbi uses the latest technology in telephone interviewing. Located at our offices in Blackrock, the TNS mrbi CATI facility employs 45 part-time experienced interviewers.
- This facility allows for regular and effective feedback to the research team in terms of appointments made, quotas achieved, sample productivity, reasons for non-interview, and topline data.
- A total sample of 300 businesses, which employed 20+ employees, were interviewed.
- This CATI study was asked of recruitment managers or those directly responsible for recruitment in their organisation.
- CATI fieldwork was carried out between 17<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2008.



# Profile Of Respondents – 20+ Employees



# Profile Of Respondents – 20+ Employees

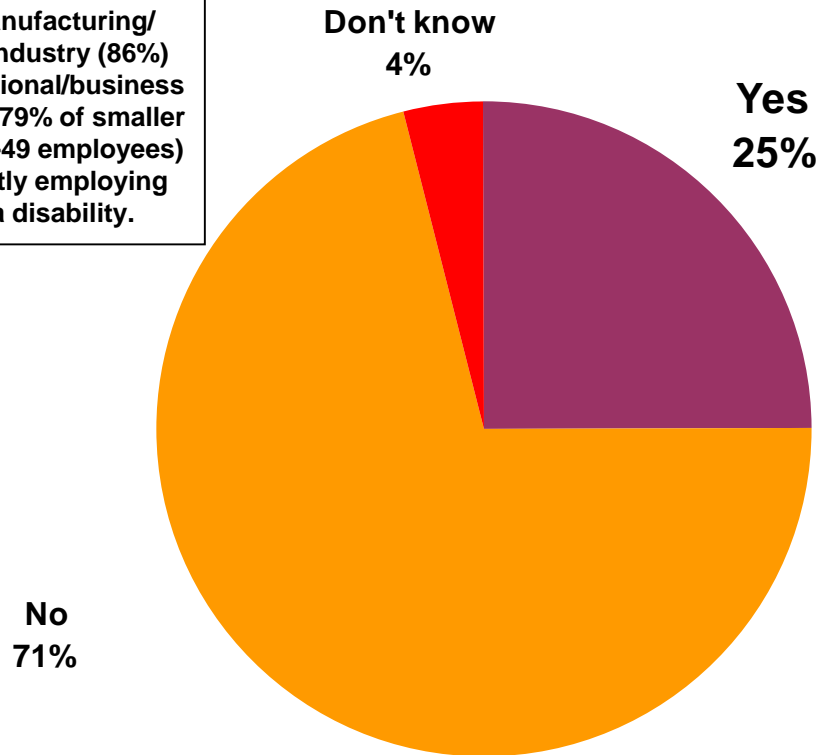


# Findings

# Employment Of Graduates With Disabilities

Base: All responsible for recruiting: 300

Employers who currently do not employ graduates with a disability are concentrated within the manufacturing/construction industry (86%) and the professional/business services (66%). 79% of smaller businesses (20-49 employees) are not currently employing those with a disability.



**Higher among:**  
Larger Companies (50+ employees) → 32%  
Personal Services industry → 42%

**Lower among:**  
Smaller Companies (20-49 employees) → 18%  
Manufacturing/Construction industry → 13%

One quarter of employers interviewed currently employ graduates with a disability in their company or organisation.

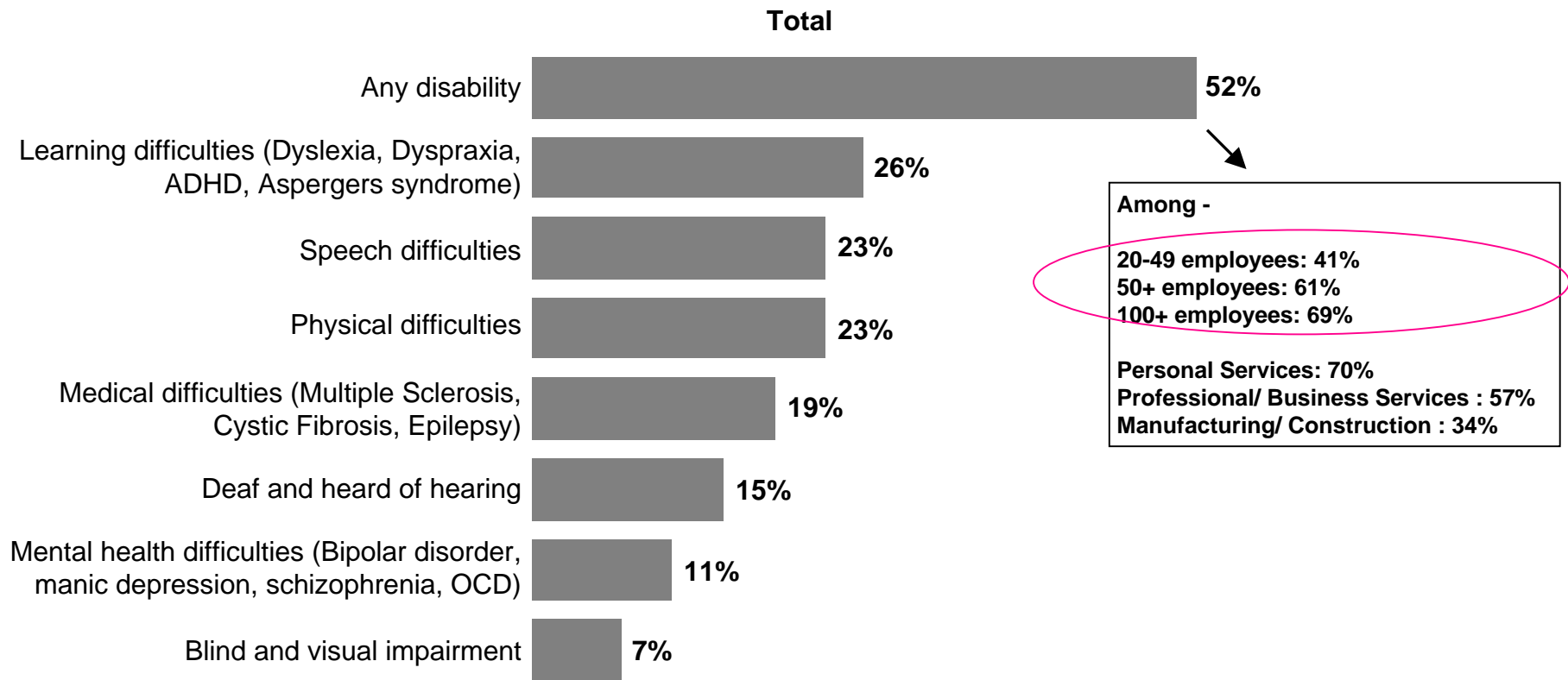
Q.11 As far as you are aware, does your company or organisation currently employ any graduates with disabilities?

