



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity



Employment prospects and successful transitions to adulthood: the case of deaf young people

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Post-school Transitions of People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

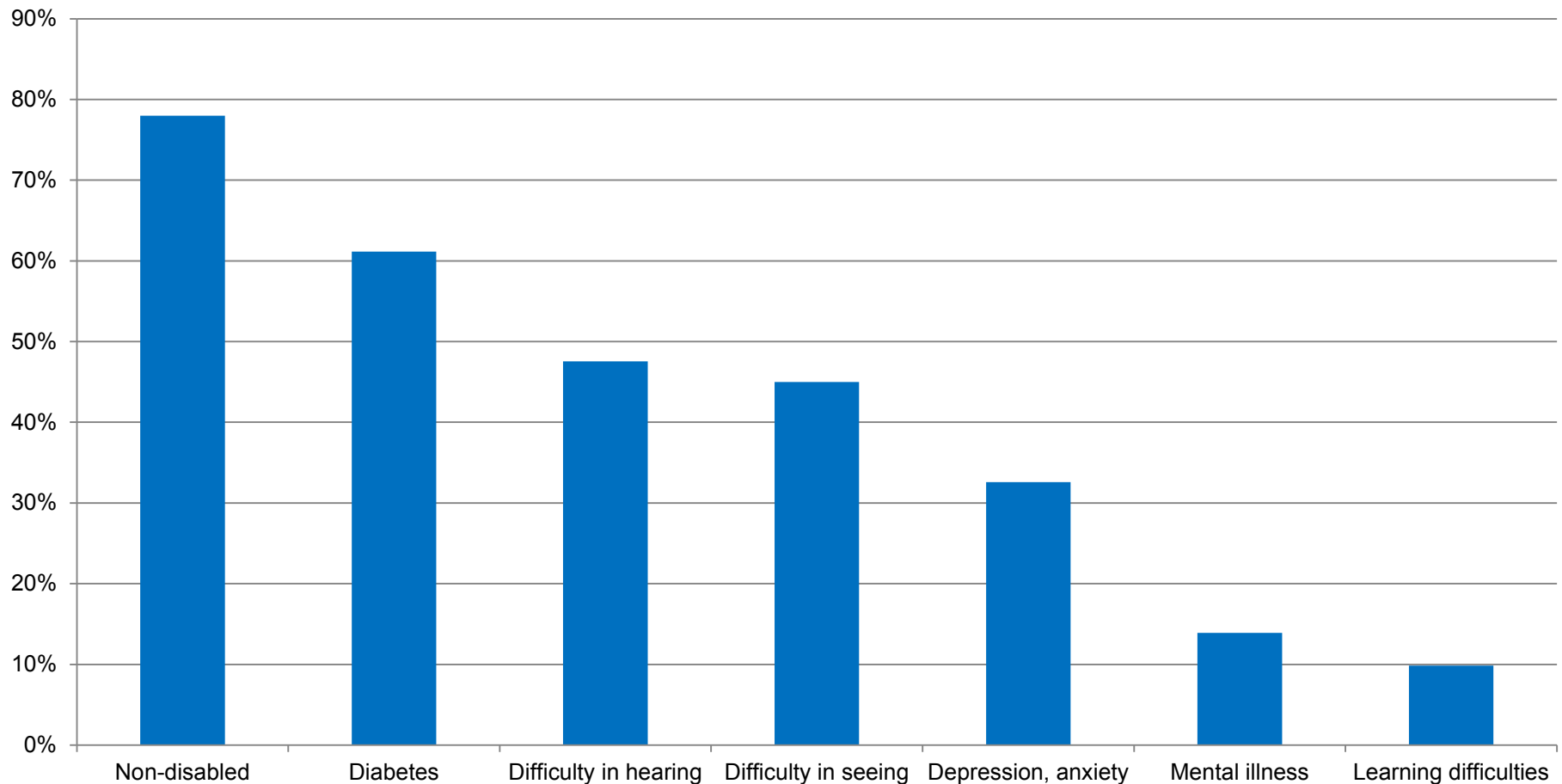


- One-year project commissioned by the National Deaf Children's Society
- Aim - to investigate the post-school transition process of deaf young people in Scotland
- Methods:
 - An analysis of policy and legislation
 - An analysis of survey and administrative data
 - In-depth interviews with thirty young people aged 18-24

