DISABLED AT INTERVIEW:
A COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGIST IN AND AMID ACTION

BY

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Contents

Abstract

I used a Community Psychology approach, involving Participatory Action Research with Qualitative methods, to both explore the employment interview experiences of disabled people and to effect positive change for disabled participants discriminated against in the labour market. In the opening chapters I set the action research enterprise within the socio-economic and political climate of the time. I follow this by describing the ethical, ideological, epistemological and methodological concerns that have driven my particular process of inquiry. I pay particular attention to the research process and reflect upon personal, social, organisational and political implications of the project. I review literature on disability, disability legislation and employment interviews and place my own work in the context of this. As well as reporting my findings on the difficulties disabled people face when seeking to enter the labour market, I describe the multiple research interventions I engaged with. These ranged from giving research participants welfare benefit advice through to consulting on the Government's Disability Discrimination Act. The main focus for the project became one of developing and marketing a Code of Practice on the recruitment and retention of disabled employees. I worked collaboratively with disabled research participants in developing and marketing this Code with four major employer organisations in order to affect change in employer staffing policies.

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Of the many people who have been important to the way I sustained myself in the research field, I feel some deserve a special mention. My research supervisor, David Fryer, offered the type of support that I have only so far experienced from friends and family. As such, I have difficulty thinking of him as a "supervisor" though I have profited immensely from his understanding and insight into research theory and practice. He helped to guide me through the ethical minefield of research in this field and I have now joined him in a niche in psychology that allows me to work with a heightened sense of ethical and moral reflexivity. A colleague and friend, Marion Murray, was particularly supportive in an academic setting I often encountered as hostile. She listened and cared at times when my worries would otherwise have fallen on unsympathetic ears. My friend Aileen Morgan offered me a wonderful role model as someone who works effectively with disabled people and she helped me believe in myself even when I felt others had lost belief in me. Bob Lavery and Bruce Sutherland prevented my being disabled by bureaucracy and technology and co-learners on the Community Psychology courses of 1995-1998 offered me unique opportunities to learn and share a new vision for psychology. Mum, Dad and John have tolerated both times of long silences and intermittent contact and other times of incoherent, lengthy ramblings when I was enwrapped in the research. Their patience and understanding have been an immense source of support. Cal, a twelve-year-old border collie cross labrador, kept me company and ensured that I got out into the fresh air and away from computers and books long enough to smell the roses. I am further grateful to the main funders, the Economic and Social Research Council, for giving me the opportunity to engage in this project and to Falkirk and Stirling Councils who helped fund parts of the research process and helped make the research interventions "real". The Central Scotland CEPD offered me support throughout, and helped me to develop my understanding of disability and employment issues; learn from their successes in the field and access a network of people with rich sources of knowledge and expertise. Among them were the research participants who enriched my understanding of the research topic more than any library could have done and their energy was vital as the project took us beyond talking and engaged us in action in a multitude of settings.

Each of the above contributed to everything that I feel is good about this thesis. Any mistakes or omission in my work are attributable to me being human and, like anyone else, full of inconsistencies, idiosyncrasies and irrationalities which I am gradually coming to accept.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I sought to leave the title ambiguous, *Disabled at Interview: A community psychologist in and amid action*, to leave it open it to several differing interpretations. The interpretations preferred may reflect the preconceptions brought to this thesis by the reader. Here are the differing interpretations I would anticipate.

"Disabled" can be interpreted as either a collective noun or a verb. "Disabled" could mean people who have a physical or mental impairment. It would refer to individuals that are identified as "the disabled" through using a medical discourse. For example, "the disabled" would be people who have a visual impairment, have lost a limb, have an impairment in cognitive functioning, have cataracts, paraplegia or dementia. However, if we were to interpret "disabled" as a verb then the phrase could mean a person who is restricted by the social context in which they are in. Here a disabled person would be someone whose sensing, physical movement or patterns of thought are restricted by the practices of others and/or the environment they are in . We would use a discourse of social exclusion. A disabled person would be someone who is subjected to social practices that privilege visual sensing, ambulatory activities or consistency and rationality of thought. The two interpretations that can be made of the title of my thesis are:

- **Disabled at interview = Disabled persons being interviewed.**
- **Disabled at interview = Persons being disabled by the interview process.**

The different ways of thinking about disability have different implications for the way we ask questions, answer questions and the way we think about and approach the research topic. I will explore the implications of these two different interpretations in this thesis.

I have also introduced ambiguity regarding the type of interview to which I refer. A focus of my thesis is on employment issues relating to disabled people. If taken in this context one could suppose my thesis is concerned with exploring the experiences of disabled people at employment interviews. However, I have deliberately omitted reference to employment in the title to open up an alternative meaning. This thesis is a piece of empirical research. If taken in this context one could suppose I am referring in the title to research interviews. This would lead one to read the title as an exploration of the phenomenon of disabled people's involvement in research interviews. In this thesis I undertook an exploration of disabled people's experiences of employment interviews using the empirical method of qualitative interviewing amongst other methods. My exploration of employment interviews is thus embedded in the nature of the research interviews I used. Thus, in my title I sought to reflect what is the twin focus of this thesis: the topic and the methods I used to explore the topic.

The final ambiguity focuses on my research role. A community psychologist "in action" is different from one "in and amid" action. Here I sought to promote the ambiguity of the phrase "in action". The phrase could be read as saying the researcher is someone who is an active agent. It could also be read as saying the researcher is an agent in an active setting, whose actions are set in the contexts of the actions of others. I used "amid" to open up this alternative interpretation and again explore both avenues in my work. This further relates to a central focus of my research approach: the use of action research as a way of understanding the research topic.

To summarise, these three ambiguities relate to the three central themes of my thesis. The first concerns how we construct a definition of disability. The second concerns being reflexive about the use of research methods. The third refers to the positioning of the researcher to the research topic. In this thesis I seek to address all three through my exploration of employment interview experiences of disabled people. The aims of my project were similarly threefold. Firstly, I sought to engage in a value driven piece of research. I wished the project to be emancipatory for disabled research participants. Secondly, I sought to gain an empirical understanding of the barriers faced by disabled people in employment interviews. Thirdly, I sought to engage in a research process that would begin to remove the barriers disabled people face when seeking employment.

In Chapter Two I begin my first review of the literature. Here, I cover the literature on disability theory, pivoting on the distinction between the Medical and Social Models of disability. I also review material on disability legislation in the UK. This sets the scene for Chapter Three where I describe the socio-economic and political context in which the project was set, specifically the period between 1994 and 1997. This period was politically volatile, culminating in the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act, widespread changes in social security welfare legislation and the ultimate change of the UK government following a General Election in May of 1997. This context would have an important impact on the research process. The research was situated in a nexus of local and national Government concerns over discrimination against disabled people in the labour market.

In Chapters Four and Five I describe more fully the assumptions I brought to the research. The topic of disability has occupied much attention in the social sciences in general and employment interviews the attention of occupational psychology and management science in particular. Combined, the two issues lead to an exploration of topics that span areas of law, psychology, sociology, anthropology, medicine, business and social policy. By its very nature the topic asks for an eclectic approach. With such a breadth of literature to be addressed I needed to navigate differing scientific paradigms involving distinctive epistemological and methodological concerns tied to intra and interdisciplinary perspectives. I therefore describe in detail the ethical and ideological position I adopted in my own research on this topic and my epistemological and methodological approach. In this way I have sought to situate my work amid the field of research on this topic. It is in Chapter Four that I identify myself as a Community Psychologist and where I describe my vision of what community psychology is.

I follow these two chapters with a description of the range of methods I used in the project in Chapter Six and a brief description of how I used these methods during the course of the project in Chapter Seven. In Chapter Eight I describe what these methods produced in the form of both the understanding I made of the research topic and the action that resulted through the various research interventions participants and I engaged with.

In Chapter Nine I return to the literature and review some of the empirical research that has been conducted on the topics of disability and employment interviews. It is in this section I have sought to make clear how my research approach has differed from others and why. I thus review this literature in light of my own empirical enquiry and empirical findings.

The research approach I have adopted differs from that which underlies much social science research. Many ideas that underlie my research occupy a marginalised position in academic settings in general and in research psychology in particular - although appreciation of their importance is growing rapidly. The ethical and ideological position I have taken as well as the epistemology and the methodology I have adopted reflect my journey of enquiry as a researcher on disability issues.

As I entered the field I found myself rethinking many of my preconceptions not only of disability but on the whole issue of what is known and knowable in the social sciences. I encountered and confronted instances of overtly and covertly oppressive practices and of ideological violence which had a profound impact for research participants and myself. At times the investigation was charged with emotion. Guilt, joy, anger, discomfort and pleasure are all emotions enmeshed in what follows. This emotional content of my work added momentum and direction to the research process. I have sought to capture these emotions in my thesis. I have considered these matters in Chapter Ten where I reflect on the research process. I extend my reflections to include a qualitative examination of the personal, social, organisational and political implications of my work. In a contrast of style I further offer a quantitative insight into the power implications involved in some of the methods I used.

For me, some of the more powerful outcomes to the research process were the numerous research interventions participants and I engaged with. With the vibrancy I felt from the action element of this project I felt the need to leave the end of this thesis open. I have sought to do this in the concluding chapter, Chapter Eleven, where I anticipate the future direction that research in this area may take. This project has reached "closure" in the sense the project met it aims and the write up is now complete. However, for some participants the project is not complete - they continue to engage in the issues explored and the actions that resulted from their involvement in the research project.

1.1 I was the researcher: writing actively in the first person

Much of the research I have reviewed has been written in the third person. I have chosen to join a growing number of social science researchers who are transgressing norms of academic writing by reporting in the first person. My reasons for doing so are twofold. First, I am seeking to be more faithful to the nature of my involvement in the field. Second, I wish to make clear additional research questions. Through the process of both asking and seeking to answer such questions I wish to contribute to an understanding of research practice.

Traditional styles of academic writing objectify and render passive the reported engagement of the researcher and participants with the process of social scientific inquiry. Typically interviews are said to have *been conducted* and questionnaires are said to have *been administered* to *subjects*. Academic researchers are apt to report their empirical activities in the passive voice. To use a literary device to turn fluid research environments containing active agents of change into static environments containing passive recipients is unfaithful to the nature of the social science research practice I sought to engage with. However, such a writing style may be appropriate where participants *are* rendered passive in the research roles they are asked to adopt.

There is a further tendency in research reporting for researchers to refer to themselves in the third person. Indeed, my education in psychology has largely been taken from texts where the authors' grammatical style appeared to remove them from the research they described. Authors would write of how *the researcher* formulated the hypothesis and the *interviewer* asked the questions. Early in my research career I acquiesced to this academic convention of writing in the third person as my writing style was driven by my insufficiently scrutinised notions of what constituted academic "quality" and what I believed were the "rules" of academic practice. For a considerable time my writing style had become, for me, an inappropriate filter through which I expressed my thoughts. The author, my self, became disembodied from what I was reporting. I further realised this was not an arbitrary preference for a particular style but one that reflected a dominant epistemological position within which I was working. This position asked researchers to try to distance themselves from the objects of their study and to write as if they had removed themselves from the context of their research. It asked that they treat their subjective involvement in their area of scientific inquiry as if it were objective and at a distance. I now view writing in the third person to be an expression of this and as such to be a literary device masking important epistemological issues. To put it plainly, *I* was the researcher.

Adopting this style has further implications. The very manner of this style of writing usefully raises and clarifies additional research questions. It turns our attention not only to the answers to which our empirical questions lead, but to the source of those questions. It gives us a different perspective from which to reflect not only on the results of empirical enquiry, but on the values brought into the enquiry by the social scientist. We may more readily begin to focus on who is asking the question and why? Both in style and content I will seek to make myself more visible in my thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW I: AN OVERVIEW OF DISABILITY LEGISLATION AND DEFINITIONS OF DISABILITY

In this, the first part of my review of the literature, I focus on the nature of legislation and changes to legislation in the disability field. I then review the different ways disability has been defined in the literature.

2.1 Reviewing the literature on legislation: supply and demand led policies

I feel it prudent to begin this section by making a distinction between supply and demand led policies. This was a focus effectively used by White (1990) in his discussion of supply led employment policies. It was also a focus adopted by Bruce (1991) in his paper centring more specifically on the employment of disabled people and by other commentators who have focused on the dual issue of employment and disability (eg. Barnes, 1991; Oliver, 1994a).

Supply led disability and employment policies focus on the job-readiness of disabled people. The emphasis is on ensuring there is an adequate supply of rehabilitated, work-ready disabled people for the labour force. The question such a focus poses is: what proportion of this population are ready and able to enter the labour market? Where supply is low, policy measures seek to remedy this through corrective measures that centre on the disabled individual: on her or his level of occupational functioning. Demand led policies ask not are there enough job-ready disabled people, but are there enough jobs for disabled people. Where the supply side looks at the disabled people who are not working and from that perspective legislators develop policy strategies that encourage, assist or insist disabled people seek employment, the demand side asks questions related to the availability of jobs for disabled people and seeks ways of encouraging employer organisations to create employment opportunities for prospective disabled employees.

Demand policy is poorly developed in disability legislation in particular and in public awareness of disability and unemployment issues in general. This is also so more widely of employment policies and economic research on disability (Chirikos, 1991). 'There are virtually no attempts in modern capitalist societies targeted at the social organisation of work, at the demand side of labour' (Oliver, 1990b:87).

Public expenditure figures published by the Department of Employment clearly show how much public money was being invested in demand and supply related activities. Figure 2a details the relevant Government expenditure for the period 1989/90.

Figure 2a Government expenditure 1989/90

Work incentive payments	£12m
Rehabilitation and placement services	£290m
Encouraging good employment practice	£4m
The Quota Scheme	£1.4m
Anti-discrimination legislation	nil
Subsidised employment	£100m

(Cited in Berthoud et al. 1993:34)

Funding on rehabilitation was nearly three times that of funding on job creation, ie. subsidised employment. During that same period £19 was spent on benefit payments for every £1 spent on employment policies such as those listed above (Berthoud et al. 1993). This is similarly the case in the US (Erlanger & Roth, 1985). Incentive payments and rehabilitation are focused on increasing the supply of workers. Berthoud et al. noted in 1993 that over the past fifteen years legislative changes in the field of disability and employment had increasingly focused on supply led policies. There is a political expediency for this, and I will discuss this later in the chapter.

The argument above is over simplistic. Conceptually, demand and supply are not readily separable. This will become clear as this chapter develops. However, if we allow the distinction to stand for now, I will begin with a review of demand led policy and then move to consider supply led policy. The former involves civil rights legislation and the latter involves a focus on occupational rehabilitation.

2.1.1 Demand led policies

2.1.1.1 The Disabled Person's Employment Acts

Disability policy has been virtually ignored by political scientists (Hahn, 1985b). However, it has been a central concern to many disability writers and has been increasingly reflected on following the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the US and the

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in the UK. During the move towards civil rights legislation for disabled people in the UK there has been much reflection on past and existing legislated provisions for disabled people. The literature I have reviewed provides a historical context to the legislation that exists today and it is in this context I will set my discussion of legislative issues relating to disability and employment.

The 1944 and 1958 Disabled Person's Employment Acts reached the statute books at a time when there was a strong commitment for the integration of disabled people into the workforce (for a full discussion and assessment of the Acts, see Topliss, 1982). Townsend (1981b) reflected on the optimism of the time concerning the future employment prospects of disabled people. In the early 1940s unemployment levels were falling from their peak in the recession hit years of the 1930s to the extent that in the post-war years there were labour shortages. With a lull in the supply of workers, employers turned to disabled people as potential employees. Further, society was pained with guilt over the failure to make adequate social provision for casualties of the First World War. Following the Second World War the UK was ready for sweeping social reforms including ensuring there was adequate employment provision for disabled people. In the Tomlinson Report (1943) the Committee on the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Disabled People voiced their dedication to secure equitable employment opportunities for disabled people and believed disabled people were equally as employable as non disabled people (Floyd, 1991). 1944 saw these recommendations adopted in a Parliamentary Bill that reached the statute books as the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act. This was to be a seminal piece of disability employment legislation, the first that secured legal rights of employment for disabled people in the UK (Barnes, 1991). It was to be further supported by the supplementary Act of 1958 that made provisions for the establishment of sheltered workshops (now known as Remploy) and means to establish and support further workshops in local authority and voluntary organisations. Combined, these Acts adopted a three-pronged strategy: the provision of training and rehabilitation; the provision of sheltered employment for those not able to compete in the open market; and, the "Quota Scheme" and "Register of Disabled People". The latter two strategies were examples of demand led policies, the former an example of supply led policy.

The Quota Scheme was perhaps the most important provision contained in the 1944 Act. Similar quota schemes exist in several European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and France, though not necessarily premised on the same beliefs as in the UK. Based on the suggestions of the Tomlinson Committee, the Quota Scheme in the UK saw a parity between non disabled and disabled people's ability to work. Germany's Quota Scheme, for example, was based on the belief disabled people were less productive than non disabled people and thus employers required incentives to employ them (Kulkarni, 1981). The UK Quota Scheme required private sector employer organisations whose work force was sized at twenty employees or more to have a quota of *registered* disabled employees. This quota was fixed in 1946 at 3 per cent of the employer's total work force. There was room for different quota percentages to be fixed for different occupational groups, though only one ever such change was introduced - a quota of 0.1 per cent for ship crews. Quota was to be monitored by quota inspections from the Department of Employment (for an internal review of these inspection visits see Leah et al. 1988). Public sector employer organisations were not required by law to adhere to quota, but the Act stipulated they should feel obliged to achieve quota. The legislative wheels would come into effect when an employer organisation below quota recruited new staff. Thus, it was not illegal for an employer to be under quota. However, if an employer was to hire a non disabled employee while under quota they were liable to a fine, though they could employ a non disabled employee if they had been granted a quota exemption permit from their Employment Service (ES) local Placement Assessment and Counselling Team (PACT).

The Act also established a Disabled Person's Employment Register, and it was to this the *registered* nature of the disability refers. Registers were kept at ES Jobcentres and at Local Education Authority Careers Offices. Eligibility for registration, in the words of the Act, held a disabled person had to be 'substantially handicapped on account of injury, disease (including a physical or mental condition arising from imperfect development of any organ), or congenital deformity, in obtaining or keeping employment or work on his [sic] account otherwise suited to his age, qualification and experience; the disablement being likely to last twelve months or more.' Those on the register were issued a 'Green Card'. This card entitled its holder access to employment opportunities via the Quota Scheme and access to specialist services within the ES. Those eligible to register were disabled people who were sufficiently disabled to require some form of specialist support from the ES, but not so disabled that they were deemed incapable of work. This specialised help is referred to in an ES leaflet as helping disabled people to secure and retain employment, to obtain travel to work grants, to obtain free loan of special equipment and the opportunity to secure sheltered employment or sheltered work placements (ES, 1993). The decision as to what counted as disabled was often left to the ES Disability Resettlement Officers (DRO). If DROs felt uncertain of a client's eligibility they could seek advice from their local Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities (CEPD). Upon registration disabled people were divided into two categories, those capable of working in open employment and those only capable of working in sheltered workshops - defined as people capable of productivity at a level of 30 per cent of more. Again, the decision as to who should be in which category was left to DROs. Stubbins (1982) reminds us few DROs had any clinical training or skills in disability assessment or vocational rehabilitation and this was noted as an area of concern by ES internal research (Leah et al. 1988). Decisions as to who were suitable to register as disabled were often left to the untrained judgement of ES front-line staff.

An additional detail of the 1944 Act included the provision of designated employment, where specific occupations were reserved solely for registered disabled people unless permission to do otherwise was granted to an employer through special permit. The only two occupations that ever came under this provision were 'car park attendant' and 'electric lift operator'. Designated employment provision was criticised for concentrating on two occupations that were both low status and low paid (Lonsdale, 1985) and for doing little to redress the stereotypical view of a disabled person in employment (Ide, 1993).

The efficacy of the Disabled Person's Employment Acts was referred to in confident manner, publicly at least, by the National Advisory Council on Employment of People with Disabilities in a pre publication draft of '*Equality Pays: An equal opportunities guide for small employers*' (NACEPD, 1994). In it they detail the duties placed on employers to employ at least three per cent disabled people in their workforce. They remind employers that any contravention of the Act could subject the employer to a fine or even imprisonment. The reality, however, was very different. The 1944 and 1958 Acts were largely ineffectual. While few employer organisations abided by the Quota Scheme, even fewer employers were ever prosecuted for contravening the scheme. Since 1975 the literature reports no prosecutions being made under the Act, with only ten prosecutions made against employers since the Acts' inception in 1944. Research by

Morrell (1990) cites over three-quarters of employers who came under the remit of the Quota Scheme (ie. organisations of twenty or more employees) reported the scheme had never encouraged them to either recruit or retain disabled staff. Successive Governments consistently failed to implement the legislation (Glendinning, 1991).