the sixth sense of business™

TNS mrbi/177037/Ahead Disability Research 2008 (March 2008)

# Incidence of Employers Interviewing a Graduate with a Disability

Base: All responsible for recruiting: 300



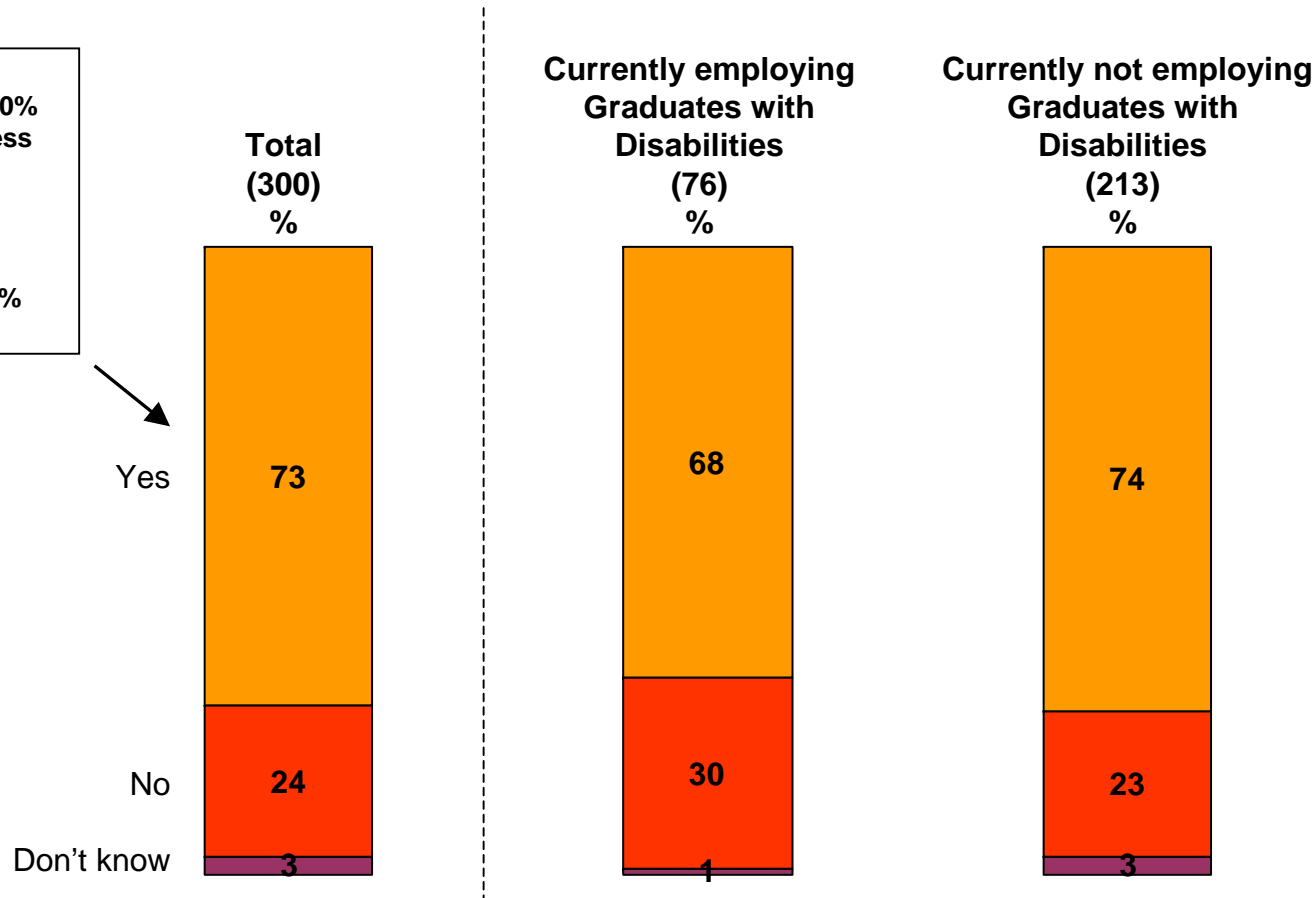
**Over half of employers had interviewed a graduate with a disability. The larger companies tend to have higher incidence of interviewing graduates with disabilities, while the SMEs are relatively less likely to do so.**