Context of the research

- Recent economic crisis
- Scottish Government's efforts to reform post-school transitions policy
- UK Government's reform of the welfare system
- Equality legislation
- EU Social Investment Package

Employment rates of working-age people in the UK by disability status

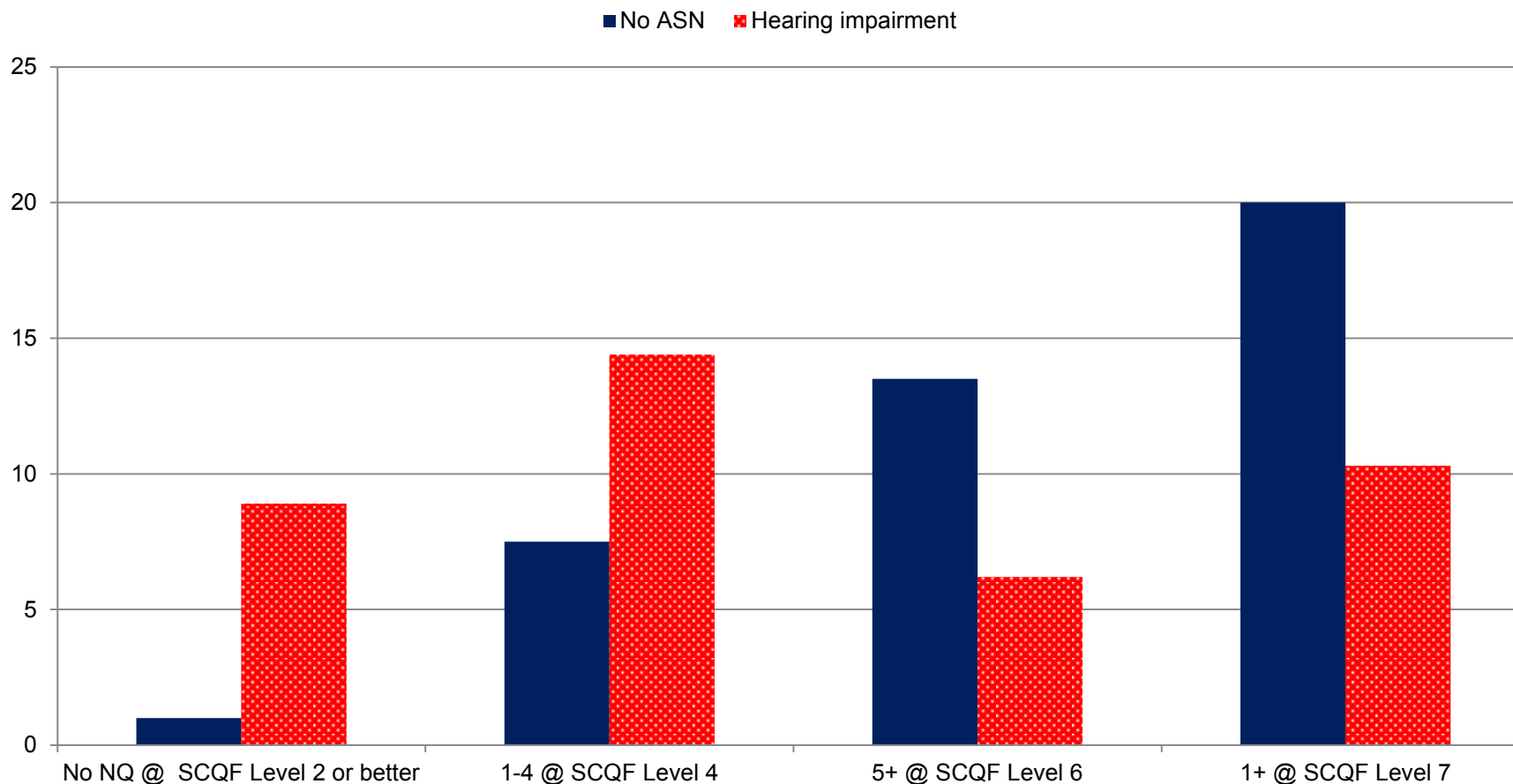