The problem with the Acts, however, did not solely lie with their implementation but also with their structure. Even when the legal requirements of the Acts are laid clear, as in the NACEPD draft document, they are poor in comparison to other civil rights legislation such as the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Race Relations Act of 1976 to which many had hoped disability employment rights legislation would aspire (eg. Bruce, 1991). The Disabled Persons Employment Acts were not civil rights Acts. They effectively allowed employers to discriminate against disabled people if that employer had 3 per cent or more of their workforce registered as disabled. Even if penalties for contravening the Acts were to have been more thoroughly imposed, sometimes they were so insignificant it would be hard to imagine how they would be an incentive for employers to comply with the legislation: a maximum £100 fine for failure to keep records on the percentage of their workforce who were disabled, thereafter a five-pound fine every day an employer continued to fail to produce such records. This fine remained unchanged for almost fifty years since it was set in 1944 (Barnes, 1991; Glendinning, 1991).

As early as 1979 the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) were determined to weaken the Quota Scheme. Indeed, in that year they recommended its abolition (MSC, 1979a). Townsend writes of the development of a 'narrow, uninformed and indeed unsympathetic bureaucratic view about employment for people with disabilities... evolved, regrettably, during the 1970s and early 1980s' (Townsend, 1981b:61). The climate Townsend describes primarily relates to the Government's handling of the Quota Scheme and the alternatives to the scheme they were considering. I would recommend Townsend's text for a fuller discussion of the processes ongoing during that period. To summarise his review, the ill-feeling so apparently felt against the scheme from within the civil service was to be found in a Department of Employment's (DE) consultative document (DE, 1973) and a MSC discussion paper (MSC, 1979a) and proposals for reform (MSC, 1981). Many commentators were concerned this latter document was published during the International Year for Disabled People, ie. Government sending out the message that employment rights should be effectively withdrawn from disabled people during the year dedicated to promoting the interests of disabled people. All these documents contained a similar message, that there was little of good in the Quota Scheme and both the DE and MSC recommended it to be scrapped. Further, both the DE and MSC in their published reviews made scant reference to the external sources that were, at the time, arguing for greater support and enforcement of the provisions of the Acts (eg. Piercy Committee, 1956; Snowdon Working Party, 1979) the wide public support for the scheme (Weir, 1981) and support from a majority of disabled people (Gladstone, 1985). Several commentators from within the disability movement in particular had asked for a reinforcement of the Quota Scheme and suggested the system of fines be more vigorously imposed and monies raised to be placed in a central fund that would support projects to benefit disabled people (Lonsdale & Walker, 1984; Graham et al. 1990). Similar inattention was paid to unpublished MSC internal research that suggested the Quota Scheme and Disability Register were popular among both disabled people and employers (MSC, 1979b).

In 1982 the MSC again recommended the abandonment of the Quota Scheme and suggested in its place a voluntary scheme supported by a less extensive set of statutory obligations. The MSC published a Code of Practice which it suggested could be used in such a voluntary way. Lonsdale (1985) points to the lack of any statutory framework in the document, being more of an educational document on good practice than an informative document on statutory provisions reaffirming the MSC's desire to move away from statutory provisions and towards more voluntary, persuasive lines. It was perhaps only the strength of opinion outside Government offices supporting the statutory provisions of the 1944 Act that meant the Quota Scheme stayed for as long as it did. Townsend believed from such evidence that the Quota and Registration provisions had a powerful enemy in the DE and MSC, so this external support for the scheme was probably vital for its survival but insufficient to mean the scheme would be strengthened or be more fully implemented. When the MSC was asked to do just that through a consultancy process in 1983 with disability organisations, Trade Unions and employers, the recommendation made was to tighten up the issuing of Quota exemption permits. This was never carried out. The reason the Government gave for their inaction was that any change in policy would not be taken until they had conducted in-depth research into the size of the disabled population (Floyd, 1991).

One explanation suggested for why the Quota Scheme was not being enforced was that it was the Register of Disabled People rather than the scheme that was not working. Here it was argued disabled people were not registering in sufficient numbers for there to be enough disabled people in the workforce to allow Quota to work. This provided one explanation for why the Quota Scheme was ultimately to fail: employers could not employ 3 per cent disabled workers because there were not enough people who were registered disabled. The SCPR survey, the aim of which was to estimate the number of people in the Britain who were registerable under the 1944 Act, estimated that one million people were eligible to register as disabled, but that only fourteen per cent of them were actually registered. Further, of those disabled people who were seeking employment only 53 per cent had heard of the Register (Prescott-Clarke, 1990). Topliss (1979) picked up this argument and explored rather than challenged it. He sought to suggest an explanation for the poor registration rates during 1978, a time when the number of registered disabled people was as high as half a million - a figure still met with disappointment by Government officials. He supposed the reason why so few people had registered was that the different definitions used under the 1944 Act led to disabled people being uncertain over whether they were eligible to register. A similarly individualised explanation was put forward by the MSC in the same year who contended poor take-up of registration was due to the stigma people felt in being identified as disabled (MSC, 1979b). While I have more faith in the latter explanation (indeed the SCPR survey did find that one in ten of both those with and without Green Cards reported they felt being registered as disabled was stigmatising), it still seems erroneous to blame the inefficacy of the Quota Scheme on the ignorance or reluctance of disabled people to register. It could well be the case that the lack of enforcement of the Scheme was a reason why disabled people did not register.

Disabled people may have seen little reason to register for what was an unenforced piece of legislation. Research by the DE suggested disabled people would register if they felt that doing so would be a positive step to take concerning their employment prospects (Foster, 1990). As Abberley (1991) suggests, disabled people may have perceived registering as disabled as an act that profited employers but offered little benefit for themselves. The SCPR survey had found large numbers of disabled people who were unaware of the Green Card and many who had heard of it but did not know what it meant or were confused about what it meant. This could support the argument that the problem was with disabled people's ignorance of the register, but it could also suggest that the register was not sufficiently marketed by the DE. Internal ES research also gives an indication DROs at that time had mixed feelings over the usefulness of the register (Beattie, 1990) which may have affected the level at which it was marketed to ES clients, ie. employers and jobseekers. However, some disabled people did register and their numbers are not inconsequential. Townsend (1981b) points out that since 1944 large numbers of people were automatically registered as disabled, such as members of the British forces disabled by war. Furthermore, the number of registered disabled reached almost one million in 1950 (Barnes, 1991) yet at that time unemployment for the registered disabled was still relatively high. Numbers of disabled people on the Disability Register dropped to 366,768 in the late 1980s (Same Difference, 1990) and ES internal research reported similar levels of decline in numbers of disabled people registered (Rumbol, 1988). The decline of disabled people registering occurred mainly during the late 1970s when unemployment was rising sharply. This could lead one to entertain alternative arguments for the failure of the provisions of the 1944 and 1958 Acts which I explore below.

One suggested reason why the Quota Scheme and disability registration were not working was due to no Government ever enforcing the legislation (Barnes & Oliver, 1995). It is superficial to cite the falloff in registered disabled employees as a reason for employers not fulfilling their quota. DE research stated that the increase in quota exemption permits granted was a result in the fall in numbers of people registered as disabled (Department of Employment, 1990). Barnes (1990) cites this as setting up a vicious circle: disabled people not registering because they feel legislation is ineffectual and the DE making the legislation ultimately ineffectual because of disabled people not registering.

As mentioned above, Government was reluctant to enforce the Quota Scheme, with there only ever being ten prosecutions under the Act in its history. This was not due to a lack of unlawful practice by employers. In 1977 10,000 employer organisations were found to have broken the law without any action taken against them. By 1986 there were an estimated 17.2 per cent of employers acting illegally in respect to the Act (Hansard, 1989). Of the ten prosecutions made only seven were fined and even then the grand total of all those fines amounted to little over three hundred pounds (House of Commons, 1979). Further, figures from the early 1970s indicated far more exemption permits were issued than there were employer organisations fulfilling quota - 25,875 of the former and 25,385 of the latter. It was common practice for bulk exemption permits to be issued and this led Massie (1981) to remark of the ES that they showed the same generosity with exemption permits as guests throwing confetti at a wedding. Townsend also noted the Government's unwillingness to prosecute during the 1940s to the 1960s, a period where unemployment was generally low but remained high among the registered disabled. He placed the blame for the poor employment rates of disabled people on the Government.

The picture was as bleak ten years later following the annual inquiry into employers attaining quota in 1989 as reported by the Employment Gazette (1990). The report presents the quota figures in the public sector. Of the nine Scottish Regional Councils, none reached quota. The highest quota was reached by Fife Council (1.2 per cent). The average quota across all councils was 0.7 per cent. None of the three Scottish Island Councils had attained quota at that time and the highest quota was 1.1 per cent (Shetland) with an average of 0.7 per cent. Of the fifty-three Scottish District Councils, two had attained quota (Clydebank & Lochaber) with the average across councils of 1.3 per cent. The table below summarises the rest of the results reported.

Table 2a: Quota figures for the public sector 1989

ORGANISATION	NUMBER REACHING QUOTA	HIGHEST QUOTA	AVERAGE QUOTA
County Councils, England and Wales	1 of 48 (2%)	4.0 West Yorkshire	0.7
District Councils, England and Wales	21 of 363 (6%)	5.8 Colchester	1.1
Greater London Area Councils	1 of 33 (3%)	3.0 Lambeth	0.9
Regional Health Authorities	1 of 16 (6%)	3.2 Isles of Scilly	0.4
Scottish Health Boards	0 of 15 (0%)	0.5 Borders &Shetland	0.2
District Health Authorities	0 of 197 (0%)	1.2 East Hertfordshire	0.3
Other bodies within the NHS	0 of 4 (0%)	2.8 Dental Estimates Board	0.8
Regional Water Authorities	0 of 14 (0%)	1.7 Sussex (mid)	0.7
Electricity Boards	0 of 14 (0%)	1.0 North Eastern	0.6
Government Departments	0 of 28 (0%)	2.8 National Savings	1.4
Nationalised Industries/ Public Authorities	0 of 10 (0%)	1.3 Civil Aviation Auth.	0.6

This is a very grim picture indeed. It is interesting that among the lowest quotas are those of the health boards. It is interesting as Chinnery (1991) similarly found the care industry was conspicuous for being under quota. It is perhaps not intuitive that industries that care for disabled people have the worst record for employing disabled people. Zola (1979) noted in the US that health occupations were the fastest growing type of employment, the medical world had the highest income bracket and health related businesses were among the richest and most profitable. This somewhat adds to the disappointment of their poor showing on Quota in the UK.

As stated earlier, although the public sector was not required by law to adhere to Quota, legislation stipulated they should feel obliged to achieve quota. The picture of quotas across the public sector is not dramatically worse nor substantially better than that found in the private sector, with an average quota across private sector organisations of below 1 per cent (Floyd, 1991). Looking at a longitudinal picture, firms employing to quota totalled 53.2 per cent at one point but had fallen by 1986 to 26.8 per cent and to 20 per cent by 1994 (re: Finn, 1994). However, the published quota figures were probably misleading. Grover and Gladstone (1981) distributed confidential questionnaires among employees in a local health authority that had an official quota of 0.7 per cent. They were seeking to find out how many disabled people were employed irrespective of whether they were registered disabled. Their results showed well over 3 per cent of employees could have registered as disabled if they had wished. Thus, these figures may portray a pessimistic picture in so much as they only offer detail on how many registered disabled people were employed: many people are disabled but not registered as disabled.

In practice, the situation with Quota was to place an untenable strain on PACTs. They were not and could never be resourced to monitor and act upon every individual recruitment practice of employers who were below quota in their area. The number of employers violating Quota was simply too great. This points to a serious flaw in the legislation. Quota targeted individual employer recruitment practices, not general employer policies. To monitor the sheer number of such decisions being made in the labour market each day would require resources well beyond the reserves of the DE. Basically stated, the legislation asked that each local PACT team should keep track of every vacancy of employer organisations in their region and supply each under quota employer with a suitable candidate from the disability register for that job or else offer an exemption permit.

The arguments mentioned earlier, connected to the Disability Register, effectively reverses the focus of the 1944 Act from a demand led policy (creating employment opportunities for disabled people) through the Quota Scheme to a supply led policy (creating sufficient numbers of work ready registered disabled people) by focusing on the importance of the Disability Register. The argument thus states the problem is not that there are insufficient employers offering jobs to registered disabled people but that there are insufficient numbers of registered disabled people.

Wherever our partiality directs us in deciding whether it was Quota or the Register that was failing, or whether the legislation itself or its lack of enforcement or a combination of both was to blame, it was quite evident from the literature the Quota Scheme had many powerful enemies who were to have a hand to play in its ultimate demise. The Public Accounts Committee in the House of Commons made clear in no uncertain terms the Scheme should be abolished (House of Commons, 1990). Their sentiments were echoed in the Government consultation document in the same year (DE, 1990) and earlier by the MSC (1981). These documents look to everything but the potential for existing legislation to be strengthened.

Of course, scrapping the Quota system was not the only option open to Government. The scheme could have been enforced more fully or reformed. For example, this was the suggestion of Walker and Townsend (1981). A reform suggested by Berthoud et al. (1993) was not to impose penalties for employers below quota who failed to recruit a disabled person if a new vacancy arose, but to encourage employers to draw up a strategy for complying with the Quota Scheme. They suggested setting a timetable for employer organisations to draw up a strategy to reach quota and to prosecute organisations if they failed to reach quota within that period. This is an approach that targets employers' policies rather than employers' individual recruitment decisions.

Instead of reinforcing the Quota Scheme the Government chose to adopt the voluntary approach advocated by the MSC in 1982. The Government invested its energies into campaigns of persuasion. The efforts and emphasis put into these campaigns suggested the Government's strong preference for voluntary action through persuasion as opposed to coercive action through legislation (Barnes, 1991; Dalley, 1991). As I will argue below, emphasis on voluntary action continues as it is embedded in the disability anti-discrimination legislation that eventually came to pass.

Berthoud et al. (1993:41) describe the aims of such campaigns of persuasion were 'to convince employers of two apparently contradictory ideas: that they have a social obligation to ensure that disabled people are treated fairly and that it is in their own best interests to employ disabled people'. Information used in these campaigns typically sought to show that disabled employees were no less productive than other employees and that there were longer-term benefits in recruiting and retaining disabled employees. Employer organisations were further made aware of the support (equipment and finances) available to support disabled employees once in employment. In essence this continued to be a demand led approach to policy in that the Government was seeking to create employment opportunities for disabled people. However, the message contained in these campaigns was, as in the problematising of the Disability Register, supply led. They were supply led in the sense these campaigns sought also to open up the opportunities by making disabled people more attractive as potential employees and thus focused on making disabled people more employable. Here the distinction between demand and supply led policies begin to merge, pointing to the difficulty in seeking to dichotomise the concepts of demand and supply led policies briefly mentioned earlier. Thus, both in campaigns of persuasion and in the 1944 Act, the demand led appearance of these policies contained supply led messages. Though not as distinct as policies of rehabilitation that I discuss later, these campaigns focused on making disabled people more employable which resulted in several commentators to feel cautious over their efficacy.

There have been four campaigns of persuasion in the last twenty years. The first began in 1977 and was known as *Positive Policies*. This campaign sought to encourage employers to rewrite internal employment policy to be fairer to disabled people. The campaign was not noted for its success (Lonsdale, 1985). Two years later this campaign was succeeded by the *Fit for Work* campaign. The main difference from the previous campaign was the introduction of an incentive behind good practice. In the words of Berthoud et al. (1993:132), 'a desk ornament is offered to companies which take the lead in developing good practice'. Each year one hundred such desk ornaments, accompanied by a citation, a plaque and the right to use an award emblem on stationary and advertising, were awarded to employer organisations who were deemed to be operating the "best practice" policies on disability recruitment and retention. The ES were later to concede the target of one hundred employers per year was far too small to have an impact on the labour market (ES, 1990) and several commentators viewed the incentives used as hardly attractive to employers (eg. Berthoud et al. 1993). The latest persuasion campaign began in 1991 and was called the *Two Ticks* campaign. Here the net was cast wider and the campaign sought to involve several thousand employers. The DE spent £400,000 in marketing the scheme (Barnes, 1991). Again, it was an award based incentive scheme. The desk ornament was dropped, instead employers who exercised good practice in relation to recruiting and retaining disabled employees were allowed to use a *Two Ticks* symbol on their advertising and stationary. However, the decision whether employer organisations were worthy to carry the Two Ticks symbol was for the employer her/himself to make, its use was purely voluntary. This has led to much criticism of the scheme, a scheme that still operates today. There is a lack of confidence in the use of the Two Ticks symbol, many employers and employees are left unclear on what the symbol means and many disabled employees remain suspicious over its use: it is not widely recognised as guaranteeing good practice. At best, the symbol shows an employer desires good practice in relation to employing disabled people in its workforce. Further, the expectancy during the early days of the campaign that thousands of employer organisations would be involved was over ambitious. In reality only *one* thousand were to become involved.

The ES also embarked upon a *Code of Good Practice on the Employment of Disabled People* that was first launched in 1984 along with a video in 1985. The Code was updated and relaunched with an ES marketing campaign in 1988. However, like the campaigns that went before it, its impact was not widespread. Graham et al. reported that only 120,000 copies had been distributed by the end of the 1980s (Graham et al. 1990). Further, only a third of those who had received the Code felt that it had made them aware of the employability of disabled people (Morrell, 1990). Morrell further found that only twenty-one per cent of all employers had formalised written policies on the issue of employing disabled people (ibid.).

These campaigns were underpinned by a supply led nature due to the additional strategies used to "sell" these campaigns to employers. Again, these strategies sought to create employment opportunities for disabled people but were hinged on a philosophy of making disabled people more attractive as potential employees. Typically, employers argued increased costs were a disincentive to employing disabled people. Part of the DE's task was to develop schemes that eased the threat of increased costs, real or imagined, for employers. Such schemes included *Adaptations to Premises and Equipment* (APE)- a system of grant provisions that could be used towards the costs of adaptations to an employer's premises and/or equipment - and *Special Aids to Employment* (SAE) - a system where the ES would loan equipment to registered disabled people in employment where employers were not willing or able to supply the equipment themselves. Neither of these schemes was successful with respect to attracting the interest of employers. Only 2 per cent of the £500,000 allocated to APE was actually used (Lonsdale, 1985). Berthoud et al. (1993) reported the lack of success of these schemes was due to poor marketing. The most recent of these initiatives, Access to Work (AtW), has received more publicity and has enjoyed a greater degree of success, although it was recently threatened by Government budget cuts. The problem with all these schemes is they are essentially reactive measures tied to individual disabled job applicants (Lunt & Thornton, 1994). These schemes are not proactive in the sense awards are made to employers who wish to make their premises more accessible to *all* prospective employees irrespective of whether a disabled person has applied for a post. This may be due to demand led policy being premised on supply led ideas, ie. creating employment opportunities by making disabled people more attractive employees in the eyes of employers and therefore make them more employable. In fact these schemes are not fitting jobs to disabled people but fitting disabled people to jobs. This would not have been the case, for example, if AtW was tied to jobs rather than individuals seeking jobs. Roulstone (1994) identifies the SAE Scheme as built on the assumption disabled people have deficits that need to be "corrected" by specialised equipment and further contends an individualising, medicalising philosophy sits at the heart of rehabilitation services for disabled people. Roulstone (1994) describes what he sees as a "catch-22" whereby it is only open to people who are in employment or highly likely to gain employment. Thus a disabled person may be unlikely to get a job offer without technological support, but that a disabled person will not get technological support unless they are likely to get a job. He further notes with considerable concern the regulations to this scheme which state the technology provided to disabled employees should benefit the disabled job incumbent alone and not benefit non disabled workers. Thus, the opportunity for this scheme to be of benefit more widely to less severely disabled people who may be disabled in employment settings is lost.

