

Compendium

## Chapter 3 - Work

Contact:  
Joanna Bulman  
los@ons.gsi.gov.uk

Release date:  
10 April 2014

Next release:  
To be announced

### Table of contents

1. [Key findings](#)
2. [Aims of this chapter](#)
3. [Working age adults employed at both waves – barriers reported](#)
4. [Working age adults who were economically inactive at both waves – reasons for not working](#)
5. [Types of enablers reported at Wave Two by employed and economically inactive adults](#)
6. [Background notes](#)

# 1 . Key findings

- ‘Family responsibilities’, ‘lack of job opportunities’<sup>1</sup> and ‘lack of qualifications/experience/skills’ were common barriers at work reported by adults employed at both [waves](#)
- Employed adults with impairment at both waves were more likely to have a participation restriction to work than employed adults without impairment at both waves
- Having an impairment may be associated with experiencing impairment-based barriers at work. ‘A health condition, illness or impairment’ was the top barrier for adults with impairment at both waves, and was a barrier reported by offset adults at Wave One, and by onset-acquired adults at Wave Two
- For adults who were economically inactive at both waves, ‘family responsibilities’ was a reason commonly reported for not working. Impairment and disability-related reasons were also reported by adults with impairment at both waves, offset and onset-acquired adults
- Most adults who were employed at both waves did not report any enablers which helped them at work. Similarly, most adults who were economically inactive at both waves did not report any enablers which they needed to be able to work
- When reported, however, the most common enablers were ‘modified hours or days or reduced work hours’ and ‘tax credits’<sup>2</sup>. These enablers might have been reported for various reasons – as ways to cope with family or caring responsibilities, or to manage a health condition, illness or impairment, or to supplement low income

## Notes

1. Lack of job opportunities’ can still be relevant to someone who is employed, because he/she might not be in the job he/she is qualified for, or would like to do
2. A person may qualify for a [tax credit](#) if he/she works but earns low wages

## 2 . Aims of this chapter

We saw in [Chapter 2](#) that adults on the LOS can be classified into four [groups for analysis](#):

- adults with impairment at both waves
- offset adults
- onset-acquired adults
- adults without impairment at both waves

These groups reflect the diversity of [impairment status](#), in that impairment status may be stable, or may change over time. A person may have impairments at both waves (group 1) or no impairment at both waves (group 4), or they may no longer have impairments (group 2) or they may acquire impairments at Wave Two (group 3).

As with impairment status, a person may have a change in his/her [economic activity status](#) between waves. However, because most people were employed at both waves or were economically inactive at both waves, this chapter will focus on these subsets of people. Due to insufficient sample size ([only 2% to 3% of each group were unemployed at both waves](#)), it is not possible to analyse adults who were unemployed at both waves<sup>1</sup>.

[Chapter 2](#) of this report explores changes in [participation restriction](#) experienced between Wave One and Wave Two. According to the LOS definition, adults who had a participation restriction in one or more life area will experience barriers. People may report different [barriers](#) depending on their economic activity status.

On the LOS, adults employed at both waves were asked to report barriers which limit them in the type or amount of work they do. Adults who were economically inactive at both waves (excluding retired people and students) were asked about reasons for not working. Barriers to work or reasons for not working could include 'family responsibilities', 'lack of job opportunities'<sup>2</sup> and 'attitudes of employers'. Respondents may report none, or one or more barriers/reasons. The barriers/reasons reported by adults may change over time. For work it is possible to see if a particular barrier/reason was:

- i. reported at both waves
- ii. reported at Wave One only
- iii. reported at Wave Two only
- iv. not reported at either wave