# Should A Graduate With A Disability Disclose At Any Stage During the Recruitment Process?

Base: All responsible for recruiting

Among -  
 Personal Services: 80%  
 Professional/ Business Services : 67%  
 Manufacturing/ Construction : 77%

20-49 employees: 79%  
 50+ employees: 67%



**Almost three-quarters of employers believe that graduates with a disability should disclose at recruitment stage. The smaller companies are somewhat more keen to obtain disclosure from graduates about their disabilities, as compared to the larger companies.**

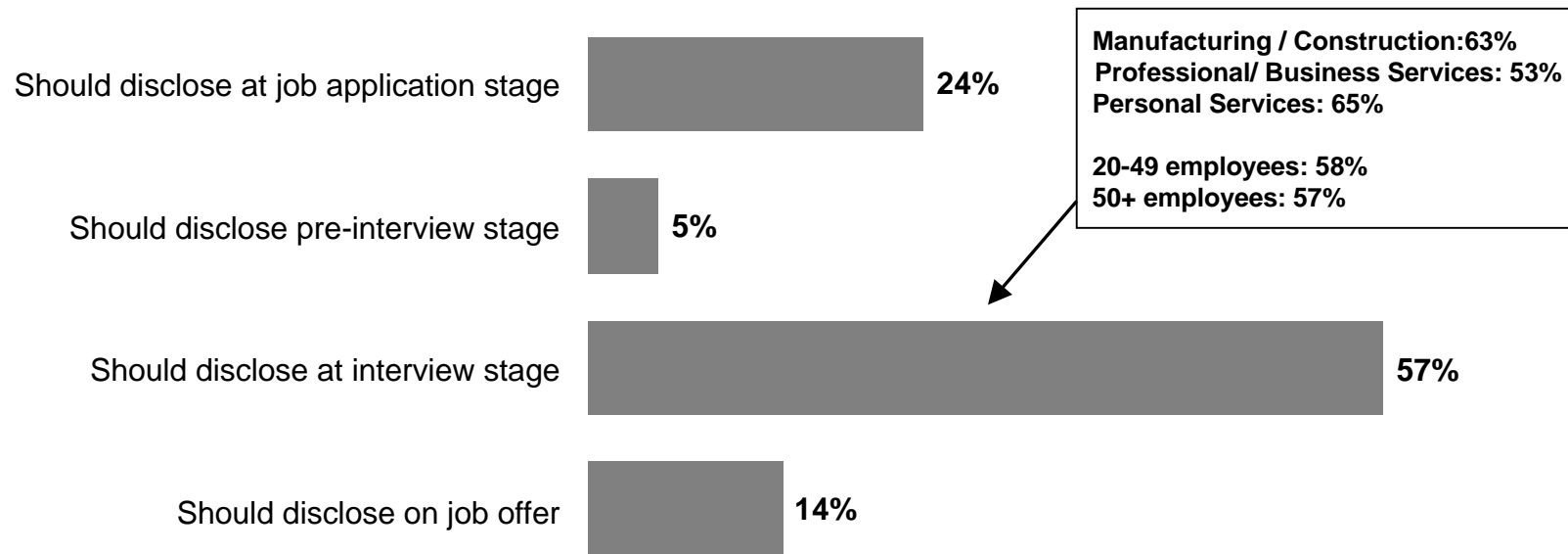
*Q.2 In your opinion, should a graduate with a disability disclose and by disclose I mean tell you the exact nature of their disability, at any stage during the recruitment process?*

the sixth sense of business™

TNS mrbi/177037/Ahead Disability Research 2008 (March 2008)