Also, such schemes highlight inadequacies of disabled people by basing support on the assumption disabled people are less productive workers and therefore require subsidy from Government (Barnes, 1991; Lunt & Thornton, 1994). Barnes lists five other problems with these policies:

(a) disabled employees may only be employed for as long as they are eligible for Government financial assistance, after that they may be replaced by a non disabled employee;
(b) if disabled workers are subsidised, this may create negative reaction among the workforce who were not subsidised in their own employment;
(c) the extra administration costs such as filling in applications for the schemes may put some employers off;
(d) employers may find Government interest and involvement in their organisation unwelcome; and,
(e) disabled employees may feel tied to a particular employer because of alterations to premises that allowed them access to the workplace that they may not find or have to fight for elsewhere.

(Barnes, 1991)

Oliver says of special employment schemes for disabled people: 'Their aim is to make the individual disabled person suitable for work, but while they may succeed in individual cases, such programmes may also have the opposite effect. By packaging and selling them as a special case, the idea that there is something different about disabled workers is reinforced and may be exclusionary' (Oliver, 1990:86). Employment policies towards disabled people that rely on subsidising employers for taking on disabled employees may perpetuate the stereotype that disabled people have less to offer than non disabled people and disabled people's inadequacies must be redressed by the Government in the form of financial compensation to employers. The experiences of disabled people in such subsidised work settings have not been always positive. Several commentators have highlighted the fact that such employment often offers physical participation in work environments but not necessarily social participation (Hagner, 1989). Further, loss of employment is often attributed to poor social integration rather than poor job performance (Foss & Peterson, 1981; Hanley-Maxwell et al. 1986). This would also be the case for supported and sheltered employment provision which I will discuss next. Overall, the problems inherent with the policy initiatives I have described so far are due, I would contend, to these being supply led policies disguised under auspices of demand led policies.

2.1.1.2 Sheltered/supported employment

For disabled people who have been deemed unable to work in the open labour market, the Government has been committed to creating job opportunities through sheltered and supported employment. These are more explicitly demand led policies. Provisions for sheltered employment were written under Section 15 of the 1944 Act and were only available to those classified under section II of the disability register (unable to work in competitive, open employment). Sheltered employment is distinct from supported employment. Where sheltered employment is a separate employment opportunity for disabled workers, often with little integration with non disabled workers, supported employment is work in integrated settings. Sheltered employment has been described as, at best, a period of training and transition for disabled people into competitive employment. At worst it is described as containment centres (Samoy & Waterplas, 1992). Sheltered employment is usually low paid and many sheltered workers remain dependent on social security benefits. Supported employment is usually better paid and workers are in a competitive labour force, but have support available for those who are not used to such a competitive working environment (Konig & Shalock, 1991). Such support may come from a jobcoach for example, who works in a support role with the disabled employee until the disabled employee can work unassisted.

2.1.1.2.1 Sheltered workshops

The most common forms of sheltered employment are the workshops run by the Government subsidised company Remploy. Originally known as the 'Disabled Persons Employment Corporation Limited', Remploy was established in 1945. Additional workshops run by both local authority and various voluntary organisations were established under the 1958 Act. Sheltered workshops were made up of a workforce entirely of people registered as disabled. These workshops, often small factories, took on contract work and provided training and employment for disabled people. Berthoud et al. (1993) cite criticism of these workshops concerning the over representation of labour-intensive manufacturing. Typically, disabled employees are required to work full-time in an intense, competitive working environment where the working week is marked by concerns to meet stringent targets and deadlines to retain work contracts.

2.1.1.2.2 Sheltered Placement Scheme

A development from sheltered employment has been the sheltered work placement. Though the title of the scheme is "sheltered placement" this is, effectively, supported employment. Here disabled people are subcontracted out by a local authority or voluntary agency to a local employer. The former is called the sponsor, the latter the host. The host (employer) pays the disabled employee's wage not to the employee but to the sponsor. The wage the host pays to the sponsor is a percentage of the full wage paid for the job, an amount related to the disabled employee's output on the job. The sponsor then pays the full wage to the disabled person and any shortfall between the full wage paid by the sponsor and the partial wage paid by the host is made up by the DE. Therefore, if a disabled employee is identified as 60 per cent as productive as other employees in a host's workforce, the host only pays 60 per cent of the wage to the sponsor. The sponsor will pay this 60 per cent from the host to the employee plus 40 per cent which the sponsor recoups from the DE. Only disabled employees who have between 30 and 80 per cent productivity levels compared to non disabled employees are considered for the scheme.

Taylor (1990) found the two types of sheltered employment were likely to be in competition with one another in local authority settings. Supported employment has generally been preferred to the provision of sheltered workshops. Berthoud et al. (1993) cite supported employment as more beneficial than sheltered employment for a number of reasons. First, the range of occupations offered to disabled employees is wider than the labour-intensive manufacturing jobs found in sheltered workshops. Secondly, supported employment is less costly, with costs of maintaining workshops being particularly high in comparison to the cost of supported placements with employers. Finally, they suggest there is evidence that the productivity of disabled employees is higher in supported than sheltered work. It has been suggested this is due to the host of supported employment being in the open and competitive marketplace. Bruce (1991) noted that with the Government's growing preference for supported employment placements that were less costly to provide than sheltered workshops, many workshops have closed over the last few years. Bruce points to the distress this has caused many disabled people who have been dismissed from their long-term, secure jobs in workshops and placed into the more insecure and unfamiliar setting of jobs in the open market.

There are criticisms of supported employment. There is an upper financial ceiling for wages for each supported placement that effectively means placements are only available for less well-paid jobs. Therefore, placements tend to be located in low status, low skilled jobs (Barnes, 1991). Barnes points to the very low wage paid on average to people working in supported employment settings, among the poorest paid workers in the country. Also, supported employment possibly provides a more hostile working environment where, it has been argued, disabled employees may be more prone to working alongside the disabling attitudes of non disabled work colleagues. Further, work placements are often less secure than established sheltered workshops. Disabled workers on supported placements are effectively employed by the sponsor and as such most do not enjoy the same privileges as fellow employees of the host company; they may not be entitled to the same redundancy packages or sick pay provisions (Mainstream, 1990). Lastly, once a disabled employee achieves a higher than 80 per cent output they are taken off the supported employment scheme. Effectively this would mean a loss of income to the employer ie. they would have to pay 100 per cent rather than 80 per cent of the disabled employee's wage. Thus, few employers have been keen to take on placement employees into open employment (Mainstream, 1990). However, there has been considerable support for this scheme. Research has indicated local authorities were committed to the scheme even where DE subsidy was felt to be inadequate, and there was indication to suggest they would be prepared to invest considerable financial backing for such supported employment schemes (Taylor, 1990). This suggests supported employment, at least by Local Authorities, is well received.

In March 1990 there were a total 20,700 supported placement employees involving Government expenditure of £141 million. This was a particularly popular scheme with regards to demand exceeding supply (Berthoud, et al. 1993). An SCPR survey suggested 95,000 disabled 'jobseekers' were potentially eligible for placements, and of those 43,000 actually wanted sheltered or supported employment (Prescott-Clarke, 1990). Dalley (1991) referring to the same SCPR survey cites that 350,000 people were requiring sheltered employment and that only one tenth of those people were actually in such employment. In respect to Remploy sheltered workshops, in 1984/85 there were ninety Remploy factories providing only nine thousand work placements (DE, 1990), four thousand placements in local authority workshops - though many of these were exclusively for the blind - and one thousand places in voluntary sector workshops (Floyd, 1991). With so many disabled people wanting these placements there has been quite strong competition among disabled jobseekers for them.

In the 1970s, sheltered workshops were thought of as charitable organisations rather than organisations that could compete economically. Thus, subsidy was seen as a necessary part of this type of provision. However, at the beginning of the 1980s concern was addressed at the level of subsidy sheltered workshops required from the Government. In an era where an emphasis was placed on cutting public expenditure, increasingly demands were made on workshops to become more cost-effective, more profitable and less reliant on state subsidy (Mainstream, 1990). However, these workshops were originally set up for political rather than economic purposes and their premises were often poorly equipped to enable them to be profitable in the open marketplace (Barnes, 1990). A suggestion put forward by the NACEPD was that public sector organisations prioritise offering contracts to sheltered workshops, though at the time this advice went unheeded. More recently Michael Portillo sought erroneously to use European legislation to argue a case for avoiding the favouring of sheltered workshops such as Remploy in the allocation of local and national Government work contracts (Leathley, 1994).

Sheltered and supported employment settings are examples of demand led policies, though I would argue this is questionable particularly for supported employment. The levels of subsidy involved are premised on opening employment opportunities of disabled people by making disabled people more (financially) attractive to employers. Yet again I feel the demand led nature of these policies is underpinned by a supply led approach.

2.1.1.3 Adult Training Centres

Adult Training Centres (ATCs) are a further form of employment provision for disabled people. They are typically run either by local authorities or from within the voluntary sector. Their principle clients are people with learning difficulties. During the 1980s there were 480 such centres across Britain, catering for approximately 45,000 trainees (Lonsdale, 1985). Though the original remit of ATCs was as employment training facilities, few such centres have been involved in specific employment training in recent years. Further, few trainees actually move from these centres into employment. In their survey of Scottish ATCs, Jackson and Smithers concluded that training for work was an unrealistic aim of these centres in the economic climate of that time (cited in Griffiths, 1989). First, the emphasis moved from employment training to contract work involving monotonous and repetitive tasks. With high levels of unemployment in the 1970s and a job scarcity, centre managers often tendered for such work at unrealistically low quotes. Subsequently, trainees would be paid extremely low wages, if a wage at all. Oliver (1990b) refers to the wage paid at ATCs to trainees as slave labour rates even by the standards of the Third World. ATCs were not under any statutory obligation to pay trainees for their work. Many therefore chose to encourage trainees to apply for social security benefits rather than give trainees a wage. Such trainees would therefore have a limit imposed on their earnings in line with the disregarded earnings upon which social security benefits are calculated. Few trainees thus got wages above the disregarded earnings, many received a wage considerably below it. Whelan and Speake (1977) reported 50 per cent of trainees earned half the earnings disregard. At that time the earnings disregard was four pounds. Even when this disregard was increased to fifteen pounds in the late 1980s few trainees received an increase in their pay (Same Difference, 1989). During this period ATCs were often criticised for being sweat-shops, economically exploiting their clients. The work would often be both unskilled (Wertheimer, 1981) and extremely poorly paid. These centres were originally thought of as a supply led policy, providing employment training for disabled people. However, in recent times they have increasingly become part of the demand led policy, providing employment opportunities, though such employment has been of a poor quality in both the nature of the work and the wages paid for such work.

2.1.1.4 The move towards more comprehensive civil rights legislation

As with the climate over the 1944 and 1958 Acts - specifically the hostility regarding the Quota Scheme - there was additional hostility towards introducing legislation that would replace these Acts with more explicitly demand led policies. This hostility was prevalent early in the move to protect the civil rights of disabled people. This hostility was, in its earliest days, exhibited in an open refutation that discrimination existed. In 1981, ironically the International Year for Disabled People, the MSC felt there to be 'a lack of conclusive evidence of the discrimination against disabled people' (MSC, 1981). Even until 1991 the then Minister for

Disabled People, Nicholas Scott, was still arguing that discrimination was not widespread in the UK (Oliver & Barnes, 1994). However, during that decade and the one to follow there was to accumulate more than enough evidence, both through the work of disability activists, the disability movement as a whole and the research community, that discrimination against disabled people was widespread (eg. Barnes, 1991). Comprehensive civil rights for disabled people were advocated by the United Nations in 1982 through its adoption of the World Programme of Action. A year later saw the beginning of the Decade of Disabled People. During this decade several countries recognised the rights of Disabled People through legislating on disability rights. Towards the end of the decade saw the arrival of the ADA (1990) in the US, with the often recanted phrase originally voiced by President Bush of 'let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down'. At the beginning of the 1990s civil rights for disabled people were recognised in the constitutions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In the UK the Voluntary Organisations for Anti-discrimination Legislation committee was formed. This brought together many existing disability organisations in the concerted effort to get civil rights legislation written onto the statute books. With civil rights legislation moving onto the statute books in the US, the UK Government was coming under increasing pressure to implement similar legislation. The only significant rights based disability legislation there had been since the 1944 and 1958 Acts were the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970) and the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act (1986). The former addressed service provision to disabled people based on the Seebohm Report (1968), the later addressed the rights of disabled people to have their needs assessed by local authorities and more generally to be included in consultation over social work practice. This last Act added pressure to the whole movement towards more extensive civil rights protection for disabled people through the considerable controversy that surrounded the Government's refusal to fully carry out the provisions of the 1986 Act. Tom Clarke, the Member of Parliament responsible for getting the 1986 Act on the statute books, in a foreword to *Social Work: Disabled people and disabling environments* (Oliver, 1991a) directed the reader's attention to the refusal of the then Government to fully implement this Act and as such was a dissenting voice to be joined by many others in the widespread call for statutory civil rights for disabled people. Oliver describes the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act as simply a list of services and the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act as providing a professional and administrative approach to the delivery of these services (Oliver, 1994a). He highlights that what has been missing is a strong legislative framework.

As I discussed earlier, the Government responded to calls for more enforceable and extensive civil rights legislation for disabled people by insisting voluntary compliance rather than statutory compliance was the right path to take (ES, 1988; DE, 1990). The Government argued that, in any case, the UK should wait to see how the ADA turned out (Berthoud et al. 1993). Dominant justifications later cited by Government to avoid implementing civil rights legislation were based on a cost/benefit argument. The Government claimed civil rights legislation proposed by the opposition, the Disability Civil Rights Bill, would have cost £17 billion to implement. The Rights Now campaign has been harshly critical of the Government's costing, suggesting they overestimated the costs of implementing the Civil Rights Bill by some £12 billion.

In the 1990s there have been many changes in legislature that have affected the lives of disabled people. Many of these changes were introduced following the Government's public display of interest in disability issues reflected in the commissioning of the OPCS surveys in the mid 1980s. In 1990 the Department of Social Security (DSS) introduced the idea for new benefits specifically designed for disabled people who were in low paid employment and to further extend the range of benefits for disabled people who were in need of attendance or who had mobility difficulties (DSS, 1990b). Also during that year the Employment Department published a consultative document that, amid all its proposals, perhaps the most radical was the suggestion to involve private and voluntary agencies into the field of disability rehabilitation (Department of Employment, 1990). Again, during this period arguments were made against the Quota Scheme and, particularly disconcerting due to the passage of the ADA in the US, were the arguments against the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation.

The drafting of the DDA was weighed down heavily with concerns over the interests of employers. As Oliver noted in relation to the field of welfare provision, the Government at that time were consistently avoiding an 'empowerment strategy' in relation to disabled people (Oliver, 1991b, 1991c) through the Government's failure to implement the Disabled Persons Act of 1986, its obstructiveness against developing anti-discrimination legislation and its woefully inadequate funding of organisations run by disabled people in comparison to organisations run by non disabled people on behalf of disabled people. Akin to Oliver's more general comments, the situation was such that the Government sought to create a labour force niche for disabled people but did not want to create conditions in the labour market such that disabled people would have any power. The concern was to avoid disempowering employers through introducing legislation to which they would have to comply. Government perceived civil rights legislation for disabled people as potentially damaging to the interests of employers.

During the earlier days of the legislative process, in particular the initial consultation stage, the Government again took a preference towards a voluntary stance to promoting the civil rights of disabled people (*Hansard*, 1995a). This emphasis on voluntary action is perhaps clearly shown in the Government's frequent heralding of the 'two-ticks' disability symbol as a success, a scheme that was purely voluntary and often criticised as tokenistic (as referred to earlier). Very early in the consultation process the Government made it clear they wanted to leave it very much up to employers to find their own solutions as to how to encourage more disabled people into their workforce. This was preferred to the imposition of more formal processes. This was to be a dominant rhetoric used by Government to for so long prevent the implementation of legislation on the employment rights of disabled people. As with the two ticks campaign and the two previous national campaigns, the tactic was to persuade rather than to compel employers to recruit disabled employees. Legislation adopted the stance that employers should have a relatively free rein in how to tackle anti-discrimination. Berthoud et al. (1993:131) summed up their view on the Government's commitment to the rights of disabled people: 'The general impression left by our review of employment policy is that the Government would quite like to see more disabled people in work but is not prepared to do much about it'. They advised any future move towards legislating on disabled peoples' rights should back up existing carrots with two large sticks. First, there should be the threat of heavy fines that could be levied against employers who discriminate. Second, there should be the threat of court action. The legislation that was to eventually reach the statute books, the DDA, has severely weakened sticks. Unlike the Sex Discrimination and Race Relations Acts, there is no Commission to enforce the prescriptions contained in the legislation.[1] This provoked one lobbying group to issue its own consultation document on a Disability Commission Bill in August 1995, two months before the DDA was to reach the statute books (Bow Group, 1995).

Berthoud et al. (1993) concluded that efforts at persuading employers to recruit disabled people were ineffectual when the condition of the labour force (ie. high levels of unemployment) meant employers were generally having little trouble in recruiting staff. An independent analysis of the employment legislation concerning disabled people concluded: '... persuasion through voluntary means has simply not worked. And there is no evidence that it is likely to in the future' (Mainstream, 1990:153).

It is unhelpful to discuss demand led policies without reflecting on the nature of supply led policies. Changes in legislation have continually focused on the supply side of the equation, on rehabilitating, training and equipping disabled people to go into the work place. Little emphasis has been place on the demand side, on encouraging and promoting jobs for disabled people. Even policy that appears demand led may be underpinned by supply led reasoning, as I discussed earlier. Berthoud et al. (1993) document that 94 per cent of the employment policy budget spent on disabled people went on services such as rehabilitation, placement services and sheltered employment, all services geared to the special needs of disabled people. Only 3 per cent was spent on services that persuaded employers to hire disabled workers.

> Supply-side employment policies risk over-emphasising individual characteristics such as poor work histories, low qualifications, and, in the case of disabled people, physical and psychological impairments. Money spent on counselling, rehabilitation and training can be largely wasted if there are no suitable jobs available for people when they complete these programmes.
> (Berthoud, et al. 1993:41)

This point is similarly made by Barnes (1991). The suggestion is that more money should be invested in this so far apparently neglected area.

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1. *The Labour Government have recently redressed this situation with promises to introduce a Disability Commission.*

> There are virtually no attempts in modern industrial societies that are targeted at the social organisations of work, at the demand side of labour. And given the size of the reserve pool of labour that currently exists in most industrial societies, it is unlikely that such targeting will occur in the foreseeable future.
>
> (Oliver, 1994a:52)

Barnes (1991) holds that while the UK was one of the first western nations to recognise the civil rights of disabled people through implementing legislation in the 1940s, successive Governments since have been retreating from this original position. The legislation that was to eventually succeed this legislation has been negatively viewed by many as short-sighted and ineffectual. Prior to the DDA there had been strong criticism over the inefficacy of legislation and services designed to create employment opportunities for disabled people (Oliver, 1985; Graham, et al. 1990). The DDA has not served to ease the concerns of such commentators. Lord Lister, a highly regarded civil liberties lawyer, described the DDA as 'riddled with vague, slippery and elusive exceptions, making it so full of holes that it is more like a colander than a binding code' (*Hansard*, 1995b:813). One exception that has been particularly contentious is the stipulation that new employment protection will only apply to employers who have a workforce of twenty employers or more. Smaller employers will, under the DDA, continue to be allowed to discriminate against disabled people without recrimination. Lord Lister went on to point out that in establishing equality legislation, 'all exceptions to the principle of equal treatment should be kept to the minimum necessary to avoid undermining the principle in itself. In existing laws exceptions are carefully and narrowly defined, by contrast this law [DDA] embodies a series of narrowly sweeping broad absolute exceptions' (*Hansard*, 1995b:813). The DDA has also been criticised for not being extensive enough in the areas of disabled peoples' lives it covers.

> Anti-discrimination legislation without freedom of information and a supportive network of disabled people will simply mean that the lawyers will get rich; freedom of information by itself will mean that individual disabled people will be subjected to professional mystification and sleight of hand; and support for the disabled people's movement without a framework which guarantees basic human rights will leave the movement politically emasculated.
>
> (Oliver, 1994a:59)

The DDA has yet to receive the support of many disabled organisations within the disability movement and many groups remain hostile to it. This may have important implications as the new Labour Government seeks to enforce the DDA which they inherited from the previous Conservative administration. Walker (1981d:191) reminds us that: 'rights must be clearly established by law and the necessary resources committed to achieve them. But that law must also have the support of public opinion and particularly of those people it is intended to serve.'

2.1.2 Supply led policies

As I discussed earlier, policy interventions in the area of disability and employment have tended to focus on the supply side of the labour market. Specifically, the focus has been on the training and equipment needs of the disabled prospective employee and concerns over the motivation of the disabled "jobseeker". The issues seen as most needing to be addressed are those that ensure prospective disabled employees have the necessary skills, training and support that employers demand. Such supply led policies in the field of employment and disability are highlighted in programmes of rehabilitation and training provided to disabled people.