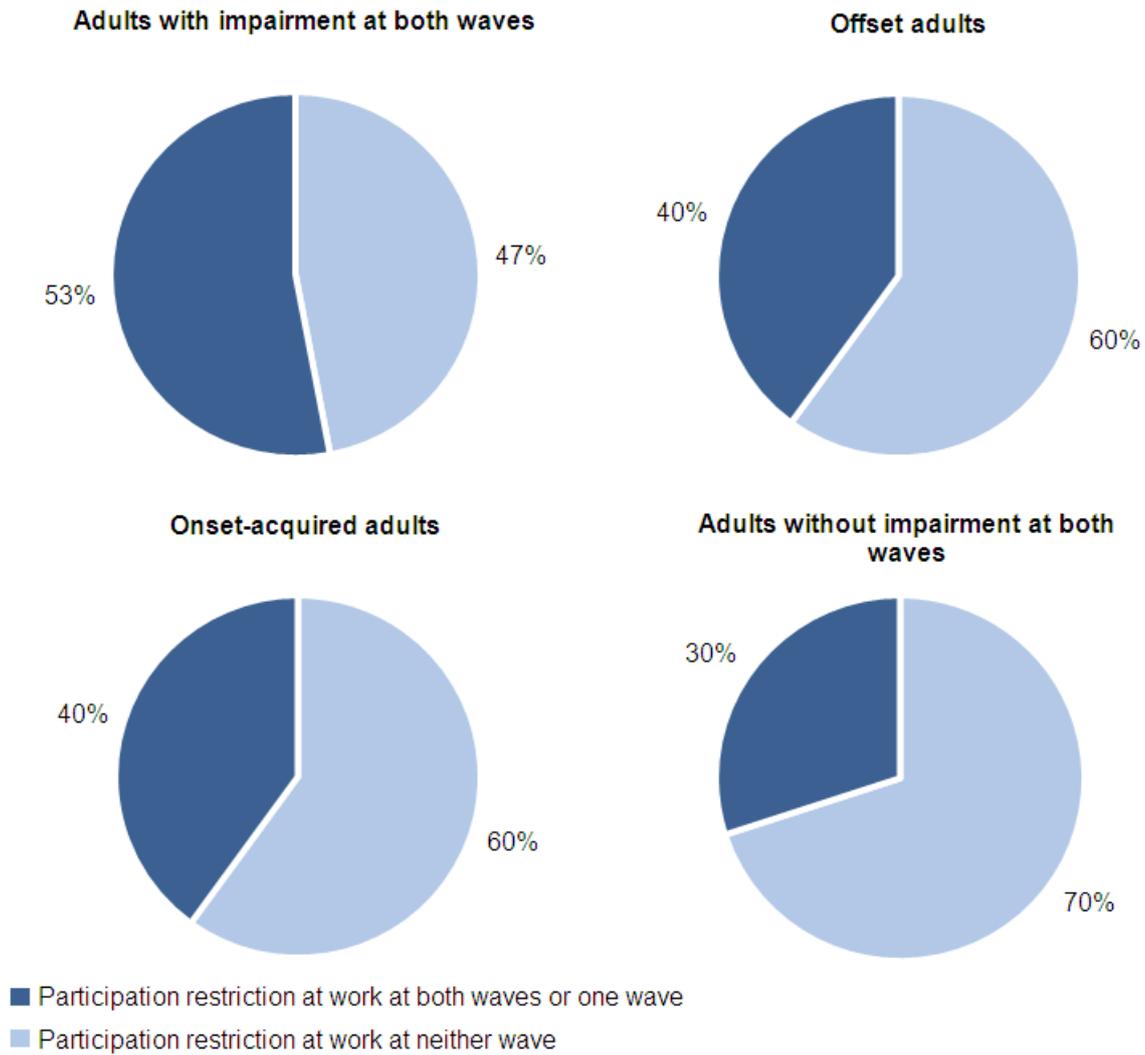
This chapter describes the types of barriers to work by working age (16 to 64) adults who were employed at both waves<sup>3</sup>, and who experienced a participation restriction at any point in the survey (as identified by the dark sections of the pie charts (see Figure 3.1)). For these adults the types of barriers that were reported at both waves or at either wave (groups i, ii, and iii above) will be examined by group.

For working age adults who were economically inactive at both waves (excluding retired people and students), this chapter examines the types of reasons reported at both waves or at either wave (groups i, ii, and iii above), by group.

This chapter will also examine the types of '[enablers](#)' reported for work. For employed adults, enablers are measures which helped them at work, whereas for economically inactive adults, enablers are measures which they need to be able to work. For both employed and economically inactive adults, enablers could include 'modified hours or days or reduced work hours' and 'tax credits'<sup>4</sup>. As with barriers, respondents may report none, or one or more enabler.