SOURCE: THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY 2012 QUARTER 2

Barriers to employment

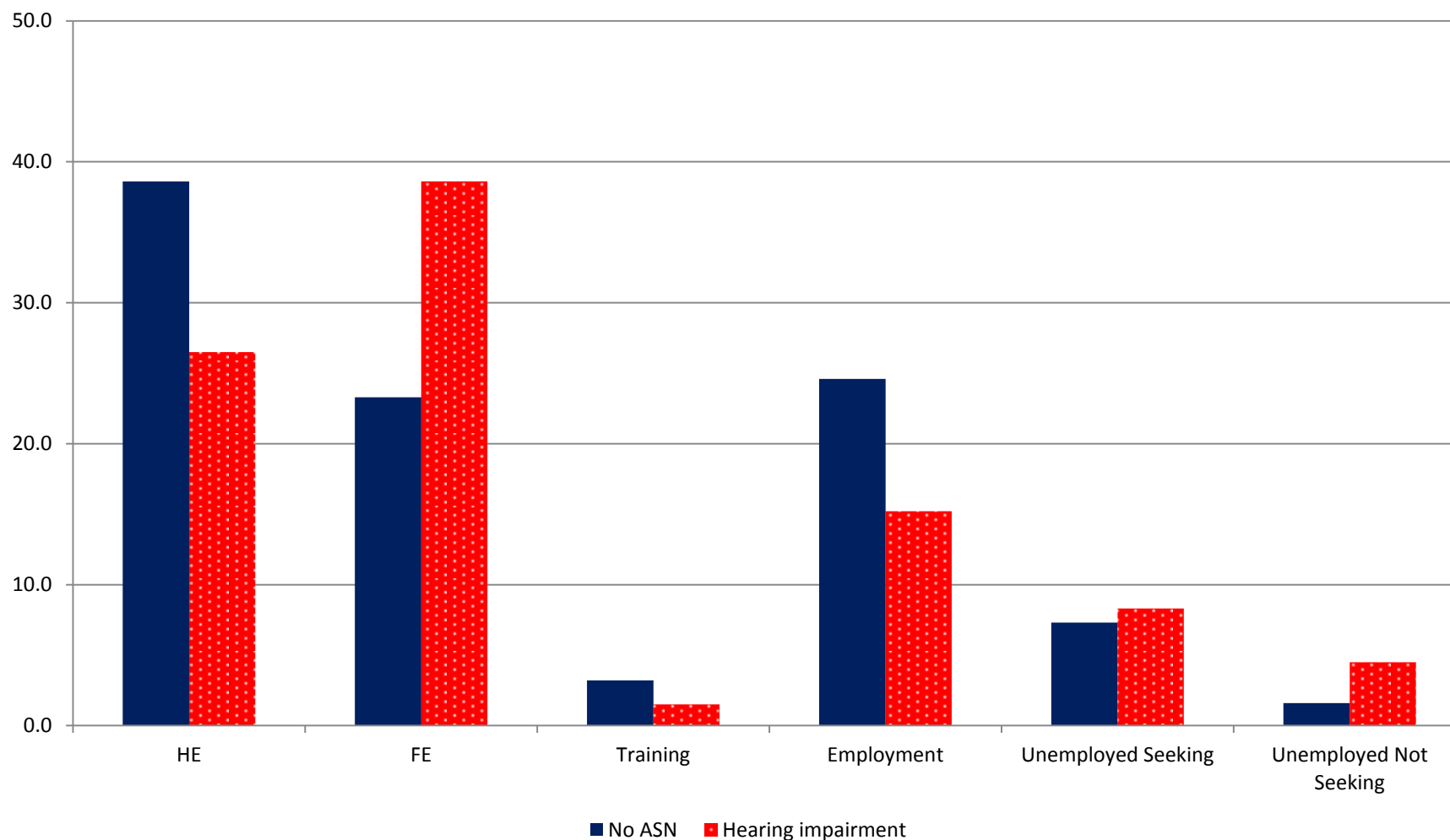
- Lower levels of educational attainment
- Attitudinal and environmental barriers
- Lack of transition support at upper-secondary levels (Ebersold, 2012)