Concern towards this area of policy development has seen considerable change in the ES. In the past the Government's Employment Rehabilitation Service (ERS) was responsible for the "resettlement" of disabled people into employment. The remit of general rehabilitation work in relation to employment was, and still is, to fit the disabled prospective employee to the needs of the employer. This was the responsibility of Employment Rehabilitation Centres (ERCs). In these centres people were trained for low-skilled manual work. In 1982 Asset centres were set up in areas where there were no ERCs. Here the emphasis was on job search skills rather than manual work skills training. Both types of centre were, by the close of the 1980s, increasingly concerned with assessing the disabled person's physical and psychological ability in the workplace and to readdress any skill deficit disabled clients may have. This was the job of the Disablement Resettlement Officers (DROs.) By the 1970s there were approximately five hundred and fifty DROs and sixty senior DROs. Additionally, there were specialist staff who addressed the employment concerns of blind people. In all during this period there were thirty-five blind persons' resettlement officers and thirteen blind persons' training officers (Townsend, 1981b). DROs were assigned the task of assessing and placing disabled job seekers into employment. They operated alongside the Disablement Advisory Service (DAS) which was established in the 1980s to undertake what had previously been a role of the DROs - to encourage employer organisations to recruit and retain disabled employees. Each ES area had a DAS. The role of each DAS was also to handle applications for sheltered placements and equipment aids and adaptations to premises. Thus, there were demand-side aspects in the overall service provision, in so far as the DAS sought to persuade employers to recruit disabled workers. However, this has historically been a muted activity at best, often remaining in the shadow of the larger, more visible machinery of the supply led dominated rehabilitation services.

The landscape of rehabilitation, training and placement services in the ES is very different today. The specialist services detailed above have undergone dramatic reorganisation. Following a prolonged period of criticism against the ERS, criticism that attacked: its lack of responsiveness to localised labour market concerns through its over centralisation; its incomplete coverage of the mixed and varied nature of the disabled population; its over focus on low-status, manual/production work (Barnes, 1991); and, its low rates of successful rehabilitation of clients, the Service was dramatically changed (Berthoud, et al. 1993). PACT became the new division of the ES that specialised in the area of disability, integrating the previous responsibilities of the DROs and the DAS. Seventy regional PACTS were established throughout the UK and were staffed by DROs, whose job became redefined and whose title was renamed. The DROs became Disability Employment Advisors (DEAs) - their new job description effectively spanned the past responsibilities of the DROs (assessing and placing activities) and of the DAS (encouraging employer good practice). On occasion PACTs were additionally staffed by occupational psychologists. As well as supporting and assisting the activities of disabled jobseekers, PACTs were ultimately responsible for administering the Quota Scheme and encouraging good employment practice - specifically promoting a Code of Good Practice, published by the ES (ES, 1990, 1994b), to local employer organisations. The role of the ERCs was taken over by local training agents who would provide these rehabilitation services under contract to the Government. In effect, Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) in England and Wales and Local Enterprise Councils (LECs) in Scotland took over the responsibility for skills training from the Training Agency which in turn had taken over the role of the MSC. They would receive annual contracts from the Employment Department to provide all training and enterprise services in their area. These councils were employer led, unlike previous training provision led by a coalition of employers, trade unions and independent advisors. The Department of Employment's consultative document on employment and training for people with disabilities proposed to develop the role of the voluntary organisations and private agencies in the delivery of training and rehabilitation services (Department of Employment, 1990). Finally, the ERCs disappeared, though some lived on under the guise of Ability Development Centres, adopting the new role of a training resource for local PACT teams and as centres that researched into new methods of rehabilitation and depositories of new rehabilitation technologies and equipment.

Internally generated research by the Department of Employment (DE) on the PACT strategy of promoting the ES's *Code of Good Practice* has suggested that it has had a positive effect on the recruitment practices of employer organisations. Morrell (1990) found that employers who had been contacted by PACT were more likely to hold positive attitudes toward disabled people, to write internal employment policies of good practice towards disabled people, and to be actively engaged in the recruitment of disabled employees. However, there were wider concerns of this new face of the disability rehabilitation industry.

The reorganisation of disability services within the ES effectively decentralised rehabilitation and training activities to local service providers. This was intended to make the services more locally accountable. However, the practice of subcontracting services out to private and voluntary training and rehabilitation providers has been problematic. Bruce (1991) cites this move as a massive shift of statutory services from Government to employers. The subcontracting of these services has raised uncertainty over their funding where there was difficulty in guaranteeing the numbers of people who would be using the services (Berthoud, et al. 1993). With the ES decentralising control over the types of rehabilitation programmes offered, this created the threat of gaps opening up in service provision. Contact with and thus awareness of people with less common and more complex disabilities may mean service workers who are covering a relatively small geographic area may lack skills in working with such clientele (Bruce, 1991). Also, through the ES adopting a more general approach, reflected in the absorption of Blind Persons' Resettlement Officers into the job of the DROs, we can see a move away from specialisation. Remember, at that time DROs were criticised for their lack of training which may mean they were not sufficiently informed to help several client groups, such as people with severe psychiatric disabilities (ibid.).

Furthermore, gains made in the provision of LECs and TECs, which gave greater accountability to local labour market needs and greater responsiveness to local employers needs, had their positive outcomes possibly counteracted by the often conflicting demands made on them. These councils would often find themselves in the difficult position of juggling the concerns of local employers while also meeting the targets of the Government's training guarantees for disabled people (Berthoud et al. 1993). An added problem was with service provision being contracted out, this opened up training and rehabilitation provision to market forces. The accompanying emphasis on cost-cutting created a threat to the quality of services provided. The nature of the funding of LECs and TECs, based on outcome measures such as number of National Vocational Qualifications achieved by service clients, could lead to discrimination against the most severely disabled. Thus, the funding criteria may pre-select for the most able to be allocated places on training programmes (Hahn, 1985b; Bruce, 1991; Berthoud et al. 1993). Bruce framed the concern as follows: 'Given... society's limited perception of what disabled people can contribute, it should be recognised that employment and training services for people with disabilities will decline, unless they are given policy, resource and service protection or ring fencing' (Bruce, 1991:248-249). Discussing disability service provision in general, Rioux & Crawford (1990) describe the system of rehabilitation in very negative terms.

> Economic pressures and the pressure to minimise the human resource strains exerted by "clients" of the dispensing program conspire to direct decision making along certain paths. Program officers have no choice but to give preference to individuals who can either be served temporarily at low program cost, or to longer-term recipients who will not require costly systemic changes. As a result, the programs leave some overserved, and many underserved or altogether unserved.
>
> (Rioux & Crawford, 1990:103-104)

Thus, the manner of funding and organisation of vocational rehabilitation in recent times has tended to focus service provision on those who have the greatest potential to be rehabilitated. Also, closure for a rehabilitation programme is typically job placement, irrespective of the nature of the job secured. Thus rehabilitation will be recorded as successful for a disabled client who moves from unemployment to underemployment (ie. moving to a poorly paid job or poorly satisfying job). The participants in a study by Schriner et al. (1993) called for more attention to be paid to the quality of a job placement achieved rather than on simply achieving placement as an outcome.

Oliver views that the main beneficiaries in any of the changes to services for the disabled are the existing professions they maintain and the new professions they spawn in the disability field for non disabled people (Oliver, 1991c). Writing about the implications for Care in the Community legislation, but I feel of relevance to all disability policy issues, he writes: 'It is not unreasonable to predict that able-bodied professionals will consume most of the employment services of these changes and able-bodied academics the not insubstantial training budgets which will be necessary to fit professionals for this brave new world' (Oliver, 1991c:158). Here the influence of demand led policies, such as anti-discrimination legislation, can increase the problem of the 'denizens' of the disability industry. In the US, which has had such legislation for the past seven years, the rehabilitation industry may be reacting in ways that are strengthening its position in the field. I feel this is suggested by Potyka's reaction to the paper by Devience and Convery (1992). In her comments, though she says that rehabilitation workers should work in partnership with disabled people in tackling discriminating or uneducated employers, she strongly argues the rehabilitation workers have an expertise that should not be lost in this process. 'Rehabilitation workers are uniquely prepared to assist in the development of accommodations in the workplace. It is important that we approach employers with the knowledge and skills to provide our expertise in business terms, promoting the value of such accommodations to good business practice and productivity' (Potyka, 1992:46). Such calls ask for supply led policies, implemented under rehabilitation service provision, to strengthen the position of such disability professionals. This was also the view adopted by Richard Wood, Director of the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP), concerning the way legislative changes appeared to be in the interest of non disabled professionals rather than disabled people (Wood, 1991). However, within the ES the jobs opened up for professionals through services developed for disabled people were not as attractive as the 'denizen' concerns would suggest. The work of the disability division of the ES has not been highly esteemed by the organisation as a whole. Often the role of the DRO in the past was seen as a low status job, comparable to a clerical worker (Stubbins, 1982). Nonetheless, the continued growth of disability jobs for the non disabled rather than disabled should be of concern to those working in the field.

2.2 Reviewing the literature on definitions of disability

Considerable amounts of research time, money and energy have been invested in empirical and theoretical work on defining disability. Indeed, literature in the social sciences on disability issues has been growing increasingly over the past few decades (Meyerson, 1988). The issue is pivotal as the way disability is defined has important implications for the interventions made in disabled peoples' lives (Oliver, 1994b). With so much invested one would hope the research community has progressed towards defining what disability is, but the picture appears more that progress has come from elsewhere. The disability movement has been particularly successful in reclaiming and developing a theoretical model of disability. The movement has been noticeably active since the late 1980s (Glendinning, 1991) and continues to be active to this day.

My review of the literature on defining disability began with Employment Service (ES) research. Rumbol (1988) could not find a nationally or an internationally agreed definition of disability as she began her paper for the ES on the prevalence of disability in the labour force. She pointed to the many attempts made to come up with a comprehensive classification system but admitted at that time there were many different such systems and very little agreement between them. This lack of certitude on the issue of defining disability was repeated in internal ES research on evaluating services for disabled people. The research found strong support across Disablement Resettlement Officers (DROs) to retain as much flexibility in their services as possible in recognition that 'disability isn't always well defined' (Beattie, 1990:10). A further outcome of this research was a feeling that medical information on a client's disability was sometimes irrelevant. For example, medical information did not give the DRO much of a clue how well a person could use local transport. Thus, the opinion of a client's doctor was not always of use in determining whether a client was disabled. To quote from a Disablement Advisory Service Manager, 'I had a GP once who had not himself travelled on a bus, or on the underground for years and quite honestly, he didn't realise the physical strain involved in doing it these days' (Beattie, 1990:26). In a piece of Government commissioned research on the prevalence of disability in the working age population, Prescott-Clarke concluded on the issue of defining disability, 'while it is possible to establish certain principles, it is not possible to lay down a set of clear "rules" ' (Prescott-Clarke, 1990:2). She later wrote of the Disabled Person's Employment Register, 'registrability is a difficult concept to pin down ... The 1944

Act does not supply the kind of operational detail that would allow anyone in possession of a particular set of basic facts about an individual to classify that person as registrable or not' (ibid:16).

Confusion over defining disability is commonplace. Finkelstein and French (1994) pointed to confusion in the field of psychology, highlighting a British Psychological Society article (BPS, 1989) in particular as getting into a 'muddle' in its attempt to define what is meant by disability. Despite or perhaps because of the lack of success in arriving at a workable definition of disability, researchers continue to strive to define disability. Recent innovations have sought to standardise diagnostic criteria to reach a definitive account of what constitutes a disability and have led to the development of standardised scales and tools such as the *Preliminary Diagnostic Questionnaire* (Moriarty et al. 1987). Floyd and Kettle (1991) sought solace in the use of computer technology to develop an assessment tool that would define "employment handicap". Successive surveys, assessment tools and diagnostic scales often compete for the prize of "the most sophisticated" or "the most definitive", citing the complex classification schema they use and develop as reasons for their expected reward. Success with such activities has not been conspicuous so far. The struggle to pin down a definition of disability continues to escape us.

Confusion in the field is often exacerbated by the complexity and constantly changing terminology used. Disability is a contested concept and the discourse surrounding disability issues are often confused by transient nature of the labels used to describe it (Berthoud et al. 1993). At the time of my involvement in this research project two general labels were competing: "people with disabilities" and "disabled people". Labels used for differing impairments showed further variety. For example, in the UK the labels "learning disability" and "learning difficulty" are used interchangeably for what was previously known as "mental handicap". In the US, "learning disability" is a term used to refer to people with impairments such as dyslexia as opposed to mental handicap, thus terminology at present does not travel well across cultural and national boundaries.

Such changes in terminology occur through the historical process of language evolution where terms float in and out of common usage. Less arbitrary changes in terminology are also created through the active campaigning of disabled people themselves who seek to change the way we talk about disability. The critiques of terminology used to supplant the old and support the new labels are often complex and contradictory. This is the case over preferring between the terms "people with disabilities" and "disabled people". The former is advocated by campaigners who claim its alternative (disabled people) places an undue emphasis on peoples' impairments. By putting people first, they argue, the label "people with disabilities" highlights the commonality of the human condition rather than the particulars of an individual's impairment. The slogan of the day is "the disabled are people" (Hasler, 1994). However, other campaigners criticise this terminology as essentially descriptive. Instead, they change the noun "disability" into a verb and promote the use of the term "disabled people" believing this reflects the way people are disabled by society (Dalley, 1991). Changes in terminology similarly affect disability organisations. The *Scottish Council for Spastics*, for example, changed its name to *Capability* due to concerns that the term "spastic" was offensive to disabled people. Disputes and sensitivities over definitions similarly apply to descriptors of people who are not disabled. "Able-bodied" is a popular term preferred by many but some prefer the term "non disabled" as a means 'to reverse the stigma of "otherness" and throw it back at the oppressor' (Hughes & Paterson, 1997:333).

The move to change terminology is considered necessary by those in the disability movement in the same way other minority groups have actively sought to change language (noticeably the women's movement and ethnic minority groups). Here language is construed as playing an active role in the creation of disabilism, sexism and racism (Barnes, 1991). However, Barnes also notes the fact "disabilist" is not a commonly used word, unlike "racist" and "sexist". Changing terminology becomes part of the process of reclaiming language to challenge the oppression these groups face. The job of settling on disability terminology is fraught with internal contradiction, inconsistency and continually changing convention. Finkelstein is less tolerant towards concerns over constantly changing terminology in the disability field. 'Replacing one label with another while the day-to-day reality of disability remains unchanged seems to be an exercise in changing fashions, even adding more confusion to... disability' (Finkelstein, 1994b:11). For Finkelstein, constantly changing disability terminology is an annoyance that does little to redress the way disability is negatively received by the public.

Defining disability is of central concern to many authors from the disability movement. Swain et al. (1994), in their introduction to their influential book *Disabling Barriers - Enabling Environments*, found one of their first tasks was to explain to their readership 'which "disabilities" and "disabled people" is the book about?...' (Swain et al, 1994:1). Within the first few lines they make explicit their book is about disabling barriers not disabled people. This is a common distinction made in developing definitions of disability and divides the concepts used to define disabled people into two theoretical models. These have become known as the Medical and Social Models.

2.2.1 The Medical Model

Perhaps one of the most pernicious definitions of disability advocated by researchers was that of Miller and Gwynne (1972). The definition they promoted was of disability as 'social death'. They arrived at this definition following research they conducted at a residential home for disabled people. The results of their research were sharply attacked by residents in the home (Hunt, 1981), and have been more widely criticised (Finkelstein, 1991; Morris, 1994b). Miller and Gwynne's work can be viewed as giving an insight into the oppressive definitions of disability that can be used by researchers working in the field. Their definition was closely associated with what has become known as the Medical Model of disability.

The Medical Model ties disability directly to the individual's impairment. It is the person's functional limitation that confers on them the status of being disabled. The Medical Model holds a person is disabled if they have an impairment that is medically recognised. This model is reflected in the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) definition of disability originally advanced by Wood (1981):

> **Impairment** - any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.
> **Disability** - any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

Such a definition of disability problematises the individual as disability becomes tied to the individual's level of functioning. Under the Medical Model the power to define disability is held by professionals and is out with the control of disabled people (Glendinning, 1990).

The focus on impairment in the Medical Model is part of a wider ideology that associates difference with negativity. The idea of the "norm" is evoked through impairment being thought of as "abnormal". "Normalisation" is a concept often built into many disability survey tools where difference is problematised. For example, the *Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale* (Yucker and Block, 1986), designed to measure attitudes towards disabled people, is premised on associating difference with negativity. A low score on the scale is given to people who indicate they feel disabled people are different from non disabled people. This is felt to be a negative attitude towards disability. In the second part of my literature review (Chapter Nine) I cite criticisms of past disability research informed by the Medical Model. These criticisms very much parallel the criticisms of the Medical Model I discuss in this chapter.

Morris feels this general way of thinking about difference sits at the heart of prejudice against disability. Here is an abhorrence of difference, of that which does not fit with what we consider "normal" (Morris, 1992b). Bringing the abnormal into the arena of the normal does not, however, remove their difference or deviance (Liazos, 1972). Therefore we tolerate those we feel as different, though in doing so treat them as something less than equal to ourselves. Normality sits high in the philosophy behind conductive education. Oliver, himself a person with a spinal injury, feels the discourse of those who advocate conductive education as offensive. They seek to make those who are unable to walk able to walk again, and for those who no longer desire to walk, to instil back in them the desire to walk (Oliver, 1994c). His anger is very much apparent in his writings on this topic:

> The nightmare of conductive education is unachievable because nowhere in human history have the different been turned into the normal and neither medical science nor other rehabilitative techniques or educational interventions can assist in this process. The reason is simple; normality does not exist. Someone else, not very long ago, had a vision of normality associated with blond hair and blue eyes, and look where such a vision got him.
>
> (Oliver, 1994c:166)

Finkelstein (1994b) further cites the angst felt by many parents of disabled children concerning conductive education. They are asked to put their children with cerebral palsy through quite painful therapy regimes in order they can develop "normally" with respect to physical mobility.

The Medical Model offers a political response to the issue of disability and particular social "solutions" to the particular "problems" it identifies. It gives rise to a 'cure or care' approach (Finkelstein, 1991). If a disabled person cannot be *cured* by medical intervention then they need to be *cared* for through welfare provision. Finkelstein (1991) believes all disability service provision in the UK is premised on this Medical Model. He uses the term *administrative model* of disability to encompass both the medical definition of disability given meaning through rehabilitation services and the welfare approach to disability given meaning through care service provision. For example, the rhetoric of community care conceptualises a dependency role for disabled people by the central use of the descriptor "care" (Barnes, 1991; see also French 1994a). This is most provocatively captured in the enthusiasm behind "respite care services" where disabled people are often removed from their homes so their informal carers get time away from caring responsibilities (Large, 1990). The carer occupies the role of the benevolent, self-sacrificing agent in the relationship. The disabled person occupies the role of the incumbent, the burden (Rock, 1988). Under this model disabled people are thought of as "sick" and of in need of "care" (Oliver, 1991c) and as a worthy cause for charity providers (Barnes, 1991). 'The imperfections of community care stem primarily from tensions that surround dependency in an advanced industrial society; and until these dissonances are resolved, disabled people will continue to suffer from denuded political status' (Borsay, 1986b:191). The role of disabled people becomes passive. Very much more active are the carers, in particular the professional carers and the medical profession. For example, under the Medical Model the medical profession holds an important role in the allocation of welfare benefits. Where problems in benefit allocation are identified, they are thus often thought of as medical problems (Walker, 1981b,c). This has warranted its own level of criticism. 'Housing, personal social services, and access to employment and the community all loom larger, and decisions affecting the future welfare, especially standard of living of people with disabilities cannot, on this view, remain with medical practitioners alone or (on some views) at all' (Townsend, 1981a:93).