### **Figure 3.1 Percentage of working-age (16 to 64) adults with a participation restriction to work, by group [1](#)**

**Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were employed at both waves, and experienced a participation restriction to work at either or both waves**



**Source: Life Opportunities Survey - Office for National Statistics**

**Notes:**

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report
2. Sample sizes have been rounded independently to the nearest 10
3. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest 1
4. Based on weighted data

### 3 . Working age adults employed at both waves – barriers reported

This section focuses on working age (16 to 64) adults who were employed at both waves.

Tables 3.1 to 3.4 show the top four barriers reported by each group, broken down by whether the specific barriers were reported at both waves or at one wave of the survey<sup>1</sup>. The analysis has been approached in this way in order to explore the types of barriers that are reported at both waves (i.e. those that are persistent), compared to those that are reported at one wave only (i.e. those that are transient).

'Family responsibilities' was the barrier most commonly-reported (either at both waves, or at one wave of the survey) for offset adults, onset-acquired adults and adults without impairment at both waves. It was also the second-most common barrier to be reported at some point of the survey by adults with impairment at both waves. 'Family responsibilities' here refer mainly to childcare, and is a well-known concern for most working families facing the competing needs to work and to care for their children. [Data from the Labour Force Survey](#) also show that one of the main reasons for economic inactivity for working age adults was '[looking after family/home](#)' (with 'students', 'long-term sick' , and 'retired' being other most commonly-reported reasons).

Having impairment(s) appears to be associated with having impairment-based barriers to work. 'A health condition, illness or impairment' was the most commonly reported barrier. The relationship between impairment and impairment-based barriers can also be seen in the offset and onset-acquired groups. For offset adults, 'a health condition, illness or impairment' was the third-most common barrier that was reported at Wave One, but no longer at Wave Two. In contrast, this barrier was third-most commonly reported at Wave Two only for onset-acquired adults. This pattern suggests the joint offset (and onset) of impairment and impairment-based barrier.

In general, barriers tended to be reported at either wave, rather than at both waves. For all groups, apart from 'family responsibilities', all other work barriers were rarely reported at both waves (see 'Barrier at both waves' columns on Tables 3.1 – 3.4). This suggests that 'family responsibilities' may be a more persistent barrier than other barriers. For adults with impairment at both waves, 'a health condition, illness or impairment' may also be seen as a persistent barrier (Table 3.1).

Of the other barriers, 'lack of job opportunities' and 'lack of qualifications/experience/skills' were generally the next most commonly-reported barriers. These two barriers appeared to affect working age adults regardless of their impairment status. This finding may reflect the downturn experienced in the labour market as the UK economy was emerging from the 2008/09 recession. Even though the adults included in the analyses were employed at both waves, 'lack of job opportunities' might have been reported because these adults were in jobs that did not suit their qualifications, or [did not offer them the desired number of hours](#).

**Table 3.1, Adults with impairment at both waves[1]: top four barriers at work, by experience of barrier**

Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were employed at both waves, and experienced a participation restriction to work at either or both waves<sup>2</sup>

Great Britain			
Rank	Barrier at both waves %	Barrier at Wave One only %	Barrier at Wave Two only %
1	A health condition, illness or impairment 15	A health condition, illness or impairment 14	A health condition, illness or impairment 22
2	Family responsibilities 10	Family responsibilities 10	Family responsibilities 10
3	A disability 6	Lack of job opportunities 8	Lack of job opportunities 10
4	Lack of job opportunities 4	Attitudes of employers 7	Lack of qualifications/experience /skills 10

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report

2. Based on weighted data and a sample size of 510 (the unweighted sample figure has been rounded to the nearest 10)

**Table 3.2 Offset adults[1]: top four barriers to work, by experience of barrier**

Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were employed at both waves, and experienced a participation restriction to work at either or both waves<sup>2</sup>

Great Britain			
Rank	Barrier at both waves %	Barrier at Wave One only %	Barrier at Wave Two only %
1	Family responsibilities 10	Family responsibilities 13	Family responsibilities 14
2	Lack of qualifications/experience /skills 2	Lack of job opportunities 11	Lack of job opportunities 8
3	Lack of job opportunities 2	A health condition, illness or impairment 9	Lack of qualifications /experience/skills 7
4	Attitudes of employers 2	Lack of qualifications/experience /skills 9	Difficulty with transport 4