School leavers' attainment



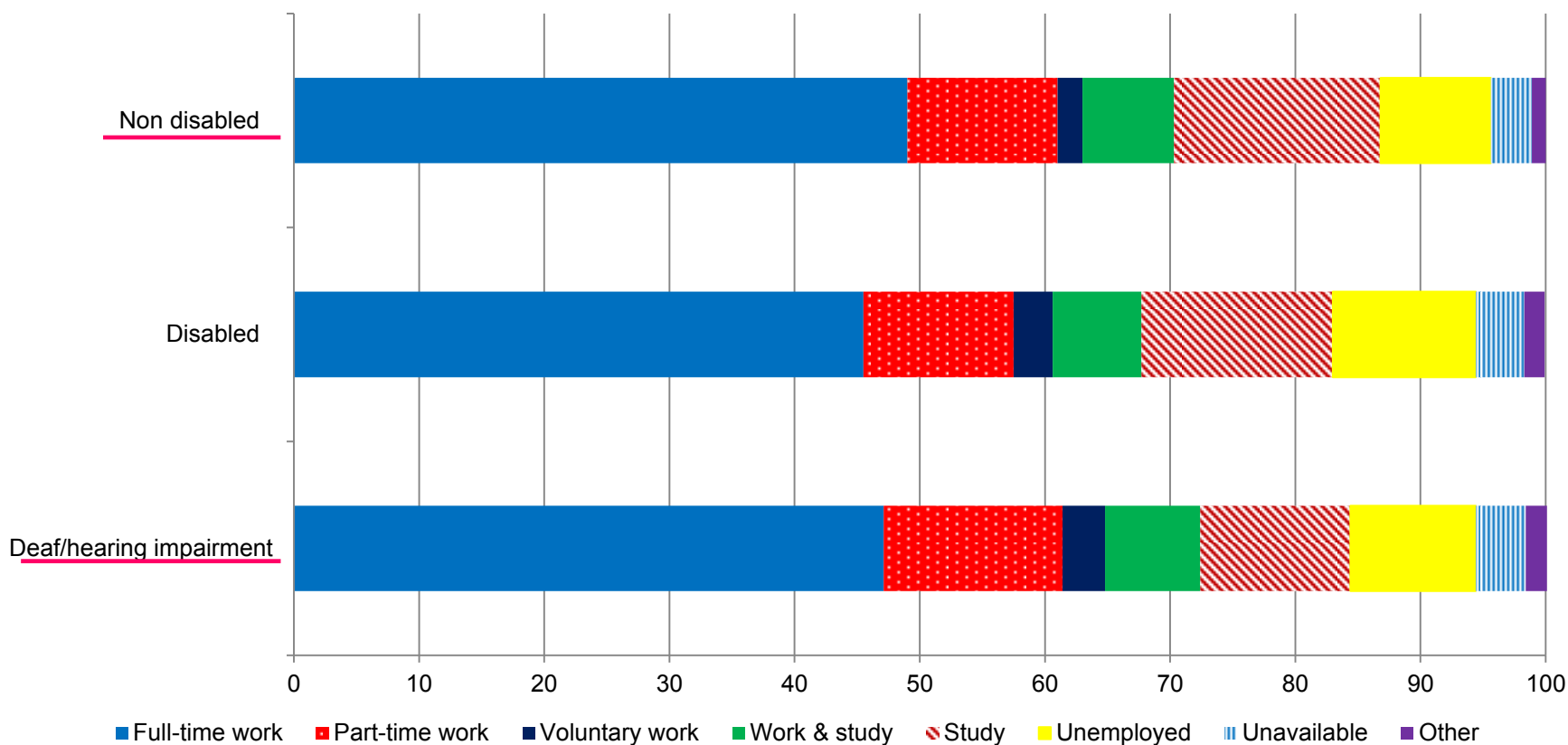
SOURCE: ATTAINMENT AND LEAVER DESTINATIONS, SUPPLEMENTARY DATA. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (2013)
Note. This figure shows a selection of all qualifications; therefore reported percentages do not add up to 100.

School leavers' destinations



SOURCE: ATTAINMENT AND LEAVER DESTINATIONS, SUPPLEMENTARY DATA. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (2013)

Destinations of graduates



SOURCE: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? AGCAS DISABILITY TASK GROUP (2012)

Barriers to finding and staying in employment



Graduates	Non-graduates
Lack of accessibility in applying for work	
Discrimination in recruitment practices	
Lack of deaf awareness	
	Lack of work experience
	Limited social networks
	Lack of support in employment

Lack of accessibility

- Having to ask for job details over the phone
- Telephone job interviews
- Group interviews
- Difficulties at career fairs
- Networking difficulties

Case study: Jack, jobseeker, 24

- Business graduate looking for work in the financial sector, SIMD 5
- Severe to profound hearing loss, communicates orally

'I went along to the careers fairs the university arranged and they were a bit of a disaster because the rooms were so packed and it was so noisy you couldn't speak, you couldn't network so you were just reduced to picking up the literature they had on the tables and trying to avoid speaking to people and looking like an idiot because you can't understand a word that they're saying. So that was a hindrance, especially when everyone says networking is so important and all that sort of thing.'