# At What Stage Of The Recruitment Process Should A Graduate With A Disability Disclose? (Spontaneous)

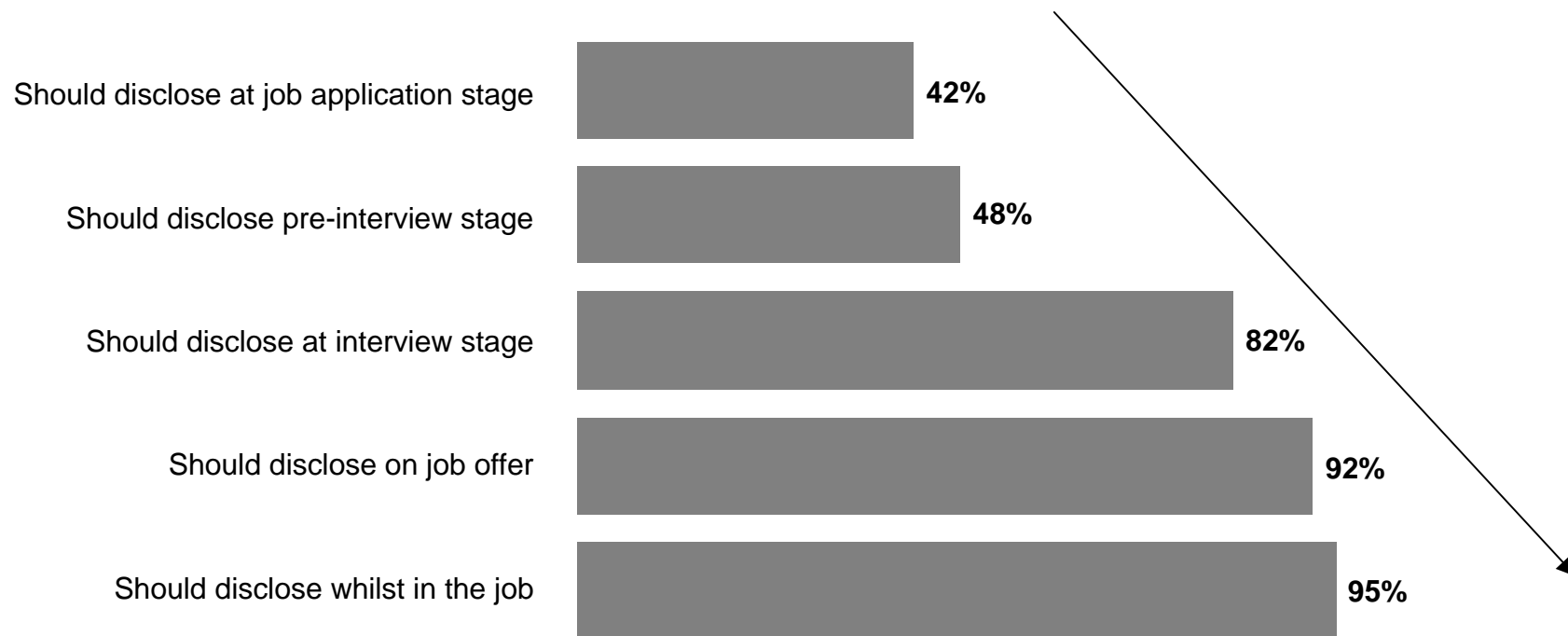
Base: All who feel a disability should be disclosed: 218



**Over half of employers believe that a disability should be disclosed at interview stage, however the majority do not believe there is a need to disclose prior to interview. No differences observed by size of organisation.**

# At Any Of The Following Stages Of The Employment Process, Do You Think A Graduate With A Disability Should Disclose? (Prompted)

Base: All responsible for recruiting: 300



**Overall, the critical juncture appears to be the interview stage.  
Once again, no significant difference by size of the company.**

*Q.4 At any of the following stages of the employment process, do you think a graduate with a disability should disclose their disability?*