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report

2. Based on weighted data and a sample size of 360 (the unweighted sample figure has been rounded to the nearest 10)

**Table 3.3 Onset-acquired adults[1]: top four barriers at work, by experience of barrier**

Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were employed at both waves, and experienced a participation restriction to work at either or both waves<sup>2</sup>

Great Britain			
Rank	Barrier at both waves %	Barrier at Wave One only %	Barrier at Wave Two only %
1	Family responsibilities 16	Family responsibilities 11	Family responsibilities 21
2	Caring responsibilities 2	Lack of job opportunities 6	Lack of qualifications/experience /skills 13
3	Lack of qualifications/experience /skills 1	Lack of qualifications/experience /skills 4	A health condition, illness or impairment 11
4	Lack of job opportunities 1	Caring responsibilities 4	Lack of job opportunities 8

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report

2. Based on weighted data and a sample size of 210 (the unweighted sample figure has been rounded to the nearest 10)

**Table 3.4 Adults without impairment at both waves[1]: top four barriers to work, by experience of barrier**

Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were employed at both waves, and experienced a participation restriction to work at either or both waves<sup>2</sup>

Great Britain

Rank	Barrier at both waves %	Barrier at Wave One only %	Barrier at Wave Two only %
1	Family responsibilities 14	Family responsibilities 16	Family responsibilities 21
2	Lack of job opportunities 2	Lack of job opportunities 11	Lack of job opportunities 7
3	Lack of qualifications/experience/skills 2	Lack of qualifications/experience/skills 5	Lack of qualifications/experience/skills 6
4	Caring responsibilities 1	Attitudes of employers 4	Difficulty with transport 4

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report
2. Based on weighted data and a sample size of 870 (the unweighted sample figure has been rounded to the nearest 10)
3. Please see reference tables for data for all barriers
4. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest 1

Details of all barriers types can be found in the [data section of this publication](#). The [data can also be viewed as interactive charts](#).

### Notes for 3.3 Working age adults employed at both waves – barriers reported

1. The rankings are calculated based on the percentage of adults who reported each particular barrier at both waves, at Wave One only, or at Wave Two only, out of those adults from that particular group who had a participation restriction to work at either or both waves

## 4 . Working age adults who were economically inactive at both waves – reasons for not working

Tables 3.5 to 3.8 show the top four reasons for not working, as reported by each group, broken down by whether the specific reasons were reported at both waves or at one wave of the survey<sup>1</sup>. The analysis has been approached in this way in order to explore the types of reasons that are reported at both waves (i.e. those that are persistent), compared to those that are reported at one wave only (i.e. those that are transient).

For adults who were economically inactive at both waves, reasons for not working appeared to be stable over time, as they were more likely to be reported at both waves, rather than at one wave only. 'Family responsibilities' was a common reason reported consistently over time, particularly for offset adults, onset-acquired adults and adults without impairment at both waves. For adults with impairment at both waves, 'a health condition, illness or impairment' and 'a disability' were the top two reasons reported for not working. It is worth noting here that adults in this analysis were economically inactive and were therefore not working and not seeking work. Therefore, the reasons for not working reported by this group may be related to personal circumstances as well as economic factors.

'A disability', rather than 'a health condition, illness or impairment', seems to be more closely associated with the offset and onset of impairment. 'A health condition, illness or impairment' tended to be reported at both waves by both offset and onset-acquired adults (Tables 3.6 and 3.7). However, for offset adults, 'a disability' was the top reason reported at Wave One only, but did not feature as a reason at Wave Two only. In contrast, 'a disability' was the third-most reported reason at Wave Two only for the onset-acquired group, coinciding with their onset of impairment. Adults with impairment at both waves also tended to report 'a disability' as a reason for not working, at both or one of the waves. It may be that most of these adults were economically inactive because they were long-term sick or disabled, and hence they perceived themselves as having a disability, in addition to impairments.

Some reasons for not working seemed to be more transient, as they were reported only at one wave, rather than both waves. These included 'anxiety/lack of confidence', 'lack of qualifications/experience/skills' and 'receipt of benefits'.