The intrinsically political nature of the Medical Model can be seen in the way it not only makes disabled individuals politically impotent but also in the way it does this to the disabled population as a whole. It does this through its tendency to divide and rule over the disabled population (Zola, 1979; Walker, 1981a; Borsay, 1986a,b). Disabled people are divided according to their type of impairment and the age or origin of their impairment (ie. through eligibility to different types and levels of disability income benefit). Such divisions may make it harder for disabled people to acknowledge they share many concerns in common (Walker, 1981a; Borsay, 1986b) and thus develop a common culture and a political identity. Chappell (1992) points to what she feels to be an unwelcome practice of discouraging people with learning difficulties developing friendships with one another. Thus, the preferred practice is of promoting friendships between non disabled people and people with learning difficulties. In essence this is an effective way of preventing disabled people sharing common concerns and joining together in a common struggle. Instead they are assimilated into the mainstream where their difference is tolerated but not rejoiced. Finkelstein (1994b) describes how the boundaries between different categories of disabled people were considerably sharpened throughout the 1970s and 1980s with an increased use of various disability scales and measures (re: Cornes, 1990). Thus despite having the common experience of disability, "the elderly" are placed in a different category from "the disabled" who are in a different category from the "mentally ill" who are in a different category from "the learning disabled". For example, increasingly we are encouraged to see an elder who uses a walking stick, or an elder who has failing hearing, as "elderly" and infirm rather than disabled. This encouragement is perpetuated through the stricter medical classifiers of what constitutes a disability in the welfare benefit system and a culture that undervalues contributions to society of elders in the community (Walker, 1980b). For example, this is commonly a strategy adopted by social service departments, and can be found in their relevant guidelines (re: DHSS, 1981).

The divisiveness with which disabilities are defined may account for the split in the disability Olympic movement between the *Para Olympics* and the *Special Olympics*. The latter is for people with learning difficulties, the former for people with physical and sensory disabilities. This split was discussed in the BBC documentary series *On the Line* (BBC, 1994) during the build up to the 1996 Olympic Games. Internal divisions within the disabled population are often encouraged and enacted by disabled people themselves. This may be a strategy disabled people employ when they cannot avoid the disability label but wish to do so, for example, when they are required to identify with the label to receive services. A disabled individual may deny the negative label of disability applying to themselves. Rather, they perceive themselves as "normal" but having a particular physiological or psychological nuance, while applying the label of disabled onto others. Thereby a disabled person who has arthritis may compare her/himself more favourably with someone with a learning difficulty by associating the disability label on to "them" and dissociating the label from her/himself. 'This, it is falsely believed, frees the individual, or group, to consider themselves as only a variation in the pattern of normality while the others, lower down the scale, can be regarded as really disabled' (Finkelstein, 1994b:13).

With the overwhelming presence of medical interventions into the lives of disabled people, it is no wonder the Medical Model holds such power over legislation and service provision.

> ...there has been an expansion of the influence of science in general and in particular of "medical science," until they have in some ways replaced religion and law. Where once a social rhetoric made reference to good and evil, legal and illicit, now it is to "healthy" and "sick".
>
> (Zola, 1979:455)

However, neither impairment nor disability are intrinsically medical phenomena, it is just the way they have been constructed. As evident from the level of criticism against the Medical Model, it has not received unanimous support. Dissent has been particularly pronounced from the more active sections of the disabled community.

2.2.2 The Social Model

Disabled People's International (DPI) stood against the Medical Model, under the guise of the WHO definition cited earlier, ever since its inception. The first strand of the WHO definition is relatively unproblematic, unlike the second. It has been criticised for associating impairment with abnormality through its reference to normality (Barnes, 1991; Oliver, 1983). The model has received a sharp critique from disability writers in particular and the disability movement in general. Two publications stand out as particularly influential and both were instrumental to the development of an alternative to the Medical Model of disability: the Social Model. The first was the publication of *Fundamental Principles of Disability* by the Union for the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) who defined disability as: 'The disadvantage or restriction of activities caused by contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people with physical impairment and thus excludes them from participating in the mainstream of social activities' (UPIAS, 1976:4). Oliver (1991b), Finkelstein (1991) and others have cited the UPIAS document as providing the initial shift towards a Social Model of disability. In that document began the articulation of a social oppression theory of disability. The second influential publication was from an author who was active in UPIAS, Vic Finkelstein. In his book *Attitudes and Disabled People* (Finkelstein, 1980) he developed a materialist account of what he called the 'social barriers model' of disability. He related the spread of industrialisation and production line economies with their drive for efficiency as the main antecedents to the power of the Medical Model of disability. He cited the era of the industrial revolution as the time when 'cripples disappeared and disability was created' (Baird, 1992:5). In a materialist discourse of disability, disability is not a fixed phenomenon associated with physical or mental impairment, but is created through the social and economic barriers faced by people with impairments. For Finkelstein disability is caused not by impairment but by socio-economic relationships (Finkelstein, 1981). This theme has been picked up by a variety of other authors. For example, Hahn writes on this with particular passion.

> The present forms of architectural structures and social institutions exist because statutes, ordinances, and codes either required or permitted them to be constructed in that manner. These public policies imply values, expectations, and assumptions about the physical and behavioural attributes that people ought to possess in order to survive or to participate in community life.
> (Hahn, 1988a:40)

Many writers describe the way the Medical Model entraps disabled people in lives dependent upon others. Under this model disabled people have had very few opportunities to take control over their own lives. Indeed, choice is something many disabled people are denied (Corbett, 1989). Many disabled people are removed from their own homes and placed in residential care under medical supervision. 'Rights are dependent on incapacity, and this incapacity is the subject of a medical judgement' (Walmsley, 1991:224). Davis made the powerful connection between the founder of the Cheshire homes and this benefactor's other notable contribution to society, the dropping of the bomb over Hiroshima.

> The mentality that made Cheshire a compliant participant in the mass creation of disability at Hiroshima is the same mentality which made him the instigator of the mass incarceration of disabled people in a chain of segregated institutions. In the first case he went over the tops of the heads of disabled people in a B29 bomber, in the second he went over our heads in the name of charity.
> (Davis, 1986:3)

In such criticisms of the Medical Model the value-laden nature of the model is made explicit. These values are of a socio-political nature. However, not all critiques of the Medical Model have attended to political and economic perspectives. Indeed, the early forms of the Social Model concentrated solely on the social. This can be found in the work of Stone who was among the critics of the Medical Model who supported an alternative model informed by the Social Constructionist school of thought. Here the social dimension of disability is acknowledged through highlighting the importance of attitudes towards disability. Disability is said to be caused by negative attitudes and it is contended that the removal of such attitudes would eradicate disability. This refinement to defining disability was particularly popular during the International Year for Disabled People in 1981 (Hasler, 1994). Indeed, there has been a proliferation of research writings on attitudes towards disability (eg. Bowman, 1987; McConkey, 1988; Matthews et al. 1990; Söder, 1990; Rees et al. 1991; Anderson & Antonak, 1992), particularly in the rehabilitation field (Chubon, 1992; Leahy, et al. 1992) and numerous scales and tools to measure these attitudes (eg. Tringo, 1970; McConkey et al. 1984; Yucker & Block, 1986; Gething & Wheeler, 1992). However, this account too was felt by some to be inadequate (Hahn, 1988a; Oliver, 1994b). For example, programs targeted at changing attitudes have been woefully ineffective in the past (Oliver, 1985; French, 1992). Disability simulation exercises similarly often prove ineffectual in improving attitudes towards disability (Wilson & Alcorn, 1969). Though Sadlick and Penta (1975) found evidence for positive attitude change among nurses towards people with quadriplegia through using short video presentations of successful rehabilitation clients, such successes are rare in the literature in this area. Abberley is critical of the work of social interactionist theorists such as Goffman. He criticises such theoretical work for the lack of attention it pays to power. Referring to Goffman's work on stigma (Goffman, 1963), Abberley says he:

> ... chooses to interpret its meaning as one of 'blemish and ritual pollution' rather than of the power and inequality which allowed one person to be a slaveholder and compelled another to be a slave. It is telling that a theory unable to recognise the nature of power relationships in today's society, should exhibit a similar incapacity in its assessment of ancient history. Theories which ignore power conflicts and subscribe to a consensus view, as interactionism does, have no choice but to see existing inequalities as inevitable.
>
> (Abberley, 1994:110)

Gerber (1990) similarly criticises the influential work *Cloak of Competence* by Edgerton

(1967) for taking an ahistorical account and again not recognising the importance of socio-economic factors when interpreting the lives of people with learning difficulties who had experienced periods of institutionalisation. Goffman's work is fairly typical in this sense, that such research tends to develop in an apolitical direction, tending to focus on how disabled people cope with their stigmatised identity rather than identify means of changing the stigmatised role of disabled people (Hahn, 1985b). Such concerns led to the rejection of the initial Social Constructionist attempts to redefine disability. Abberley also criticises studies of disability that highlight the disadvantaged position of the disabled population in society such as under employment and poverty, but fails to implicate corporate responsibilities for this situation. Also, intervention programmes that focus on altering people's attitudes towards disability without recognising the close interplay of social, economic and political aspects of how disability is constructed are more often ineffectual in changing how people view disability (French, 1992) and may act as token gestures towards redressing the disadvantage experienced by disabled people (Chinnery, 1991). Interactionist accounts of disability are all too often nothing more than descriptive and contain little that would threaten the status quo that sustains the stigma of which they speak. Interactionist accounts fail through not linking the interactions that they describe to the socio-economic and political framework in which these interactions are based. 'Because symbolic interactionists and ethnomethodologists ask about "definitions of the situation" from the viewpoint of individual actors, they share with positivists the disinclination to problematise interpretative contexts' (Ligget, 1988:265). Social Constructionist accounts offered little other than a general focus on attitude formation to suggest how socially disabling practices could be redressed. Oliver criticised the influential work of Stone (1984) for not laying a clear path to how the disabled state might be redressed in modern industrial society (Oliver, 1986). Its omission was the political and the economic.

Such a pathway to a deeper understanding of how a disabled state is maintained and how it may be redressed is provided by Finkelstein (1994b). Using attitudes as a starting point, he recognises that negative attitudes remain towards disability in spite of the many efforts to turn this about, and that these attitudes are unlikely to stem from ignorance or misunderstanding, but are endemic to the negative status disability has in the fabric of our society. Hahn takes this still further, describing how negative attitudes can be identified as coming from two sources: *existential anxiety* and *aesthetic anxiety*. The former denotes the fear the non disabled have of becoming disabled. The often heard phrase "there but by the grace of god go I" suggests such a reaction to disability. Though the phrase is used to evoke empathy, it is based on a fear of becoming disabled. Indeed, for many people the fear of becoming disabled is greater than the fear of death, even though the latter is inevitable and the former not (Hahn, 1988a). Keith (1992) invokes existential anxiety when she described her motivation to write on issues concerning disability and care services. She writes of how these issues were made pertinent to her following the actions of a speeding motorist that resulted in herself becoming disabled. Indeed she reinforces this anxiety in the reader throughout the article, describing how becoming disabled '...could happen to anyone at any time through accident, illness or old age [and] is a frightening prospect' (Keith, 1992:170). Pollard, introducing a special issue of *Consulting Psychology Journal* on the Americans with Disabilities Act similarly invokes this anxiety by describing the importance of such legislation in the light of the fact that disability '... is likely to touch all of us or a loved one...' (Pollard, 1993:1). Such fears of disability are common in the discourse on disability. Further, existential anxiety is also felt in the label used by some disabled people that they apply to non disabled people - TABS (temporarily able bodies) ie. bodies in a temporary able state prior to becoming disabled.

Aesthetic anxiety is the fear of disability as it signifies difference. It alludes to those differences we find unappealing. It is reflected in social values that hold unblemished and unimpaired bodies are those closest to perfection. Such social values help sell considerable amounts of "beauty products" and have made the fortune of many a chemical company. It is a world where we have learned to classify and categorise people primarily by physical appearance (Hahn, 1988b) and anything that deviates from our sense of aesthetic beauty is derided and devalued. Hahn (1988a) links existential anxiety to the Medical Model, or as he terms it the *functional-limitations* model and aesthetic anxiety to the Social Model which he calls the *minority-group* model. The different ways we think of disability in this respect will have important implications for the field of disability. Hahn develops his argument on how these different ways of thinking lead to quite different social policy implications, particularly if we were to pay more attention to the prevalence of aesthetic anxiety rather than existential anxiety which appears at the core of much anti-discrimination legislation (see Hahn, 1988a for further reading).

Existential anxiety points to our feelings of awfulness in our imagining of what the experience of disability is like. Aesthetic anxiety points to the social values we hold towards disabled people more directly, ie. our feelings that disability is something socially unattractive. Navran (1992) reports a Harris Poll in the US that found 74 per cent of their sample who were questioned said they felt *pity* towards disabled people; 58 per cent felt *embarrassed*; and, 47 per cent felt *fearful* they might become disabled too. Embarrassment and pity are perhaps related to aesthetic anxiety, and fear is perhaps related to an existential anxiety. These feelings may hold important implications. Disability becomes politicised through focusing on aesthetic anxiety as it becomes more clear how the disabled population are a group who are marginalised through the result of social and cultural values.

Disability becomes politicised not only by new theoretical venturing. It also came through more immediate changes in many disabled people's life circumstances. During the 1970s disabled people were finding new ways of living. Particularly influential were the Centres for Independent Living that began to spring up across Britain (Hasler, 1994). These would call into question the dominant Medical Model of disability and lead to the development of a more overtly political model of disability. New ways of living called for new ways of thinking. The minority group perspective on disability recast the lives of disabled people in a different light. This perspective held that disabled people were subjected to the same type of discrimination and segregation as other minority group members. Moreover, the marginalisation of disabled people was particularly harsh with the disabled population having higher rates of unemployment, greater dependency on the welfare system and higher proportions living on or under the poverty line than any other minority group. '... they also have experienced a more pervasive form of segregation in education, housing, transportation and public accommodations than the most rigid policies of apartheid enacted by racist Government' (Hahn, 1987:553). Hahn goes on to describe a minority group perspective of disability that first highlights the widespread negative attitudes towards disability, then highlights an environment moulded by public policy and moves to the conclusion that the built environment reflects society's negative attitudes towards disability. Here the blame for discrimination and prejudice lies with agents of powerful industrialists who have 'implicitly promoted pervasive messages about acceptable forms of human appearance that encouraged consumers to strive relentlessly to approximate these images' (Hahn, 1987:555). In this Social Model of disability, new ways are suggested as to how disability might be removed through social and political intervention.

One of the most insightful and elegant renderings of a community that effectively removed disability from a section of its inhabitants by removing social barriers rather than relying on medical intervention can be found in the writings of Groce on the history of Martha's Vineyard, an island off the coast of New England in the US. The following is an extract from her book *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language*. It clearly shows us where she got the idea for the book's title. Here, Groce is talking with Gale, an elder on the island:

> "Oh," he said, "they didn't think anything about them, they were just like everyone else."
> "But how did people communicate with them - by writing everything down?"
> "No," said Gale, surprised that I should ask such an obvious question. "You see, everyone here spoke sign language."
> "You mean the deaf peoples' families and such?" I inquired.
> "Sure," Gale replied, as he wandered into the kitchen to refill his glass and find some more matches, "and everybody else in town too - I used to speak it, my mother did, everybody."
> (Groce, 1985:2-3)

In the community of Martha's Vineyard there was a high incidence of hereditary deafness from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, yet during that time islanders did not view deafness as a disability. Indeed, as Groce asked island elders of their recollections about the deaf people in their community, it became obvious to her that deafness was not a disability as it is thought of in western society today. Indeed, many islanders reacted with surprise at why researchers were interested in the deaf people of their community as for them they were no different from other members of the community. This is evident in the passage quoted above in how Gale reacted to Groce's questioning. The community had adapted quite early in its history to deafness by developing their own form of sign language practised by almost all members of the community, deaf and hearing people alike. The story has parallels with Finkelstein's amusing yet insightful fictional short story which he titled *The Revolution* (Finkelstein, 1992). In this story the non disabled members of a community decide to construct a separate, purpose built village on a hill on the outskirts of their town for members of their community who used wheelchairs. When the non disabled peoples' town is destroyed by flood they go for help to the village of wheelchair users. However, when they arrive at the village they find themselves disabled by the village environment. They would bump their heads on the low doorways and low ceilings and would get their feet trapped in the wheelchair tramway lines laid out on the paths.

In both stories, one historical and one fictional, the message is clear. It is the social organisation of communities, as reflected in patterns of communication and construction of the built environment, which disables individuals. This was to be the main feature of the Social Model of disability as it was to develop. Where the Medical Model located the problem with the disabled individual, the Social Model located the problem outside the disabled individual and onto social, economic and physical barriers.

The Social Model of disability has been promoted particularly by the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) who have been successful in encouraging a greater number of people to self-identify as disabled and become involved in political processes on disability issues (Barnes, 1991). The model they have adopted accepts people have an impairment that may have a medical marker/origin, but that this only becomes a disability once society refuses to acknowledge these impairments in its social, economic and political practices. Whereas the Medical Model ascribes responsibility for disability on an individual's impairment, the Social Model places this responsibility at a more corporate level; the exclusionary practices of social institutions. The significance of the Social Model is in the interventions it suggests. These focus on the removal of social, economic and physical barriers, barriers that make the social economic and physical environment hostile to the disabled person, rather than rehabilitating the disabled person to the hostile environment (Barnes, 1991; Sapey & Hewitt, 1991). The Social Model redefines disability to align more to WHO's early definition of handicap:

> **Handicap** - a disadvantage for a given individual resulting from an impairment or disability, that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role.
>
> (Wood, 1981)

While in the WHO's definition there is an intimate link between disability and impairment, under a Social Model this link is more distal, with social and economic barriers being placed between them. Thus an impairment does not necessarily cause a disability, it does so under the mediating factors of the social and economic environment in which that person with an impairment lives. The Social Model was further adopted and developed by Disabled People International (DPI). Their definition was two pronged;

> **Impairment** is the functional limitation within the individual caused by physical, mental or sensory impairment.
> **Disability** is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers.

This differs from the WHO definition as the term "impairment" replaces the WHO's definition of "disability" and the term "disability" replaces the term "handicap".

Barnes (1991) asserts the terminology advocated by the DPI is becoming increasingly recognised by the majority of organisations of and organisations for disabled people. He sees this awareness spreading still further to both professional organisations and to some sections of the public. Oliver (1986) feels that much progress has been made in promoting the Social and rejecting the Medical Model of disability and hopes further progress will be made in achieving a more adequate definition that takes into account the oppression experienced by disabled people. Abberley (1987) states a theory of disability as oppression:

> (1) recognises and, in the present context, emphasises the social origins of impairment;
> (2) recognises and opposes the social, financial, environmental and psychological disadvantages inflicted on impaired people;
> (3) sees both (1) and (2) as historical products, not as the results of nature, human or otherwise;
> (4) asserts the value of disabled modes of living, at the same time as it condemns the social production of impairment; and,
> (5) is inevitably a political perspective, in that it involves the defence and transformation, both material and ideological, of state health and welfare provision as an essential condition of transforming the lives of the vast majority of disabled people.
> (Abberley, 1987:17)

The Social Model offers room for the articulation of the oppression experienced by disabled people. Thinking of disabled people as an oppressed group in society and likening them to the oppression experienced by other minority groups is not, however, a new idea. It predated the rise of the disability movement though it was an idea that did not take hold at the time. The idea is contained in the work of Barker, though the way he articulated this view is offensive by today's standards. He suggested the disabled person's position in society was not unlike that of 'the Negro [sic], the Jew [sic] and other underprivileged racial and religious minorities' (Barker, 1948:31). In recent years the Social Model has indeed gained considerable influence. In May 1996 WHO abandoned its Medical Model of disability and adopted the Social Model.

Where the Medical Model is divisive, the Social Model is unifying. The model promotes the commonality of the oppressed experiences of disabled people and does not, in theory, create separate categorisations of people according to the nature of their impairment. Further, there is a strong level of agreement across the disability movement over the efficacy of the Social Model. However, this is not to say that there is unilateral agreement within the disability movement on how the Social Model should be defined. There is, in fact, a noticeable difference in opinion among those who promote the Social Model. I feel the division is best described in Dalley's (1991) identification of the split between what she terms the *radicals* and the *reformers* within the movement. The radicals hold social and economic barriers as the primary factors that create disability and continuously caution against invoking an individual's impairment into the equation. The reformers are more comfortable about invoking an individual's impairment into the causal explanation and seek to allow room in the Social Model to account for impairment. This leads both camps to seek differing solutions to a disabling society. The reformers seek solutions that ease the burden on disabled people such as supporting moves for more adequate financial compensation or income replacement schemes. The radicals seek wider change. Rather than seek improvement within the hegemony of the non disabled person's world, they seek to change that world such that equality exists between disabled and non disabled people. In practise we can see this disagreement in the division between the UPIAS and both the Disability Income Group (DIG) and Disability Alliance (DA). DIG and DA were campaigning for reforms in disability benefits to improve the economic circumstances of disabled people through establishing a national disability income. The UPIAS criticised this campaign as too concerned with symptoms [disabled people's poverty] to the detriment of concentrating on the causes [a disabling society] (Barnes, 1991). The former were playing the role of reformers, the latter the role of the radicals. The radicals criticised the reformers for playing the organ grinder's tune - the tune of the non disabled. The reformers sought to play their own tune. In turn, the reformers criticised the radicals as idealistic and scathed them for their abandonment of pragmatic considerations in the existing social, political and economic climate; for pursuing ideological goals when what was needed was practical and immediate action to redress the poverty faced by disabled people.