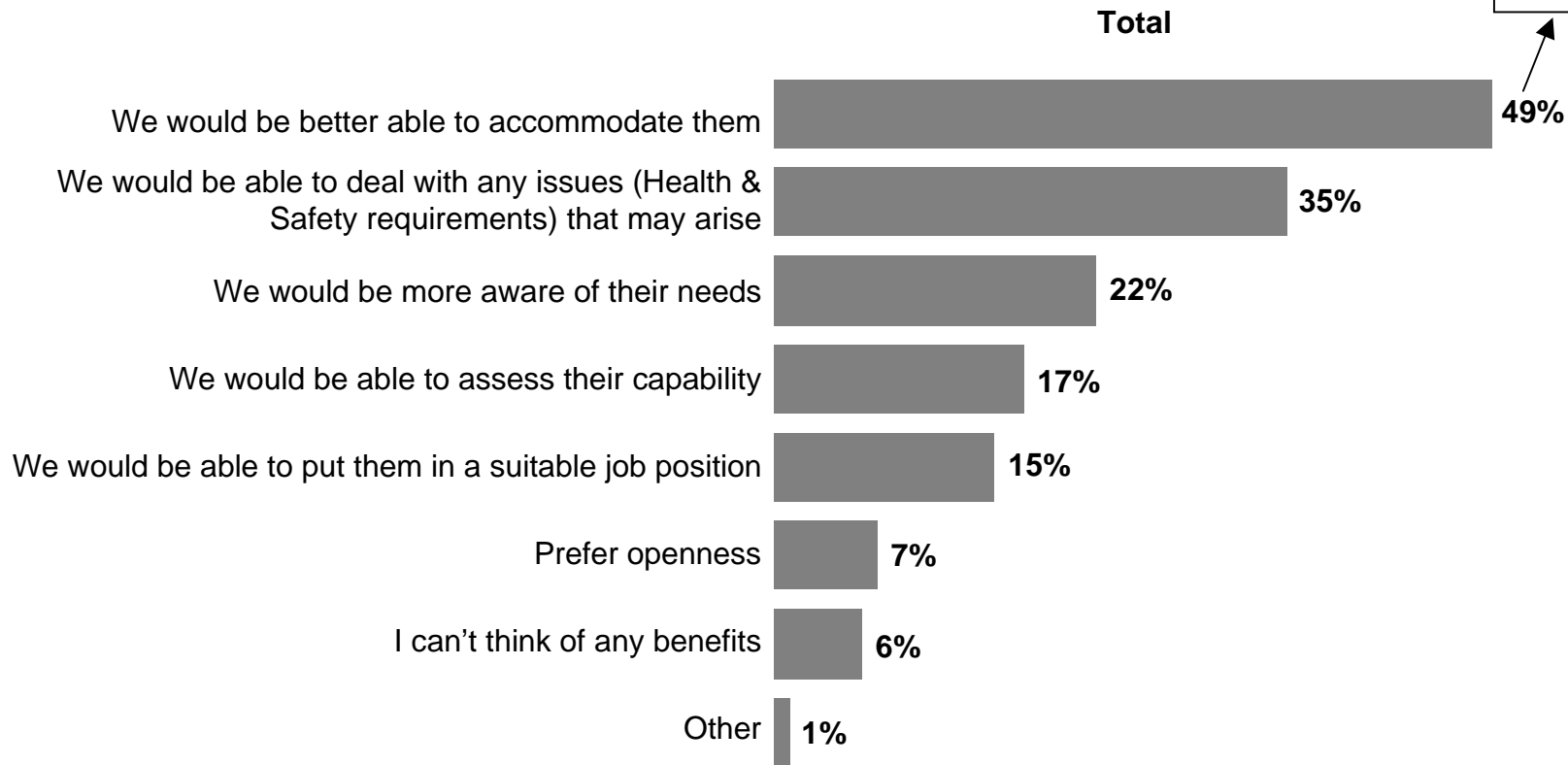
the sixth sense of business™

TNS mrbi/177037/Ahead Disability Research 2008 (March 2008)

# Benefits To Employer Of Disclosure

Base: All responsible for recruiting: 300

Among -  
 20-49 employees: 57%  
 50+ employees: 41%



**The main benefit of disclosure is that employers would be better able to accommodate graduates with a disability. Indications of larger companies saying they would be better able to accommodate such graduates, as compared to smaller companies.**

Q.5 What are the benefits, if any, of disclosure of a disability for you as an employer ?