**Table 3.5, Adults with impairment at both waves [1]: top four reasons for not working**

Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were economically inactive at both waves<sup>2</sup>

				Great Britain	
Rank	Reason reported at both waves	%	Reason reported at Wave One only	%	Reason reported at Wave Two only
1	A health condition, illness or impairment	63	A disability	15	A disability
2	A disability	32	Anxiety/lack of confidence	15	A health condition, illness or impairment
3	Family responsibilities	12	A health condition, illness or impairment	13	Difficulty with transport
4	Anxiety/lack of confidence	8	Difficulty with transport	8	Anxiety/lack of confidence

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report

2. Based on weighted data and a sample size of 800 (the unweighted sample figure has been rounded to the nearest 10)

**Table 3.6 Offset adults[1]: top four reasons for not working**

Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were economically inactive at both waves<sup>2</sup>

Great Britain						
Rank	Reason reported at both waves	%	Reason reported at Wave One only	%	Reason reported at Wave Two only	%
1	Family responsibilities	43	A disability	12	A health condition, illness or impairment	8
2	A health condition, illness or impairment	25	A health condition, illness or impairment	11	Family responsibilities	8
3	Caring responsibilities	7	Anxiety/lack of confidence	10	Lack of qualifications/ experience/ skills	8
4	A disability	6	Family responsibilities	9	Lack of job opportunities	7

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report
2. Based on weighted data and a sample size of 70 (the unweighted sample figure has been rounded to the nearest 10)
3. Please see reference tables for data for all reasons
4. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest 1

**Table 3.7, Onset-acquired adults[1]: top four reasons for not working**

Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were economically inactive at both waves<sup>2</sup>

				Great Britain
Rank	Reason reported at both waves %	Reason reported at Wave One only %	Reason reported at Wave Two only %	
1	A health condition, illness or impairment 35	Anxiety/lack of confidence 11	Lack of qualifications/experience /skills 19	
2	Family responsibilities 29	Family responsibilities 11	Anxiety/lack of confidence 17	
3	Caring responsibilities 18	Affects receipt of benefits 9	A disability 14	
4	Anxiety/lack of confidence 8	Caring responsibilities 8	Family responsibilities 12	

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report
2. Based on weighted data and a sample size of 70 (the unweighted sample figure has been rounded to the nearest 10)
3. Please see reference tables for data for all reasons
4. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest 1

**Table 3.8, Adults without impairment at both waves[1]: top four reasons for not working**Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were economically inactive at both waves<sup>2</sup>

Great Britain						
Rank	Reason reported at both waves	%	Reason reported at Wave One only	%	Reason reported at Wave Two only	%
1	Family responsibilities	69	Affects receipt of benefits	9	Caring responsibilities	10
2	Caring responsibilities	6	Family responsibilities	7	Anxiety/lack of confidence	6
3	Lack of job opportunities	2	Lack of job opportunities	4	Family responsibilities	5
4	Difficulty with transport	2	Anxiety/lack of confidence	3	Difficulty with transport	5

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report
2. Based on weighted data and a sample size of 240 (the unweighted sample figure has been rounded to the nearest 10)
3. Please see reference tables for data for all reasons
4. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest 1

Details of all barriers types can be found in the [data section of this publication](#). The [data can also be viewed as interactive charts](#).

### Notes for 3.4 Working age adults who were economically inactive at both waves – reasons for not working

1. The rankings are calculated based on the percentage of adults who reported each particular barrier at both waves, at Wave One only, or at Wave Two only, out of those adults from that particular group who had a participation restriction to work at either or both waves

## 5 . Types of enablers reported at Wave Two by employed and economically inactive adults

The LOS asks adults in employment if there is anything which has helped them at work. Economically inactive adults are asked if they would need anything to be able to work. This section looks at the types of enablers reported at Wave Two. The following tables show the enablers most often reported at Wave Two by the four groups. Adults employed at both waves (Table 3.9) and adults who were economically inactive at both waves (Table 3.10) are shown separately.

Most adults who were employed at both waves did not report any enabler or measures which helped them at work. This was particularly the case for adults without impairment at both waves (78%) and offset adults (75%). Adults with impairment at both waves were most likely to report at least one enabler (39%).