The reformers and radicals premise their arguments on different models of disability. The radicals argue from a "pure" Social Model view while the reformers seek to qualify the Social Model with a recognition of the "reality" of impairment alongside the social dimension of disability. Such reformers critique the Social Model for not giving sufficient recognition of the importance of impairment (eg. Crow, 1992; Morris, 1992a; French, 1994c). French, in particular, made an evocative criticism of the Social Model in this vein. Describing her own experiences as someone with a visual impairment she cited many of her difficulties as not, she believed, created by social barriers. She described her attempts to manipulate the social environment to remove her disability. She told her neighbours of her difficulty and explaining the reason why she did not acknowledge people in the street unless they were in very close proximity to her. However, she found her attempts to be unsuccessful.

> For my part, my inability to see them approaching meant that I was inevitably jolted abruptly from my thoughts when they did speak, which as well as feeling unpleasant, affected the normality of my response. This, in turn, may well have deterred them from talking to me again. All in all, my attempt to manipulate the social environment was not a success, and although my situation does give rise to social isolation, I do not feel inclined to repeat the experiment. The difficulty I have described is not entirely due to my impairment, for it involves other people's responses, but neither is it easily modified by social and environmental manipulation; it occupies a middle ground.
> (French, 1994c:18)

Yet, I believe she describes that which is perhaps the most intrinsically social - communication. These non verbal cues she speaks of are social conventions. There is nothing about them that cannot, in theory at least, be amenable to a social intervention. However, it would be quite wrong and insensitive to dismiss her experiences. Indeed, she writes of how when her arguments are dismissed or judged to be misdirected she finds this very disabling, leaving her feeling 'estranged and alienated' (French, 1994c:19) from the disabled community of which she recognises herself as a member. Her feelings are, I feel, very important. She speaks with despondency at her unsuccessful attempt to remove social barriers and she finds solace in the conclusion that impairment is a very "real" part of her disability. But perhaps the type of social intervention required for her own impairment is so awe-inspiring that this puts her off contemplating the utility of entertaining it. However, that is not to say that such interventions are not possible or less preferable to acknowledging the functional limitations of people with impairments. Martha's vineyard described earlier is perhaps an example of the fact that our ways of communicating and the system of language we use can be modified in order to include rather than exclude people with sensory impairments. In Martha's vineyard the community encouraged a greater use of non verbal communication. It could equally have de-emphasised the importance of non verbal communication were it hereditary blindness rather than deafness that was so prevalent in their community. Were we not so reliant through social convention on the visual, French may have not been subjected to the level of social embarrassment she felt. Indeed, the tables can be reversed on the non disabled. In Martha's Vineyard people who were unfamiliar with the prevalence of sign use on the island often found themselves to be extremely uncomfortable and disabled by the lack of verbal communication. Groce relates the story of how a non disabled visitor to the island was petrified when he walked into the local store late one evening to find everyone sitting around tables in the store in total silence. He did not realise they were signing to each other, he felt that he had stopped conversation by walking in the store when in fact the conversation was going on all about him but in a different form. His experience as a hearing person of being in a social setting with a room full of people who sat in total silence was distressing.

I feel both French (1994c) and Morris (1991) are quite right in warning us not to dismiss disabled peoples' very real and tangible experience of impairment. Further, Morris' concerns over the dominance of theoretical developments in the field of disability lead me to caution my critical stance towards recognising an individual's impairment in the Social Model of disability. Writing as a feminist, she highlights the androcentric tendency to distance discourses from the personal experience of disability (Morris, 1991, 1992a). Further, the imposition of theoretical models on the experiences of disabled should be heeded with caution as this may be an additional oppressive practice though perhaps disguised under emancipatory goals (Morris, 1992a). However, I feel the reasons for sustaining a discourse on impairment are problematic. French (1994c) concedes that emphasising the social will help to unify the disability movement, but cautions us over believing that all disability can be removed with sufficient attack on social barriers, and that not recognising the experience of impairment may alienate many disabled people from the movement (French, 1994c). Morris (1992a) reminds us that disability is associated with illness and old age with two-thirds of disabled people being of age sixty or over. She describes how the experience of disability can be physically painful and asks that any theoretical model of disability should recognise that or risk alienating the experiences of large numbers of disabled people. I find such arguments unsatisfactory in that it appears to leave unrecognised the importance of the social in the very experience of pain. It leaves the experience of impairment untouched by and separate from the social and thus, I believe, safe within the domains of the Medical Model. I, on the other hand, believe pain cannot be understood as a physiological process alone, as it seems this critique of the Social Model would imply. Pain and distress are better understood as a socio-physiological phenomenon and cannot be fully understood if the experience is stripped of social context. This is captured, I feel, in the paper by Towns on asthma and the importance of power relations on how asthma is experienced by the "patient" (Towns, 1994). It is further clear in many anecdotal stories we hear of how pain is not experienced until it is placed in a meaningful social context. I do not always feel the pain of cutting my finger on paper as I turn the pages of a book until I see my blood on the page. The basics of first aid warn us to heed the importance of treating shock as well as trauma. Medical doctors are not only in the business of healing broken legs and bandaging bruised bodies, but in ensuring the social meaning the "patient" gives to their injury is such that it does not exacerbate their condition. We cannot afford to leave unrecognised the social meaning in the experience of pain. This is similar to a remark made by Marks (1996) on the importance of social context in the experience of physiological changes induced by hallucinogenic drugs. There is now greater awareness among the medical profession that responses to physical symptoms, reaction to treatment programs and the course of physical impairment and illness are affected by psychosocial processes. Similarly, the experience of pain is greatly affected by the meaning we give to it. Feeling pain when one is alone can be experientially very different from feeling pain when we are in the company of friends and family. To be told the pain you feel from a migraine is pain caused rather by a brain tumour would, I feel, dramatically change how that feeling of pain was experienced. The examples are too numerous, and the power of the connection between the social and the physiological too powerful to dismiss. Stated simply, there is no physiological, there are only psycho-physiological and socio-physiological.

Further, the distinction between the physiological and the social source of impairment is not at all clear and it may ultimately be impossible to draw such a distinction. Abberley uses the example of Phenylketonuria (PKU) which can now be detected and impairment avoided through dietary control. While one could view PKU as a congenital and thus biological/medical condition, it can also be viewed as a socially, economically and politically determined condition - the impairment is dependent upon whether the environment in which a child is born tests for PKU and whether there is available treatment. This perspective does not deny impairment, but properly situates it in its social, economic and political context. This is a view that holds impairment cannot and should not be ignored but we should take care to situate it in its proper context. This point, I feel, has been missed by many writers who ask us to "renew" the Social Model through attending to the importance of impairment. Finkelstein (1994b) points to the fact no disability organisation would actively campaign against medical endeavours that seek to eliminate impairment. He cites that many disabled people would welcome scientific developments that lead to the eradication of epilepsy, multiple sclerosis etc. and would welcome new advances in corrective surgery or technological developments that would assist people with a sensory impairment. However, Finkelstein does neglect many cases of disabled people opposing the eradication of impairment. Two examples stand out - the move to eradicate impairment through abortion and through genetic screening. He overlooks the danger of recognising impairment stripped of its social and historical context. In 1990, abortion laws were changed in the UK in recognition that a foetus born after twenty-four weeks of gestation can survive. Accordingly, a pregnancy can now only "normally" be terminated up to the twenty-fourth week rather than the twenty-eighth week that had previously been the latest point at which a termination could legally be carried out. This recognises the social and moral value we place on life itself. The exception is if the pregnancy places the mother's life in danger or if the foetus is diagnosed as 'seriously handicapped'. If a foetus is diagnosed as having physical or mental impairments "it" can be legitimately aborted up to the fortieth week of pregnancy. Many writers are opposed strongly to this form of eradicating impairment (Morris, 1992b), yet this is the product of placing an emphasis on impairment without situating impairment in its social and, in this case, the moral context.

The controversy sparked over the Human Genome Project perhaps opens up the misgivings I have over focusing on impairment. Theoretically, if successful, the project could eradicate the "disabled gene" through a process of scientific selection that will replace "natural selection". It is not difficult to see in the genome project undercurrents from the eugenics movement (Casling, 1994). Worrisome from the perspective of disabled people is that to date there is no representation of disabled people on the Genetics Advisory Commission that reports to Government on genetic issues (BCODP, 1997a,b). Genetic testing of potential employees is fast becoming a viable option and it is being considered as an employment screening device (Olian, 1984; Gostin, 1991). If we strip the Human Genome project of its social, economic and political context, it becomes nothing more than a project aimed at removing impairment and would only then get the support of the disability organisations Finkelstein is apparently speaking for. Rather, disability organisations have put this project in context and have hence become among its most vociferous critics.

The scientific interest in the Genome project as a means to remove the "disabled gene" from the human gene pool is worrisome for other reasons. Again, these worries stem from contextualising disability in its social, economic and political context. The considerable interest in removing the "disabled gene" is perturbing when one considers that up to 85 per cent of disability occurs after the age of thirteen, ie. people are not usually born disabled. Further, over 90 per cent of disability is caused by social factors (ie. poverty) rather than genetic factors - indeed one in five impairments are caused directly by the effects of malnutrition (Boylan, 1991). 'So social attention and resources are being deflected into medical technology and professional salaries when they could be providing nutrition, social support and other low-technology strategies to minimise disability or to cushion its impact' (Baird, 1992:6). Up to half of the world's disabled population have impairments that are either preventable or can be remedied for the price of a few pounds per head (re: New Internationalist, 1992). Thus, an economic rather than a uniquely medical intervention is needed. The Pearson Report (1978) describes the large numbers of accidents sustained in working environments and classified under Industrial Diseases. Such numbers increase dramatically if all disabilities caused in employment settings are included and increases more if we include all those who have been disabled as a result of the process of production in industrial societies. The Thalidomide drug and the Chenobyl incident are two examples amid many others. Very few disabilities nowadays are of the genetic kind, but have been "manufactured" as an effect of our means of production - they have a socio-economic, not a uniquely medical origin. Abberley (1987) cites Dr David Hill's (at the time a senior psychologists at Walton Hospital, Chesterfield) claim that twenty-five million people across the globe had experienced irreversible brain damage as a result of taking a prescribed tranquilliser (Largactil). 'As far the majority of the world's disabled people are concerned, impairment is very clearly primarily the consequence of social and political factors, not an unavoidable "fact of nature" ' (Abberley, 1987:11).

More ironically, it has recently been suggested that tests for disability in the foetus can actually cause disability itself. Parents of a child born with brain damage were recently taking legal action against a London hospital who had tested their unborn baby for Down's Syndrome using amniocentesis, claiming that the test caused the disability (Disability Now, 1996b). The medical profession has not only given us a language we can use to talk about impairment, but has on occasion actually created impairment. These are stark reminders of the importance not to loose the socio-economic and socio-political perspective on impairment. This point is captured again in the issue of eradicating impairment through its most pernicious form - genetic and prenatal screening. It is also captured in apparently more benign interventions such as the development of "compensatory aids" eg. prostheses. Calls for the renewal of the Social Model ask us to recognise the experience of impairment. If the experience of impairment were placed in its proper context perhaps this clarion call would be very different. Rather than recognise impairment in the Social Model, we would be asking for a recognition of the Social Model in how we think about impairment - the original venturing of the model's early days as an alternative to the Medical Model. The perspective I adopt towards impairment does not deny the significance of germs, genes and trauma, but rather points out their resultant impact on our bodies are only ever apparent in real social, cultural and political contexts, whose nature is determined by a complex interaction of material and nonmaterial factors.

I feel the strength of French's (1994c) argument for the importance of recognising the place of impairments is when she translates this concern more generally to the need to appreciate diversity. This reminds us we should reflect on the heterogeneous nature of a disabled population and avoid thinking of this population as homogeneous. However, when she and Finkelstein team up to critique psychology's approach to disability she appears to suggest that appreciating the individuality of disabled people is a strategy akin to adopting the Medical Model (Finkelstein & French, 1994c). Oliver (1991a) states that individualising disability issues is an effective way to depoliticise disabled people. Further, Abberley (1994) describes a psychology of the individual that has documented disabled people's experiences of coming to terms with their impairment and which has failed to address the social mediators of an individual's experiences of disability and confusing and confounding the concept of disability with the concept of impairment.

Reactions to the "impairment critique" and calls for a "renewed Social Model" based on it have been varied. Berthoud et al. (1993) prefer a dual-model that takes both aspects into account, ie. the individual's level of impairment and society's action or inaction in the face of an individual's impairment. They cite two extreme cases to make their point: the person in a coma and the person with a facial disfigurement. It would be hard for an advocate of the Social Model to argue the former is being excluded from, say, gainful employment due to exclusionary practices of employers. They would be excluded due to incapacity. It would equally be hard for an advocate of the Medical Model to argue the latter is being excluded from gainful employment due to impairment of function that would mean they could not perform the essential functions of any job, but they could be excluded by social barriers. Berthoud et al. believe that most disabilities lie somewhere between these two extremities and as such both medical and social factors become enmeshed in the reasons for disabled people's exclusion from social and economic activities. Similarly, Shakespeare & Watson (1995) seek to avoid taking the path of either extreme (the impairment versus the social), refusing to work in such a dichotomised way and ask us to recognise impairment in the Social Model. However, Marks (1996) views this "renewal" of the Social Model that recognises impairment as leaving a dualised account of body and society intact. She describes the essential interdependence of the two, describing the difficulties that arise when we seek to identify boundaries between the body and the external world, asking whether a wheelchair is a prosthesis or an aid. 'Like furniture, which the realist philosopher knocks, to show us it really exists, impairment is seen as "really real" and therefore unworthy of social examination' (Marks, 1996:7). Hughes and Paterson (1997) also voice their concern over the dualism inherent in the renewed Social Model and ask us to reflect on the move of disability theory away from the body while sociological theory has been, in recent times, moving back to an understanding of the body. There still exists a difficult tension as debate continues to trap itself on this dualised view of disability.

Chadwick (1996) says the critique of the Social Model concerning impairment should lead us to take the Social Model further than we have at present, describing the Medical Model as so insidious that it may be informing the redefinition of the Social Model in order that it continues to breathe. I feel more sympathy with this position than with the others I have reviewed. Further, D'Aboville (1991) states: 'Like any dominant paradigm, until such a time as it is discredited completely, this individual [medical] model is self-perpetuating in the way it spawns theory, research and practice' (D'Aboville, 1991:70).

Finkelstein (1994a) talks of attempts to change the way disability is thought of by service providers, in particular, to move both professional and voluntary organisations away from a Medical to a Social Model of disability as noticeable in its lack of success. Goldsmith (1983) notes how the challenge of the Social Model is provoking retaliation from non disabled professionals. Such professionals claim the Social Model is the work of an intellectual and socialist political minority group of disabled people and thus fails to represent disabled people as a whole. However, the Social Model of disability promoted by the disability movement is making marked progress in recent years and is also going some way to redress the internal divisions within the disabled community that have for so long appeared an artefact of the Medical Model (Finkelstein, 1994b). Increasingly such moves are unifying groups that have previously been encouraged to create their own distinct identity and their own distinct concerns, though the impairment argument may hinder the progress (Hughes & Paterson, 1997). Cornes (1991:107) concedes: 'there is some support for the view that some impairments and more severe disablement are more likely to be associated with disadvantage.' A consistent use of the Social Model would lead us to qualify this by adding that mediating social and economic circumstances will always influence the likelihood of the disadvantage.

Perhaps an extreme view, but Bowe (1990) believes that ultimately technology will provide a means to eliminate all disabilities. He envisages machines that could hear for the deaf, see for the blind etc. However, we can see from Matha's vineyard, described earlier, that we do not always need to turn to the recourse of technology to eliminate disability, indeed, it may be social barriers rather than physical or technological barriers that may have the greatest potential to reduce the prevalence of disability. Wolff (1986) further suggests technology may lead to the isolation of disabled people, whereby they will increasingly replace the present reliance of many disabled people on interpersonal contact. Dependence on technology can also make disabled people feel failures and devalued in society. There are also additional ethical concerns related to the use of technology when intervening in the lives of disabled people. Recently, technology has been developed to control "challenging behaviours" associated with learning and psychiatric disabilities. Baird (1992) refers to the increasing use of such technology in Canada and the US, describing one piece of technology that has been developed that comprises a full-body suit and helmet that has a built-in computer controlled shock system. She describes how the use of such technology, aside from immediate ethical concerns, reinforces the assumption that the problem is located in the individual. In the case of "challenging behaviour" such technology may be used to deflect attention away from the social deprivation of hostile institutional environments that may be surrounding many individuals who are showing "challenging behaviours". Situating impairment and the effects of impairment in their proper social, economic and political context is poorly considered in these interventions. The solution of "removing impairment" is not the panacea many describe it as.

2.2.3 Images of disability in the media

Definitions of disability are not only moulded and perpetuated by theoretical discourse from medical professionals, academics and the disability movement. The media is a powerful mediator to the way people gain there own definitions of what a disability is and what it is not. The media can, for example, be a powerful tool with which to counter discrimination against disabled people (President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, 1994). However, it has a history of doing the very opposite.

> ...stereotyped assumptions about disabled people are based on superstitions, myths and beliefs inherited from earlier times. They are inherent to our culture, and part of the reason why they persist is that they are continually reproduced through television, radio, films, advertising, books and both local and national newspapers.
> (Barnes, 1991:196)

Barnes then cites a study reported in *New Society* that showed children do not find abnormal appearance uncomfortable to look at until the age of eleven (New Society, 1985). The conclusion from this leads us away from believing reactions towards disabilities are innate and towards realising they are created through our socialisation as children and later as adults. A powerful medium through which this socialisation happens is through story-telling. Hahn describes how our reaction to disability has not been always negative and how it has been celebrated in our history. Cinderella, interpreted under modern times, is the tale of a beautiful young woman who marries her handsome prince despite the trickery and deceitfulness of her "ugly" (facially disfigured) sisters. However, the modern telling of the tale changes the significance of the "ugly sisters" contained in its originally telling. In its original form the ugly sisters disabled themselves (through self-mutilation) to appear more attractive (Hahn, 1988b). Hahn goes on to describe how in earlier times, particularly before the spread of Judea-Christianity, disability was experienced as something sensual, exciting and attractive. The nature of the "disability stories" we tell in modern times recasts disability under a less benign light. The alternative of earlier societies was to rejoice in difference and find pride in disability (Corbett, 1994). However, modern media presentations of disability often portray images that are offensive to disabled people (Barnes, 1991). This includes disability being associated with villainy in classical drama, children's books and cartoons and modern film (Thurer, 1980; Longmore, 1985; Shakespeare, 1994). Captain Hook, Richard the Third, Elmer Fudd and The Elephant Man, for example, all create particular representations of disability that are wholly negative.

> Dr. Frankenstein's organ transplant and Dr. No's iron fist quite naturally generate a special propensity for monstrous behaviour. Of course, the symbolic properties of disability are not exclusively lurid, though they often are. ... The point is that physical deformity in literature and art is almost *never* unencumbered by the trappings of metaphor. There are almost no average or ordinary and "by the way" physically aberrant characters.
>
> (Thurer, 1980:12 *author's emphasis*)

Disability has been a popular theme for film makers but this popularity is in its use as a metaphor for evil. Even films that seek to explore the experience of the oppression faced by disabled people often end up colluding in the negative imagery created around disability. The films *My Left Foot*, and *Born of the Fourth of July* characterise the emotional and physical dependency of people with physical disabilities (Morris, 1994b). Darke (1994) writes a particularly compelling account of the negative imagery associated with disability evident in David Lynch's film *The Elephant Man.*

There are exceptions to this in the media. They stand out as they are so few. Corbett et al. (1993) cites the much maligned UK television soap *Eldorado* for its portrayal of a disabled character, Nessa, who actively participates in her community. The fact she was in a wheelchair was not used as a central theme to her character's development, her story lines were similar to the non disabled characters in the series. Corbett et al. also note the increased presence of disabled contestants on Game Shows, though they note these disabilities tend to be the more aesthetically acceptable and visually apparent disabilities such as wheelchair users. We have yet to hear of contestants with learning difficulties or psychiatric disabilities. In the case of the latter, this probably is happening covertly with contestants not disclosing their disability to television programmers. More recently, an alcoholic drinks manufacturer has used a visually impaired person to promote their product in television advertisements. Further, positive media images have been recognised by disability groups. The *Raspberry Ripple Awards* held an 'Oscars' ceremony for television and film images of disabled people that promoted disabled people in a positive light (Channel 4, 1997). However, an equal number of 'booby prizes' were given for programmes and films that maintained negative images of disabled people. Indeed, the record of the media is more usually of maintaining negative images of disability. Such has recently been the case on the popular BBC soap opera *Eastenders* where a story line involved a young couple deciding to abort the birth of their daughter due to her having an impairment (BBC, 1997).