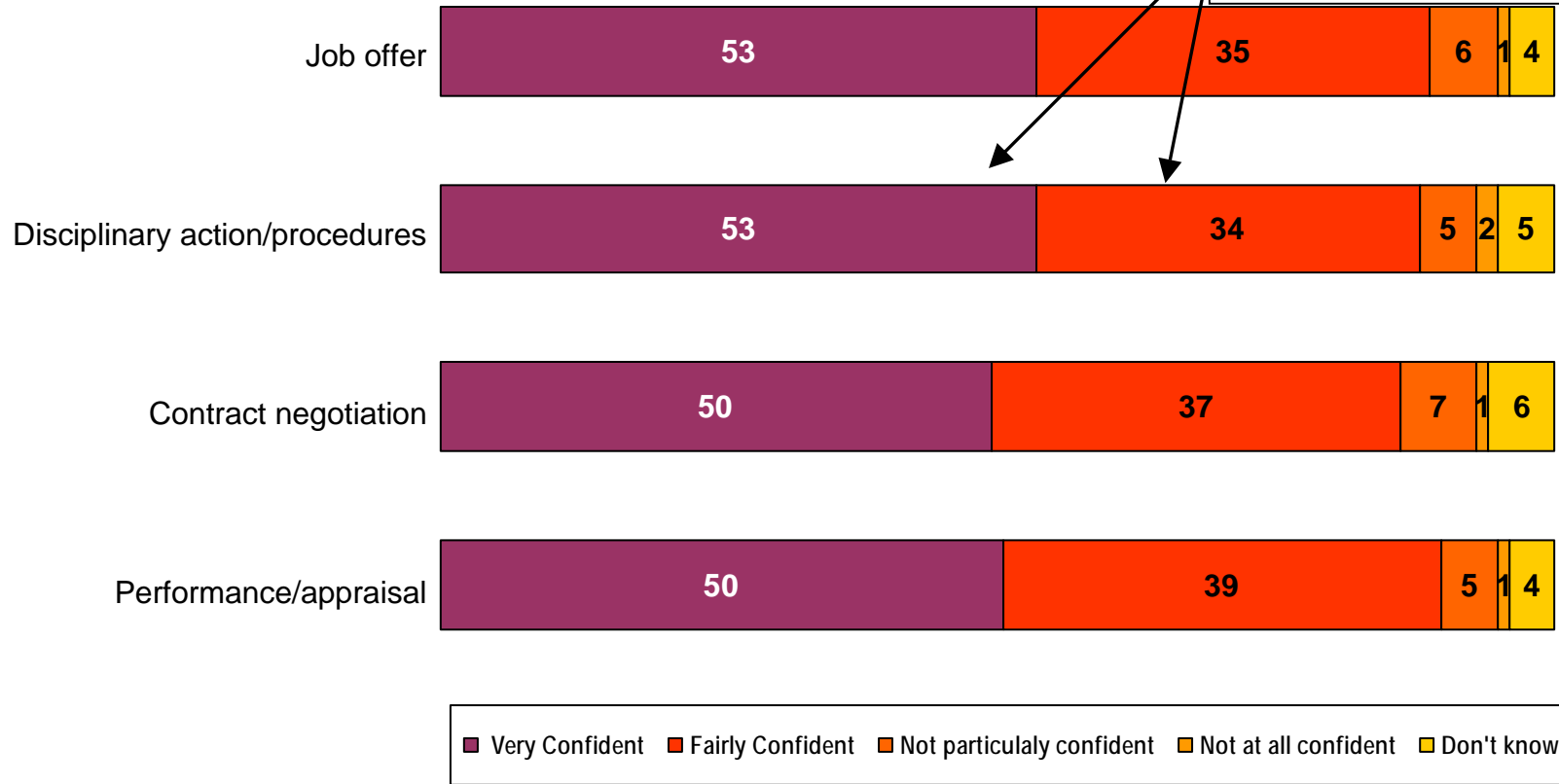
the sixth sense of business™

TNS mrbi/177037/Ahead Disability Research 2008 (March 2008)

# Confidence In Applying Company Policy & Procedures In Different Situations

Base: All responsible for recruiting: 300

**Top 2 box % (very/fairly confident):**  
 Manufacturing / Construction: 84%  
 Professional/ Business Services: 90%  
 Personal Services: 84%  
 20-49 employees: 85%  
 50+ employees: 89%



**Employers are generally confident in applying company policy and procedures in terms of job offer, disciplinary action / procedures, contract negotiation or performance / appraisal when dealing with an employee with a disability. No major difference by organisation size.**

Q.6 How confident are you in applying such policies and procedures in your company when dealing with an employee with a disability... ?

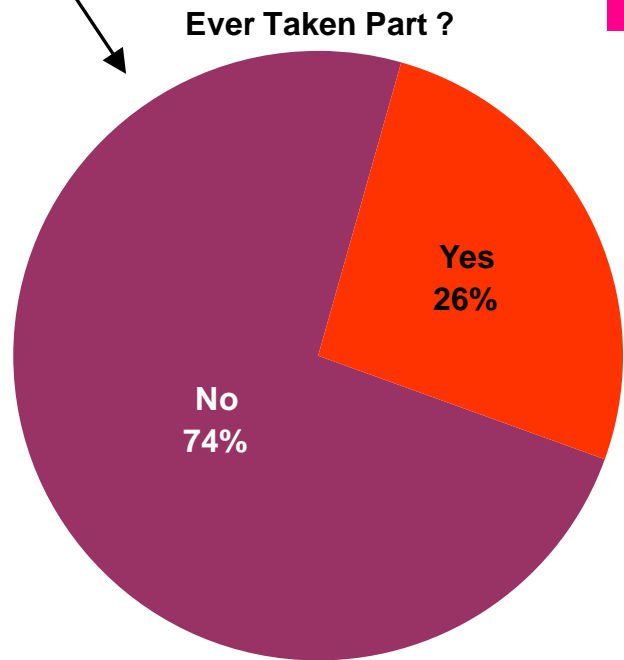
the sixth sense of business™

TNS mrbi/177037/Ahead Disability Research 2008 (March 2008)

# Participation In Disability Equality Training

Base: All responsible for recruiting: 300

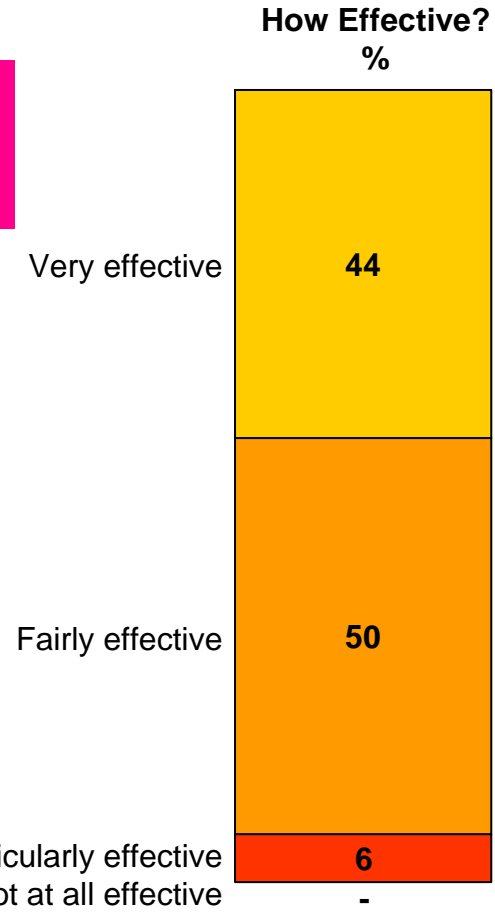
Among:  
 Manufacturing / Construction: 81%  
 Professional/ Business Services: 70%  
 Personal Services: 72%  
 20-49 employees: 83%  
 50+ employees: 65%