When reported, the most common enablers for all groups were ‘modified hours or days or reduced work hours’, ‘tax credits’<sup>1</sup> and ‘changes to your work area or work equipment’. ‘Modified hours or days or reduced work hours’ might have been reported as a measure to ease family and caring responsibilities, both of which were common barriers to work for adults employed at both waves (Tables 3.1 to 3.4). Adults with impairment at both waves might have reported ‘modified hours or days or reduced work hours’ because of family responsibilities, although this enabler could also be reported because of their impairment, which was the most common barrier for this group (Table 3.1). [Previous research](#) has shown that the provision of special equipment, modification of the workplace and flexible working hours are common measures adopted by employers in the workplace for disabled employees.

‘Tax credits’ was also a commonly reported enabler for all groups. ‘Tax credits’ is a payment provided by the Government for people earning a low income, and is available to working people including those with children and those with disability. This enabler was probably reported by employed adults because it has helped them in supplementing their income.

**Table 3.9 Enablers that helped at work, as reported at Wave Two by working age (16 to 64) adults who were employed at both waves, by groups[1]**

Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were employed at both waves

Rank	Adults with impairment at both waves		Offset adults		Onset-acquired adults		Great Britain Adults without impairment at both waves	
		%		%		%		%
1	Modified hours or days or reduced work hours	18	Modified hours or days or reduced work hours	11	Modified hours or days or reduced work hours	21	Modified hours or days or reduced work hours	10
2	Tax credits	12	Tax credits	9	Tax credits	9	Tax credits	8
3	Changes to your work area or work equipment	10	Changes to your work area or work equipment	5	Changes to your work area or work equipment	8	Changes to your work area or work equipment	4
4	Modified duties	8	Modified duties	4	Modified duties	3	A job coach or personal assistant	3
	No enabler cited	61	No enabler cited	75	No enabler cited	69	No enabler cited	78
Sample size (number)		960		910		520		2920

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report
2. Please see reference tables for data for all enablers
3. Sample sizes have been rounded to the nearest 10
4. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest 1
5. Based on weighted data

As with employed adults, most adults who were economically inactive at both waves did not report any enabler, or measures which they needed to be able to work. However, economically inactive adults were more likely to mention a measure that they needed to be able to work, than employed adults reporting a measure that has helped them at work.

The most commonly reported enablers for adults who were economically inactive at both waves included 'modified hours or days or reduced work hours', 'other equipment or services' and 'tax credits'. There could be various reasons why these enablers were reported. For example, they might help manage family and caring responsibilities. For adults with impairments, they might help overcome limitations posed by their impairment or disability, a barrier commonly experienced by this group (see Tables 3.5 to 3.8). 'Tax credits' might have been reported because it was seen as something that would help them if they chose to work.

**Table 3.10 Enablers that would help to work, as reported at Wave Two by economically inactive working age (16 to 64) adults, by groups[1]**

Adults aged between 16 and 64 who were economically inactive at both waves

						Great Britain		
Rank	Adults with impairment at both waves	%	Offset adults	%	Onset-acquired adults	%	Adults without impairment at both waves	%
1	Modified hours or days or reduced work hours	29	Modified hours or days or reduced work hours	14	Modified hours or days or reduced work hours	32	Modified hours or days or reduced work hours	34
2	Other equipment or services	21	Other equipment or services	10	Other equipment or services	24	Tax credits	10
3	Modified duties	18	Tax credits	7	Tax credits	11	Other equipment or services	6
4	Building modifications	15	A job coach or personal assistant	4	Modified duties	11	Modified duties	3
	No enabler cited	56	No enabler cited	74	No enabler cited	56	No enabler cited	58.0315127857
Sample size (number)		780		150		70		240

Source: Life Opportunities Survey Wave Two Longitudinal Dataset, Office for National Statistics

Note:

1. Please refer to definition of longitudinal analysis groups in the Introduction of Life Opportunities Survey - Understanding disability Wave Two Part II report
2. Please see reference tables for data for all barriers
3. Sample sizes have been rounded to the nearest 10
4. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest 1
5. Based on weighted data

### Notes for 3.5 Types of enablers reported at Wave Two by employed and economically inactive adults

1. A person may qualify for a tax credit if he/she works but earns low wages

## 6. Background notes

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available by visiting [www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html](http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html) or from the Media Relations Office email: [media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:media.relations@ons.gsi.gov.uk)