'Assessment Centres often require a group exercise and they're looking for people who can work in teams or lead a team or whatever and that's quite difficult for me but it's such a crucial part of the job, if you can't do this how are you going to do the job.'

Discrimination in recruitment

- All deaf jobseekers feared discrimination.
- Non-graduates were more likely to encounter potential employers who held overtly negative views of deafness.
- Some non-graduates found that they were more likely to be offered interviews when they did not disclose their deafness in the application forms.

Case study: Leah, full-time mum, 23

- SVQ 3 in Beauty Therapy, SIMD 1
- Severe to profound hearing loss, BSL user

'It was interesting because I noticed that when I sent my CV to the employers with a statement about me being deaf, I never got a reply. I tried again with no mention about my deafness on my CV and I received replies! I have been invited to interviews but I had to let them know that I need an interpreter for the interview. The interviews were then cancelled. This is discrimination! [...] I don't understand why the employers get put off when they see the word 'deaf' on my CV. They should wait until they meet the deaf person at the interview before making a decision. It is not acceptable to be denied an opportunity because I am deaf.'

Lack of deaf awareness

- Employers and co-workers often lacked awareness of the communication needs of people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.

‘The ring of the telephone ... I almost became phobic in a way. I just didn’t want to pick it up, didn’t want to because if I picked that telephone up something bad was going to happen.’

‘It turned out that it was a colleague, one particular colleague who was actually causing most of my stress because she would pick up on anything that went wrong in a bad way.’

(Emily, 24, social worker, severe hearing loss)

Work experience

- Many graduates had started working with their current employer when they were still at university.

e.g., Liam, 22, IT support specialist, SIMD 4
Lucy, 23, disability support worker, SIMD 5
- Non-graduate jobseekers had less work experience than graduates.

Case study: James, jobseeker, 23

- Car mechanic, NVQ 3, SIMD 1
- Profound hearing loss, BSL user

'I missed out my chance of having work experience when I was at school. I can't really remember exactly why. I think it was because of my deafness.'

'I have made over 200 job applications. Nothing at all. [...] I have to go to the Job Centre, check the internet and newspapers for any jobs. I have been applying for lots of jobs. I have applied for two apprenticeships. I am hoping to hear from them soon.'

Social networks vs the JobCentre

- Graduates were more likely to find employment through parents, friends and acquaintances
- Non-graduates used more conventional jobseeking strategies (i.e., the JobCentre)
 - Few were referred to Disability Employment Advisors

'The DEA is not supportive at all. She just writes reports.'

(Leah, 23, full-time mum, SVQ 3)

Case study: Lucy, disability support worker, 23

- Law graduate, SIMD 5
- Profound hearing loss, communicates orally

‘So my mum said, ‘why don’t you hand in a speculative application’. As it turned out, I had done at the right time because they were actually looking for relief workers. [...] And she would often say ‘why don’t you try this’. She obviously knows other organisations that maybe other people wouldn’t be aware of.’

Support in employment

- Graduates were more knowledgeable about support options in employment.
- Non-graduates were generally less informed about support and less likely to take advantage of guaranteed interview schemes.

'I didn't want to be guaranteed an interview. I wanted them to see my qualifications and say, 'she's a potential candidate'. I didn't want to be discriminated against that way.'

(Isla, 20, purchasing assistant, Highers)

Summary

- Both graduate and non-graduate jobseekers encountered lack of accessibility in recruitment practices.
- Both groups feared discrimination – but non-graduates encountered more instances of overt discrimination.
- Both groups encountered attitudinal barriers.
- Non-graduate jobseekers had less work experience.
- Non-graduate jobseekers were less likely to find jobs through social networks.
- Non-graduates had less support in employment.

Implications

- More career guidance, particularly for those from poorer backgrounds
- Better access to information about support in employment
- More work experience opportunities
- More positive social attitudes towards deafness

Further information about the project can be found at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/education/rke/centres-groups/creid/projects/postsch-trans-young-hi>