Over a quarter of respondents interviewed had taken part in Disability Equality Training



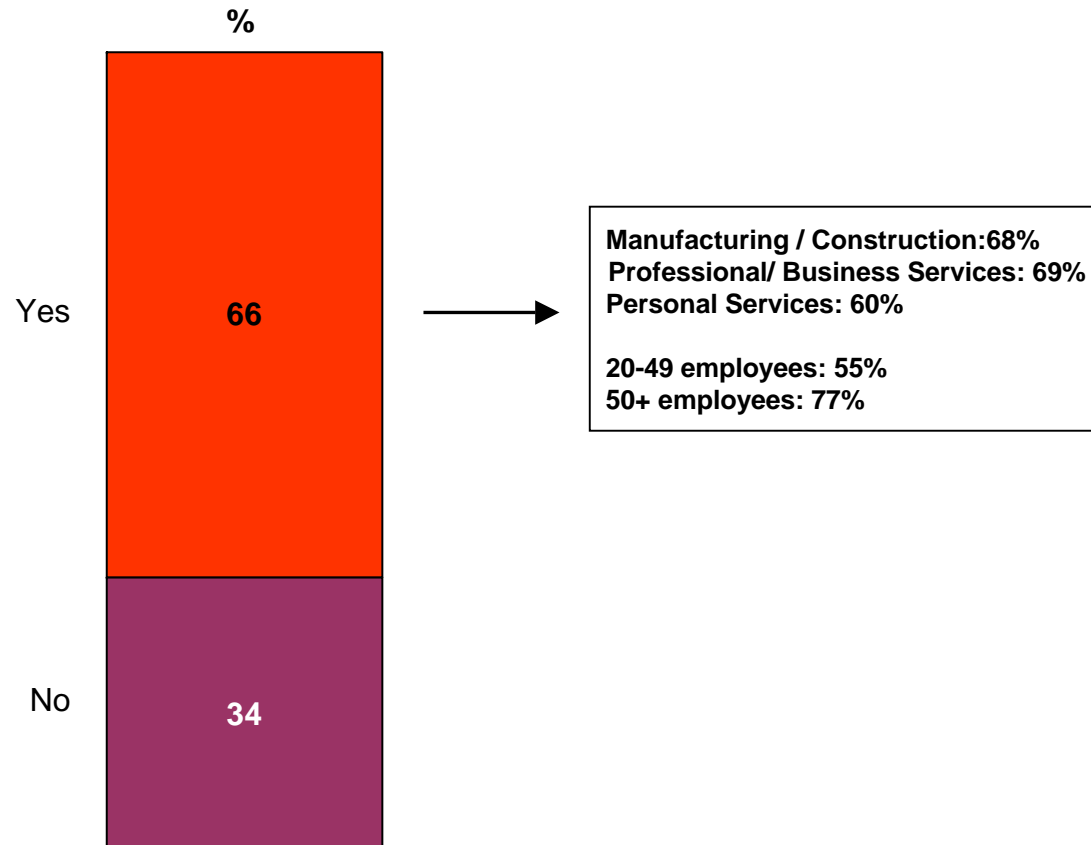
Of those who have taken part:  
 42% are currently employing graduates with a disability.  
 Whereas, 55% are currently not employing graduates with a disability.



Overall, the majority of respondents interviewed found their Disability Equality Training very effective. Smaller organisations are less likely to have taken part in such training than their larger counterparts.