Hevey (1994) writes with great passion on the media's use of disability as a metaphor for that which is socially unacceptable, forms which 'naturalise the exclusion of disabled people' (Hevey, 1994:118). Longmore (1985) reminds us that no disabled people appeared in television commercials until the 1980s. Hahn (1987) cites an exception to this recorded by Fox (1984) of a man in a wheelchair in a 1921 advert for sanitary pads. However, the reason for the inclusion of this disabled man in the advertisement is insightful. Originally the advertising campaign pictured a nurse in conversation with four soldiers but the marketing agency withdrew it as it was felt it inappropriate for men to be shown in an intimate discussion of feminine hygiene. The four soldiers were replaced with a man in a wheelchair. The message from this marketing episode is perhaps that a man in a wheelchair is not a "real" man (Hahn, 1987).

These negative images are further perpetuated by disability charities. Barnes reminds us that it was not long ago that we would find it commonplace to see the plastic statuette of a young girl wearing leg callipers sitting begging in a shop doorway - the collection receptacle used by a prominent charity in the UK. Oliver (1994a:56) describes the 'shameless way they [charities] reinforce this charitable image through their fund-raising campaigns'. In 1996, the National Disability Arts Forum launched a poster campaign *Liberty not Charity* to highlight the negative imagery of disability charity advertising. The prime objective of disability charities' marketing ploys is to 'maximise income, regardless of the image presented' (ibid.) and that many such organisations are unaware of the damage the image they promote does to disabled people. Charities have been charged with promoting oppressive ideologies (Melucci, 1989). Keith (1992) describes her abhorrence of a documentary focusing on children who cared for their disabled parents as portraying a mother as a burden to her family rather than highlighting the lack of State care provision for disabled people. Moreover, disability charities have come under increasing scrutiny following the recognition that many have very large reserves of money which appear not to be used directly to assist disabled people directly, but to ensure the survival of the charity. The worst charity in this respect is the charity *Guide Dogs for the Blind* who were criticised in December 1995 for sitting on assets of £184 million. The outcry caused a Charity Commission investigation early in 1996 into the issue of charities accumulating such large assets. Similar concerns have been expressed over the profits made by organisations behind the Motability Scheme - a scheme that provides disabled people with adapted cars - with Motability Finance Ltd having assets of nearly £1.5 billion. There has been much criticism of disability charity programs such as *Telethon* which raised money for "worthy causes" and *Hearts of Gold* portraying the "courage" of disabled people. There was particular outrage at Esther Rantzen being given a special award by Lord Snowdon for her 'services to the lives of disabled people'. The criticism was that the Hearts of Gold television programme and others like it perpetuate negative and tragic images of disability (Disability Now, 1996a) that do more harm than good and raise money to protect the interests of charities rather than those they are claiming to be charitable towards.

In the UK the family of former Prime Minister Harold Wilson spent the final years before his death concealing the fact that he had Alzheimer's Disease. A similar story was played out in the US with Ronald Reagan. Earlier in US history the American media, or perhaps I should say the political spin doctors of the time, were careful not to film President Roosevelt in his wheelchair. His impairment was kept hidden from the US public throughout his presidency, and camera angles were monitored carefully to ensure his impairment would not be made visible to them (Gallagher, 1985). The potential for providing a considerably powerful role model for disabled people was lost to media concerns that showing the US president as disabled would undermine his credibility. By its very omission, disability was portrayed as wholly negative.

The image of the wheelchair is one that is more often exaggerated than disguised in popular media representations of disabled people. Indeed, it has become the internationally recognised symbol for disabled people. This has become something of a stereotype as the proportion of the disabled population who are in wheelchairs is very low (Bury, 1979). The size of the disabled population who use wheelchairs is estimated as some 700,000 in the UK out of an estimated population of 6.9 million disabled adults. This stereotype of the wheelchair user has further led to a narrow conception of the barriers that face disabled people (Walker, 1981a).

> With this image of disability dominant, integration becomes a spatial rather than a social and economic problem, and it becomes possible to concentrate provision on a relatively small number of people and to provide relatively poorer facilities for the mentally ill and to restore those who have been in hospital to jobs and to a valued place in the community...
>
> (Walker, 1981a:15)

More positive imagery of disability has seen growth through the disability arts scene. This includes dance and theatre companies and the visual arts. The visual and expressive arts have been used to challenge oppressive practices towards disabled people in the UK. This, along with the more politicised wing of the disability movement, questions and challenges oppressive forms of disability imagery. Groups such as Graeae and others are gaining in profile. 'Just as CND had Billy Bragg, we have Johnny Crescendo' (Hasler, 1994: 282). However, the general conclusion that can be made is that the media has a powerful role in shaping the way disability is defined and the image the media most often promotes more often associates disability with negativity and finds fault with individuals.

I conclude this section by turning to the thoughts of David Hevey, who has written insightful pieces on the influence of disability imagery used in the media.

> ... I would agree that the general history of disability representation is one of oppressive or 'negative' forms and that this has happened precisely because disabled people are excluded from the production of disability culture and excluded from the dominant 'disability' discourses. We are excluded from most of history but particularly, and perversely, from the history of 'disability representation'.
>
> (Hevey, 1994:116)

2.3 Linking definition and legislation

Definitions of disability and the process of legislation are intimately connected. A distinct example of this is played out in the relationship between defining disability and social security legislation. It has been suggested that how a person defines themselves is related to their level of awareness of the social security benefits available. Rowlingson & Berthoud (1994) report those who described themselves as "ill" were less likely to have been aware of Disability Working Allowance than those who described themselves as either "disabled" or "impaired". Thus, people will have a differing awareness of legislation depending on the way they perceive their disability. In piloting a self identification scheme in Jobcentres in Glasgow to detect people with disabilities, a pilot that ultimately failed, the researcher found two factors affecting whether someone would self-identify as disabled. First, there had to be sufficient time to establish a rapport between the Jobcentre staff and the client. Second, the client had to perceive positive outcomes in identifying themselves as disabled and this had to be greater than any perception of stigma or negativity associated with the label. 'Privacy and time allied to the feeling that there is some value to the person through declaration of a disability are the fundamentals of successful identification of the client group with disabilities' (Foster, 1990:para 6.8). Both the nature of legislation and the way it is administrated can be crucial to whether people define themselves as disabled. The report by Foster recommended the more effective targeting of publicity about disability services in the Employment Service (ES) to show the benefits for disabled people who declare their disability.

The legislative process also acts as a powerful determinant over how disabled people become defined as such. Legislation creates disability in the sense that it defines different strata of disabled identities. Most often legislation acts as a means of creating division within the disabled population. In the Employment (Disabled Persons) Acts, a distinction was made between two classes of disabled people: those capable and those incapable of working in an open employment setting. The latter group were broadly described as severely impaired. Legislation thus divided disabled people into two broad types. The way this was put into practice was often very imprecise. The decision as to which category a person belonged to was often undertaken by Disablement Resettlement Officers (DROs) who were untrained in this respect. In many cases the definitions imposed upon disabled people, ie. whether they were defined as incapable or capable of work was decided almost arbitrarily (Mainstream, 1990). The imprecision in the classification itself was reflected in the use of a classification scheme that did not allow for fluctuation of impairment, the fluctuation relating to the severity of impact an individual's impairment had on their functional ability (Barnes, 1991). Despite the imprecision of this classification scheme, legislation served varying disability identities onto the disabled population.

Legislation can and does change how disability is defined, but the legislative process is not an arbitrary one but created within a particular socio-political context. An important facet of this context has been the economic conditions of the labour market. During the 1980s increasing numbers of people were effectively becoming defined as disabled through securing what was then Invalidity Benefit. It has been suggested this was not solely attributable to a greater incidence of impairment within the working population, but to increasing levels of unemployment and insecure employment in the UK. At that time doctors relaxed the way they issued medical certificates for people considered borderline between capable or incapable of working (Berthoud et al. 1993). A greater number of people were becoming defined as incapable of work. It has been suggested the increasing number of people becoming defined as "sufficiently" disabled to be deemed incapable of work was directly related to the labour market conditions of that time. For example, with the reduction of jobs in the mining industry ex-miners may have felt it to their advantage to seek medical certificates that placed them on Invalidity Benefit rather than face an uncertain future seeking work and signing on Unemployment Benefit.

Berthoud et al (1993) note that during times when the labour market was insecure or hostile to workers, it was in the interest of a disabled person to obtain a certificate of incapacity. Being in receipt of Invalidity Benefit was more secure than being in receipt of Unemployment Benefit as the latter was subject to more stringent reviews and there was a greater possibility that benefit would be withdrawn. Further, Invalidity Benefit was paid at a higher rate than Unemployment Benefit. Also, if a disabled person showed her/himself to be capable of work they were denied Invalidity Benefit even though they would experience a similar level of employment disadvantage as disabled workers who chose to declare themselves unfit for work.

The role of disabled people in the labour force moved from one of being essential labour during the 1940's and early 1950s when levels of unemployment were low to one of surplus labour in more recent times that have seen sharp rises in levels of unemployment (Gladstone, 1985). Research has suggested that claims for and allocations of disability benefits increase in areas experiencing increases in unemployment and economic adversity (Howards, et al. 1980; Kuh et al. 1988). Hahn suggests the unemployment of disabled people can be linked directly to socio-economic factors irrespective of an individual's impairment. Hahn (1985b) points to the low rates of unemployment for disabled people during World War II when physical examination and other functional requirements for employment were waived, only to be reintroduced when war veterans returned home, and unemployment for disabled people subsequently increased again. Warner sets out a particularly convincing argument that links how "mental illness" is defined and treated and economic and labour market conditions. During times of economic boom, schizophrenia is defined as a "curable" condition amenable to care in the community. During times of economic depression, schizophrenia is defined as incurable and best treated in custodial care settings (Warner, 1987).

Legislators do not find they are equally able to define all disabilities. People who have alcohol or drug dependency have often been troublesome for legislators seeking to define disability. In research involving DROs, Leah et al (1988:26) found an opinion expressed by some that '...if people are drinking to excess or abusing drugs they are best left to their own devices and there is little point in the Employment Service offering help'. Still today, psychological disabilities are very much a grey area for legislators. Confusion over defining disability is not confined to legislators, but also to those whose job is to implement the policies they make.

> A comment was made that the definition is really there for deciding the eligibility of a disabled person to register under the 1944 Act. In practice the DROs will deal with people with disabilities who are considered to need special help even if, technically, they do not fit the definition.
>
> (Ibid:29)

Thus, even where legislation shows clarity, it is not always certain that such clarity will be transferred to how such definitions inform the way legislation is put into practice. The recommendation Leah et al. made to the ES was that front-line staff in Jobcentres should receive greater disability training. There are many different definitions of disability in the arena of policy makers, and to date none of these have been consolidated. For example, the definitional criteria for attendance allowance, war and industrial injury disablement pensions all differ (Townsend, 1981b). These in turn differ to the definitions drawn up in the DDA.

However, there is virtually nothing in the Medical Model of disability that has direct implications for social policy (Hahn, 1985b:89): 'The medical perspective seems to imply a demand that disabled persons must adapt and adjust to their surroundings without imposing a corresponding obligation on policy-makers to create an environment which can accommodate the needs and desires of citizens with disabilities'. However, the translation of the Medical Model into policy does have important implications for disabled people. For example, in calculating benefit entitlement, a disabled client will be asked if they are 'sick or disabled' and specialist services are offered to them through the ES premised on the percentage of their disability. This defines disabled people as helpless and in need of support and having impairments that can be precisely defined in respect to their effect on a person's level of functioning. An example of legislation that holds just this type of view is the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (Shearer, 1981a). This leads the ES to offer disabled people rehabilitation rather than the training offered to non disabled people (Oliver, 1991c). Disabled people are thought of as faulty goods that need repair through rehabilitation rather than a resource that can be utilised and maximised through training.

The discourse of disability is maintained in the way disability is defined under welfare legislation. Since 1917 loss of faculty has been the dominant definition that decides whether someone is eligible for disability benefit entitlement (Walker, 1981b). This is much the case today. Compensation schemes are typically premised on deciding the percentage of faculty loss (Townsend, 1981a). For example, Schedule 2 to the Social Security (General Benefit) Regulations contains a list of types of faculty loss along with the percentage of disablement it constitutes. Loss of a thumb is held to be a greater disability (30%) than the loss of two fingers from one hand (20%) but less of a disability than the loss of all a person's toes (40%). The lowest disablement is for the loss of the tip of a finger (1%) (figures cited in CPAG, 1996c). Though an often used example, a violin player may find the loss of either a finger or a thumb to be more disabling in her/his working life than the loss of all their toes. This lack of vocational and wider social context is crucial. Two people who have the same impairment will not necessarily experience the same disability (Townsend, 1981a). To return to the story of Martha's vineyard described earlier, an islander who had an amputation of the lower part of their leg may have been considerably more disabled in that community than a person who was deaf. Indeed, the person who was deaf was not disabled in that community. However, under UK benefit regulations, the former would have been deemed 40 per cent disabled and the latter 100 per cent disabled.

Under legislation, disability is often defined as an all or nothing concept, dividing normal people apart from disabled people. Commonly the continuum of varying levels of impairment possessed by both disabled and non disabled people is lost. Disability becomes synonymous with the idea of "severely disabled". Disability Working and Living Allowance come under benefits for the "severely disabled". There is little room for partial disability thus the definition used is one that is more polarised than the WHO definition of disability (Floyd, 1991). Specialist employment services are for people who are severely disabled, less severely disabled people are encouraged to use mainstream services such as Jobcentres (Bruce, 1991) and thus become defined as non disabled for the purposes of legislative convenience.

Definitions of disability more often lack precision in legislation. Townsend (1981a) points out that the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act did not contain a standard definition of disability. This left local Government to include on their Disabled Person's Register whoever they liked. Rumbol (1988) concludes that it was difficult to view these registers with any sense of reliability concerning who were on the register. The definition adopted in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was constructed so that any aspect of it could change, and many aspects of it remain uncertain. Clause 2 of the Act gives the Secretary of State wide ranging powers to change any aspect of this definition.

Clause I of the DDA states a disabled person is 'someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. The Government hoped this definition would cover all substantial disability and would also provide enough clarity for it to be of practical use to employers, disabled people and service providers alike. Particularly problematic is the lack of clarity provided in Schedule 1 on psychiatric disabilities which it terms as only including a mental illness or disorder that is a 'clinically well-recognised' condition and takes the definition no further than this. Impairment is detailed as referring to that which affects normal day-to-day activities and covers abilities related to: mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination; continence; ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects; speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to learn or understand; or, perception of the risk of physical danger. People who have a severe disfigurement are covered and don't have to fulfil the 'substantial adverse effect' provision. However, the disfigurement has to be long term. Impairment controlled or corrected by drug treatment or aids would be covered, though this would not extend to people who wear spectacles. Progressive conditions would be covered once the person began to show the initial symptoms, ie. once there is a noticeable effect on their normal day-to-day activities, however slight that may be.

The DDA and the US equivalent, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), differ on how they define disability respectively. The ADA legislation has a three-pronged definition of disability. To be disabled you have a disability, have had a disability or are *perceived* to have a disability. The DDA definition lacks this third prong, in that it only covers people who have a disability or who have had a disability. The third prong of the ADA refers to someone who is regarded as having a disability. This included people who do not have a disability but are treated as though they do (Devience & Convery, 1992; Gostin, 1992). Thus, under the ADA a carrier of a recessive gene who will not develop an impairment themselves but are treated by others as though they are disabled will be protected by anti-discrimination legislation (Gostin, 1991). In the UK they are not. Thus, where concerns of genetic testing may be obviated under US law (ibid.), under UK law they are not. However, both the ADA and DDA do not classify as disabled someone who is likely to become disabled in the future which leaves the fate of people diagnosed at an early stage with a degenerative disease or condition, though they exhibit no impairment at the time of diagnosis, uncertain. Although, under the ADA if others regard them as disabled they are protected. Further, an individual who is diagnosed with a degenerative disease, say Huntington's Chorea, is protected under the US anti-discrimination law the moment they are diagnosed. Under UK legislation they are not protected until they develop an impairment that affects their day-to-day activities. Therefore, in the UK it would still be legal for an employer to discriminate against such individuals. Gostin (1992) notes under the ADA that this third prong to the definition has important implications in light of the Human Genome Initiative. If an individual in the US was predicted to develop an impairment some point in the future they would be protected by disability anti-discrimination legislation. Again, in the UK they would not.

> The drive to stay competitive requires employers to invest heavily in worker selection at a time when the use of medical, biological, and drug tests is booming and when the use of genetic predictive tests is no longer a remote, futuristic possibility.
> (Gostin, 1992:252)

In the UK this would be an extremely problematic area as disabled people are only covered if they have an "actual" impairment. While medical testing should ordinarily only be conducted after a conditional job offer has been made, the lack of a third prong to the DDA's definition of disability means, theoretically, tests that predict future impairment may fall out with legislation that protects disabled people's rights.

The DDA has not received the support of the disability movement. A strong reason for this is the Medical Model it uses in how it defines disability (Chadwick, 1996). There is a hint of the Social Model in the DDA under the central concept of 'reasonable accommodation'. Thus in anti-discrimination legislation there is a recognition that social, economic and physical barriers may prevent disabled people from gaining employment (Lunt & Thornton, 1993,1994). However, the definition of disability is wholly medical causing a serious inconsistency in the legislation. Hahn held that 'disability is whatever policy says it is' (Hahn, 1985a:294). He believes it is therefore crucial to investigate the definitions of disability contained in existing policy documents. In the DDA disability is defined as wholly conditional on impairment, pays lip-service to the social and physical barriers that can exacerbate disability, and leaves the Medical Model of disability intact.

Premising definitions of disability on assumptions of incapacity are widespread throughout any overview of this area. Fry (1987) points out that even when voting rights were opened up in 1983 to disabled people living in institutions, they were still required to demonstrate the ability to vote by having to complete a 'Patient's Declaration Form'. The form is particularly complex, and the disabled person is required to fill it in her/himself, though they may be given help. Thus, the recognition of the right to vote of disabled people resident in institutions has not been fundamentally recognised due to the implicit proviso that they demonstrate their ability to vote. Where the disabled population have the opportunity to exercise their vote there is indication that they can be a powerful political voice. A considerable number of disabled voters switched their vote from Dukakis to Bush during the 1988 US Presidential election when Bush mentioned disability rights in his campaign (Pfeiffer, 1991). A similar thing may have happened in the UK 1997 General Election, where the Labour Party made much mention of further protecting the rights of disabled people and strengthening anti-discrimination legislation. However, present indications are that the new Labour Government are dragging their heels in delivering on these promises. The recent demotion from a Cabinet to a Ministerial post for 'Employment and Disability Rights' has been seen by some as gloomy (BCODP, 1997a,b), as have recent talk of disability benefit cuts.

I found a further connection between defining disability and legislation in the work of Barnes. Barnes (1991) suggested that the rhetoric of the Medical Model of disability was used to delay the enforcement of the 1944 legislation. He refers to a Government spokesperson who said that if discrimination were made unlawful, this would put disabled people through a great deal of distress during the process of trying to prove that discrimination took place (Barnes, 1991). Presumably the individualised rhetoric that is being relied upon here is the individual's sensitivity over their particular impairment. Barnes quite properly points out that similar sensitivities were not noticeable in the way the Government assessed entitlement to disability benefits. Barnes also cites that this distress may be attributable to the inappropriate definition of disability legislators have adopted, one that associated disability with lack of ability. As an example, Barnes refers to a Department of Employment statement that described discrimination against disabled people may in fact be legitimate discrimination of an employer who is screening out those who would not perform well on the job (Barnes, 1991). Finally on this note, the Medical Model was also used effectively to halt legislation in the area of social security legislation by Barbara Castle in 1974. She announced that no reforms of the benefit system could be implemented for disabled people as they lacked sufficient numbers of skilled medical personnel to accomplish that task (Walker, 1981d).