# Understanding Of The Term “Reasonable Accommodation”

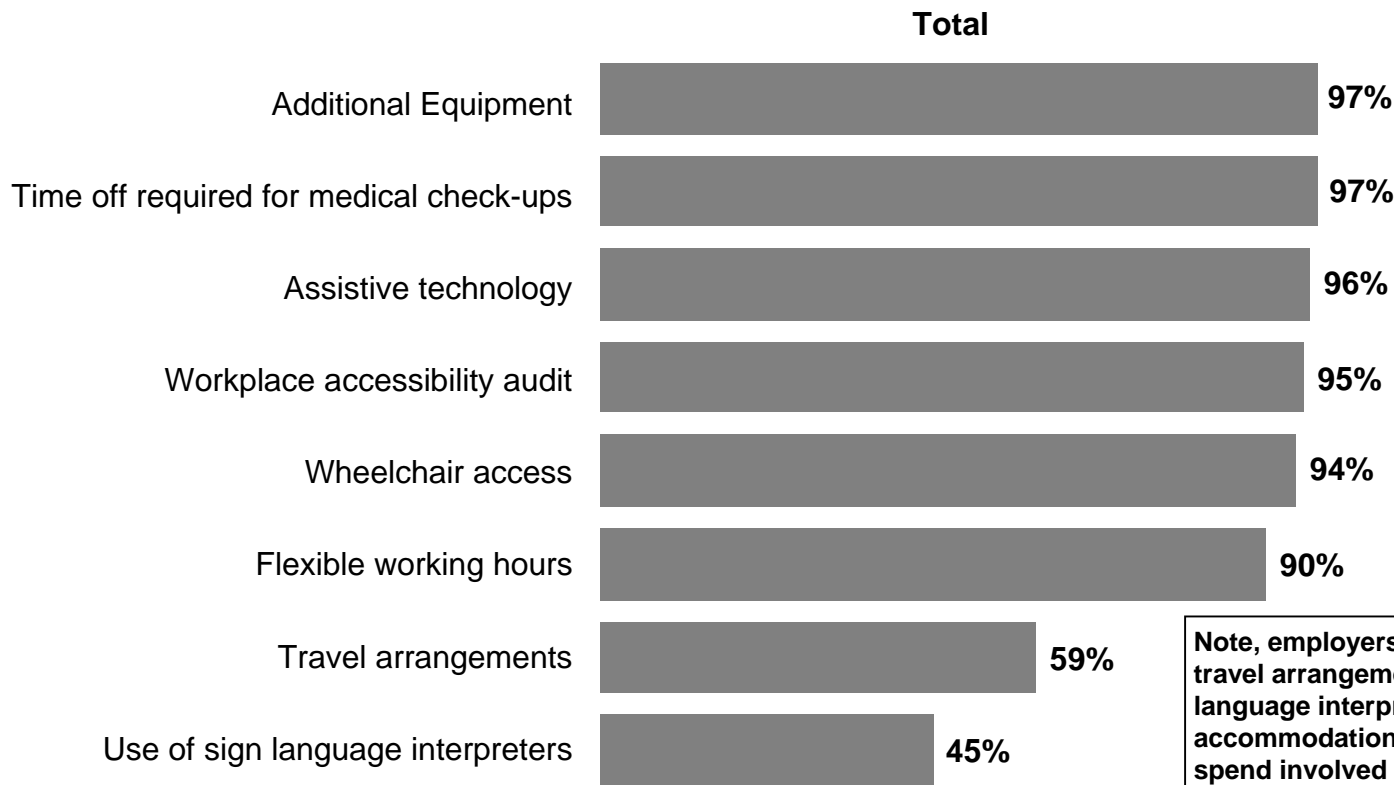
Base: All responsible for recruiting: 300



Two thirds of employers understand the term 'Reasonable Accommodation' → this is significantly higher among the larger companies as compared to their smaller counterparts.

# Elements Understood to be “Reasonable Accommodation”

Base: All responsible for recruiting: 300



It appears that the majority of employers are happy to have the first five procedures or mechanisms in place to assist graduates with a disability in the workplace. This drops off slightly for supplying flexible working hours.

Note, employers are divided on whether travel arrangements or the use of sign language interpreters are reasonable accommodation, perhaps due to the level of spend involved potentially.

**No major difference by size of organisation.**

# Conclusions

# Conclusions

- One quarter of employers working in businesses with 20+ employees currently employ graduates with a disability in their company or organisation.
- Over half of employers had interviewed a graduate with a disability. Of those, 69% worked in an organisation with over a 100+ employees. Furthermore, 70% worked in personal services and 57% worked in professional / business services.
- Almost three-quarters of employers interviewed believe that graduates with a disability should disclose at recruitment stage.
  - Of these respondents, the majority believe that disclosure should be made at interview stage (57%), followed by on job application (24%) or on job offer (14%).
- When all respondents were asked at what stage of the employment process a graduate should disclose. It emerged that:
  - 8 out of 10 believe that a graduate with a disability should disclose at interview stage (pre job offer).
  - Whereas, 9 out of 10 respondents believe that disclosure should in fact be revealed post interview stage.
  - Note, there is a minority who feel that the candidate has no responsibility to disclose at any stage.

# Conclusions

- The main benefits to an employer of disclosure are as follows:
  - To better able to accommodate graduates with a disability.
  - To be able to deal with any issues (Health and Safety requirements) that may arise.
  - To be more aware of graduates with a disability needs.
  - To be able to assess their capability.
  - To be able to place graduates with a disability in a suitable job position.
  - Prefer openness.
- Employers are generally confident in applying company policy and procedures in terms of job offer, disciplinary action/ procedures, contract negotiation or performance/appraisal when dealing with an employee with a disability.
- Over a quarter of respondents interviewed had taken part in “Disability Equality Training”
  - Overall, the majority of respondents interviewed found their “Disability Equality Training” very effective.

# Conclusions

- Two thirds of employers understand the term “Reasonable Accommodation”.
- It appears that the majority of employers are happy to have the first five procedures or mechanisms in place to assist graduates with a disability in the workplace.
  - This drops off slightly for supplying flexible working hours.
  - Note, employers are divided on whether travel arrangements or the use of sign language interpreters are reasonable accommodation, perhaps due to the level of spend involved potentially.
- There appear to be some interesting differences by size of company. We note that as of today, the smaller companies (20-49 employees) are less likely to have taken part in Disability Equality Training, and also are correspondingly less likely to be currently interviewing/employing graduates with disabilities. Expectedly, given the relative small size of their company, these smaller organisations claim to be less able to accommodate such graduates, as compared to the larger organisations.



# Employer Attitude to Graduates With Disabilities

March 2008



the sixth sense of business™

TNS mrbi/177037/Ahead Disability Research March 2008)