2.4 Reviewing the literature on social security legislation

The philosophy of the free market and a cultural shift towards individualism and individual autonomy has led to the role of the State being recast in modern society, particularly since the beginning of the 1980s during the early years of the Conservative Government. State intervention was viewed negatively by the Conservative Government, viewed as imposing upon the freedom and liberty of its citizens. The arm of the State attacked with particularly venom has been the welfare state. Such an attack is evident in the words of a former Minister for Social Security:

> A state which does for its citizens what they cannot do for themselves is an evil state. In such an irresponsible society no-one cares, no-one saves, no-one bothers - why should they when the state spends all its energies taking money from the energetic, successful and thrifty to give it to the idle, the failures, the feckless?
> (Rhodes Boyson, Quoted in Lee et al. 1983:20)

I feel this is a particularly inflammatory quotation though it reflects the hostile climate that still surrounds the welfare system in the UK today. The scope of the welfare state has thus been reduced over recent years. The emphasis is increasingly on self-help with the rejection of State intervention paralleled by the heightened competitive individualism of the marketplace (Borsay, 1986b). This is reflected in the rhetoric of community care that has been with us now since the late 1960s and has been gaining considerable momentum. Community care has meant the radical restructuring of care provision for disabled people, reducing the role of the Welfare State and increasing caring responsibilities at the level of the community in general and the family in particular (Keith, 1992).

Lister (1989) describes how the increased stringency and control of welfare benefits have created increased stigma and humiliation for those seeking to claim and claiming such benefits. A stricter definition of what constitutes "actively seeking employment" and stricter "means-testing" (investigation into claimant's financial circumstances) and an increased investment in identifying fraudulent claimants have all contributed to this. The increased use of means-testing is opposed to the concept of universal entitlement to benefit. Welfare provision is no longer based on the theory of universal coverage envisaged by Beveridge.

There is a considerable social and economic divide between those on welfare benefits and those in active employment. This also stems from ideological foundations. In the UK, there is a strong history of the Protestant work ethic. The social values contained in this ethic deem work to be essential to an individual's economic survival and that merit and effort should be rewarded. This sustains the need for there to be an economic divide between those who are active in the labour force and those who are not (Borsay, 1986b). The work ethic is apparent in the recent Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) legislation. Claimants who seek work are "rewarded" with benefit entitlement. Those who do not seek work are threatened with benefit withdrawal. However, even when claimants are rewarded with benefits, claiming benefits has become increasingly stigmatised.

This stigma is pronounced through the greater focus in social security legislation on cases of benefit fraud than on cases of failure to take up benefit. Here the Government adopts the role of policing rather than providing welfare benefits. The rhetoric of policing benefits, investigating those who claim benefits fraudulently, is commonplace. For example, it is contained in the notes of caution about improper use of the Fares to Work scheme in a report by internal research in the Employment Service (Beattie, 1990) though Employment Service staff preferred not to think of themselves as policing the scheme. In reality, benefit fraud may be less widespread than poor take up of benefits. What may be in need of redress are not the people who are getting benefit payments when they should not but the people who are not getting benefit payments when they should. At the end of 1995 the Social Security Department estimated 561,000 people claimed benefit fraudulently amounting to some £1.4 billion. In the previous year the annual figure for those who were not taking up income related benefits to which they were entitled was estimated at some 4.3 million people amounting to £3.2 billion (CPAG, 1996a). Government, however have been concerned with the smaller number of people who may be "defrauding" the system. In 1996 the then Conservative Government decided to close down a free phone benefits advice line and instead fund a new benefit fraud "hotline". Claimants used the advice line heavily prior to its closure. In 1995, for example, 3,250,000 benefit enquiries were made to the free phone number (CPAG, 1996b). Noticeably it was one of the first actions of the new Labour Government on disability benefits to initiate a programme of fraud investigation into Disability Living Allowance claimants. These factors point to a welfare environment that was becoming increasingly hostile to benefit claimants. The need of unemployed people for benefit entitlement information led some social science researchers to offer participants in their unemployment studies benefit advice. This was needed in the late 1970s (eg. Casserly and Clark, 1977) and it has never been more needed than in the 1990s (eg. Fryer and Fagan, 1993).

2.4.1 Disability benefits

What has to be decided in developing a system of disability benefits is whether benefits should serve to top up a disabled person's income or to fill-in wherever there is a perceived unmet need. Walker (1981a) describes these as philosophies of *compensation* and *income maintenance* respectively. Berthoud et al. (1993) extended this idea and described the system of disability benefits as four-pronged. The first is, again, the idea of *compensation* and includes such benefits as Industrial Injuries Benefits. Some of these benefits are more generous than others, depending on how and where the injury was caused, injuries caused while serving with the armed forces being the most well-paid (I discuss this further towards the end of this section). The second is the *insurance* principle. Such benefits included here are Incapacity Benefit and retirement pensions. These offer an income as of right for those eligible. Among those who are not eligible are people who are disabled at an early age and married women. Third, there is the principle of meeting *minimal needs*. The main benefits here are Income Support and Housing Benefit. The fourth is based on *proof of incapacity*. This is for disabled people who are not insured against disability and the level of these benefits is particularly low. Disabled people do have the opportunity to seek compensation outside the social security system through either the 'tort' system (where the disabled person can sue the person or organisation responsible for their impairment) or through seeking compensation from the Government if their impairment was sustained due to being a victim of a criminal act (Berthoud et al. 1993). These courses of action require the plaintiff prove both fault and loss. Here, I will concentrate on reviewing literature on state benefits.

'Society's response to the financial needs which accompany disability has, at best, been inconsistent' (Walker, 1981b:45). The problems in establishing compensation for the additional costs of living with a disability are most clear when seeking an answer to the question "how much actually is this cost?" One solution would be to offer all disability related goods and services a disabled person requires free of charge. An alternative would be to operate a system where administrators would estimate the extra costs of living for people and reimburse that cost. Such a costing would be based on the nature and severity of a person's disability. This second solution has been the one preferred, to date, by Government. The pivotal concept in such a discourse is that of *need*. The administrator must decide what the essential needs of a disabled person are. A costing can then be made. A further decision that must be made concerns whether the way need is identified comes from hypothesising the extra costs of living of a disabled person that arise from a person's needs or examine the actual shortage in a disabled person's income that prevents her/him from satisfying those needs. Berthoud et al. (1993) refer to the former as horizontal equity and the latter as vertical equity. The concepts become clear if we supplant non means tested benefits for the former and means tested benefits for the latter. *Disability Working Allowance* (DWA) is a means tested disability benefit and *Disability Living Allowance* (DLA) is a non means tested benefit. With the latter, payment differs according to the severity of the disability but not according to the level of the claimant's income. With the former it is the person's income and severity of disability that determines their level of benefit.

Berthoud et al. (1993) report that for severely disabled people the packages of goods and services they often require can cost hundreds of pounds per week, well above the upper limit of benefit they can claim. Further, their analysis of the standard of living of disabled people shows '...that large numbers of them do not have a washing machine, are unable to save and do not have celebrations on special occasions. ...These are indications of poverty facing perhaps millions of disabled people *in the middle of the severity range*' (Berthoud, et al. 1993:103 *authors' emphasis*). Most of these benefits have kept pace with the level of inflation though they have not kept pace with the increasing standards of living. The Social Security Act of 1980 was partly responsible for this. Prior to the Act long-term disability benefits rates were indexed either to prices or wages, whichever was the greater. Following the Act these benefits were indexed only to prices irrespective of whether this was less than the rise in wage rates. Poverty has become closely linked to the reality of living on disability benefits. For example, the reliance of 60 per cent of disabled people on housing benefit and income support shows that the disability benefit provision is insufficient to meet their needs (Berthoud et al. 1993).

Disability benefits have thus been increasingly criticised for trapping disabled people in poverty (UPIAS, 1976; Poole, 1987). Barnes (1991) concluded: 'The evidence shows that for disabled people the price of living on welfare is a systematic erosion of personal autonomy and excessive bureaucratic regulation and control' (Barnes, 1991:121). Further, this 'excessive bureaucratic regulation' is seen as a form of control over disabled people's lives exercised by non disabled people. The non disabled are the bureaucrats and professionals and they control the welfare system (Sutherland, 1981; Wilding, 1982; Oliver, 1983, 1990a). This very much reflects the existing status quo of non disabled people's control of the disabled population (Abberley, 1987).

As with other welfare benefits, during the 1980s and 1990s eligibility criteria for disability benefits became considerably tightened. This was referred to by Stone (1984) as the drawing of a distinction between the needs based and work based allocation system. The effect of this was twofold. Disabled people were encouraged to become part of the needs based system and become categorised as unable to work due to disability. Other disabled people were taken off the needs based system and redefined as not sufficiently disabled to be defined as unemployable. They then joined the work based system. The former course of action can entrap people into welfare dependency. Defining disabled people as deserving of welfare benefits and separating them from the "undeserving" increases their dependence and creates further disadvantages for them. For example, a disabled person in receipt of disability welfare benefit may have their income jeopardised were they to marry or increase their mobility and self-care abilities through participating on training and rehabilitation courses or gaining employment. Any action taken by a disabled claimant that contrasts their dependency role could result in withdrawal of their disability benefits. There are many disincentives for disabled people to move out of their marginalised position on welfare dependency, these disincentives being a direct result of the welfare system of support that seeks to compensate disabled people for their disability through the needs based system (Oliver, 1988).

However, in recent times the position of dependency has been increasingly made insecure. In the years between 1979 and 1987 some £11 billion was effectively cut from the social security budget (Lister, 1989). These cuts were directly felt by disabled people. For example, long term benefits, such as Invalidity Benefit, were cut in 1980 in real terms through being indexed to prices, as mentioned above. The disability premium replaced supplementary benefit top up payments that were originally designed to take into account the extra costs of living with a disability. The disability premium effectively placed everyone on a level playing field. The level of premium was set at a standard rate. Those whose disability involved higher living costs effectively lost out. At the time, the Disability Alliance calculated that considerably more than one million disabled people effectively would be worse off due to this change alone

(Disability Alliance, 1987), though Government estimates were considerably lower. The Disability Alliance further estimated that between 1990 and the end of the century, based on the changes in *The Way Ahead* briefing and the Social Security Act of 1990, the Government would make a saving of £350 million on the social security expenditure on disability related benefits (Disability Alliance, 1990a). Some increases in money spent on disability benefits followed the review of disability benefits in 1990 (Department of Social Security, 1990a,b) but there was also a general long-term reduction in welfare commitments (Berthoud, et al. 1993). Due to the intricacies of the benefit system, there are many and varied ways that changes to the system have resulted in a disproportionately negative impact on disabled people, too numerous to mention here but covered well by others (eg. Glendinning, 1991).

Despite the cut in expenditure on welfare benefits, the figures of those who continue to claim disability benefits remains high. Since 1979 the number of people claiming welfare benefits due to long term ill health or disability has trebled, now totalling some two and a half million people, involving an expenditure of twenty-four billion pounds. This accounts for a quarter of all social security spending and is growing faster than any other area at a rate of 6 per cent per year. However, the large number of disabled welfare benefit recipients points also to the large proportion of the disabled population who are living on and in the margins of poverty (Glendinning, 1991). In face of the enforced poverty of many disabled people who were existing on state welfare benefits, the Disability Alliance, Disability Income Group and the Government's own independent "watchdog" on social security matters were asking for a more comprehensive, coherent and adequate system of welfare benefits for disabled people (ibid.). The growth of means-tested benefits exacerbated this poverty. However, not all have been vocal on demanding such a redress in the welfare system, particularly those who view the benefit system as built upon an oppressive practice where the lives of disabled people are controlled by a few non disabled "experts" (Oliver & Zarb, 1989; Oliver, 1990a). Here calls are made for a more complete redress of the philosophy of disability benefits.

Proposals for developing a comprehensive disability income scheme have been around at least since the early 1970s (eg. Disability Income Group, 1974). They were further contained in the Conservative Party's manifesto as it entered its first year of office in 1979. Their aim was 'to provide a coherent system of cash benefits to meet the costs of disability, so that more disabled people can support themselves and live normal lives'. However, the Government consistently failed to fulfil these promises by delaying any reform in the disability benefits system. For example, reform of disability benefits was avoided in 1984 during a major review of the social security system (Dalley, 1991; Noble, et al. 1997). Rather, the Government commissioned the OPCS survey that focused on prevalence of disability and living circumstances of disabled people. John Major, the then Minister for the Disabled, assured the public such a survey was necessary in order the Government be as informed as possible before they began any major review of the disability benefit system. The research was conducted during 1985 and 1986 and the results published in 1988 and 1989 (Martin, Meltzer and Elliot, 1988; Martin and White, 1988; Bone and Meltzer, 1989; Martin, White and Meltzer, 1989; Smyth and Robus, 1989; Meltzer, Smyth and Robus, 1989). The Government insisted they wait until all six OPCS reports were published before they proposed any reforms.

During this period there were increasing calls for a unified system of benefits. Such calls were supported in the late 1980s by the Social Security Advisory Committee (Social Security Advisory Committee, 1988). At that time the disability benefits system was extremely complex, Dalley (1991) citing twenty-two different disability related forms of benefit in the system before 1990. In light of these concerns and following the OPCS survey results, the Government eventually published their policy statement *The Way Ahead: Benefits for Disabled People* (Department of Social Security, 1990b) that outlined changes to the disability benefits system. These centred on three major shake-ups. First, there were changes in the administration of Attendance Allowance (for those under the age of 65) and Mobility Allowance (AA and MA). Both became encompassed by the new, in name at least, *Disability Living Allowance* (DLA). MA became the mobility component and AA the care component of DLA. Second, a new, lower rate of AA (care component) was set for the less severely impaired. Third, a new disability benefit was introduced, the *Disability Employment Credit*, that would be later renamed *Disability Working Allowance* (DWA). DWA, introduced in 1992, was targeted at those in receipt of DLA, AA or a similar disability benefit and who were in low-paid employment.

Table 2b: 1996-1997 AA and DLA rates

Attendance Allowance (AA)	Disability Living Allowance (DLA)	
	Care Component	Mobility Component
Higher rate £48.50	Higher rate £48.50	Higher rate £33.90
Lower rate £32.40	Middle rate £32.40	Lower rate £12.90
	Lower rate £12.90	

AA was effectively split into two parts. The first part, the new care component, became part of DLA for those up to the age of sixty-five. It contained three rates for disabilities with differing levels of severity. The second, retaining the name AA, became a separate type of benefit from DLA and had only two rates, with the lower rate being equivalent to the middle rate of the care component of DLA (see Table 2b). The benefit was specified to cover the costs of attention a disabled person required due to bodily functions, or when supervision was needed. This was paid at the higher rate when supervision was required frequently or for prolonged periods both during the day and night. The middle rate was paid when either was required during the day or the night, and the lower rate (DLA) was paid when there was a need for attendance for significant but not prolonged or frequent periods of time during the day, or where someone was unable to prepare a cooked meal.

MA was originally introduced in 1976, replacing previous vehicle and tax concessions. The allowance continues today in much the same form though it is now part of DLA and a lower rate has been introduced. This lower rate was for people who were able to walk but unable to walk outside without the supervision or guidance of another person. The higher rate was for those who are unable to walk, virtually unable to walk, or for who the exertion involved in walking constituted a danger to life or to health. The mobility component could not be claimed by people over the age of sixty-five, but if a claimant was successful in getting the benefit before the age of sixty-five they receive would it for life (subject to reassessment if the award was given for a limited period). Berthoud et al. (1993) believe this means legislators do not feel that elders have any need to be mobile.

Critics and Government alike anticipated the take up of the new DWA would be low. It was anticipated that many disabled employees in low-paid work would not qualify as they would not be in receipt of a "qualifying benefit" such as DLA. For example, Martin and White (1988) estimated only 8 per cent of disabled adults received the old AA and only 7 per cent received the old MA. The official estimates at the time were that only 50,000 would be eligible for DWA and very early on take up of the benefit was very low (Floyd, 1991). Official estimates turned out to be overstated as by the end of 1992 there were only 2,000 successful claimants. In a survey of the take up of benefit conducted recently, the figures for DWA were so 'tiny' the authors chose not to incorporate them in their research reporting (Noble, et al. 1997). There were further problems in take up of the benefit. Rowlingson and Berthoud (1994) estimated that only one sixth of those entitled to DWA were receiving it. Further, only 11 per cent of disabled people were in or on the margins of work. Those receiving DWA were more likely to have higher levels of disability, to work shorter hours and to be receiving lower wages that disabled people not receiving DWA (ibid.). DWA was introduced to redress disincentives to work created by the disability benefits system, but it does not look as though it has been effective in doing so.

Though DWA was supposed to counter the benefit trap, by encouraging disabled people to take up low paid employment in the same way Family Credit was meant to encourage people into low-paid employment, DWA interferes with housing benefit eligibility and thus has only a minimal effect of removing the disincentive (Berthoud et al. 1993). Also, claims for DWA are filed after employment is secured which may have been a disincentive itself, leaving the job applicant uncertain whether s/he would receive the benefit. Further, someone could only claim DWA if their wage was sufficiently low. As a single person, to qualify for full DWA her/his earnings could not exceed £48.25 (1996/7 rates) or £58.55 if s/he worked more than thirty-five hours per week. Such a wage for a thirty-five-hour week calculates out as approximately £1.70 per hour, less than half the TUC's recommended minimum wage. The ceiling after which someone would lose all entitlement to DWA calculates out at approximately £135 per week (£3.86 per hour), though the benefit paid would be at a very marginal rate. Similar *in-work* benefits for families with children whose parents were in low paid work suggested that take up of the benefit was not likely to reach 50% for all those who were eligible (Deacon & Bradshaw, 1983). It has generally been accepted that DWA has not proved effective. 'DWA has self-evidently failed to improve access to participation through work' (Noble, et al. 1997:750).

The attempt to encourage disabled people into employment through DWA was further tenuous in light of other areas of the benefits system. Disabled people on Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance were allowed to work if that work was of 'therapeutic value'. This was called the *therapeutic earnings allowance*. Barnes (1991) commented it was an unfathomable philosophy in the face of the debilitating physical and psychological effects of unemployment. For him it would be hard to argue that work was anything other than of therapeutic value to unemployed disabled people. The allowance had a limit of £45.50 (1996/7 rates). If a disabled claimant earned more than this they would be deemed able to work, and would lose entitlement to their benefit regardless of the severity of their disability.

Many organisations were highly critical of these changes to the disability benefit system. The changes were perceived as piecemeal reforms. Walker and Walker (1991) concluded that, after initial costs over the first year, the exchequer would enjoy significant net savings within a ten-year period from these changes to the disability benefit system. They suggested changes in the benefit system that resulted in net savings for the treasury must be a sign that such changes would not address the very real poverty faced by disabled people. Further, these changes did not satisfy the call for a more unified disability benefit system. The act of subsuming Mobility Allowance (MA) and Attendance Allowance (AA) under the new Disability Living Allowance (DLA) label did not convince everyone the system was being simplified or improved. Large, speaking on behalf of DIG, reacted in the following way to the change:

> ...there is only one reason for calling two existing separate benefits and two extensions to them a Disability Living Allowance. That reason is political: an attempt to put across the idea that a sort of disablement costs allowance is being introduced. We deplore this. For disabled people, the bundling together of two entirely different allowances into a single 'new' allowance is likely to be a retrograde step. For the Government, the ingenious packaging was a stroke of evil marketing genius.
> (Large, 1991:117)

Large further remarks that with AA having three rates and MA having two this involved the possibility of eleven different combinations of benefits a person may have been entitled to in addition to the nine different types of criteria on which entitlement was decided. In this regard he questions the rhetoric behind the changes to the benefit structure that set out to 'develop a more coherent and simple system'. These changes invoked criticism from the Disability Alliance (Disability Alliance, 1990a,b) and Disability Income Group (Disability Income Group, 1988, 1990). The complexity of the benefit system makes the process of claiming benefits impenetrable for many. Critics have attacked the level of this complexity. For example, the change to AA under the new DLA was referred to by Berthoud et al. (1993:94) as done in 'a fit of bureaucratic madness'. Research from the Policy Studies Institute remarked that disability benefits were extremely complex and were from their very inception very disorganised and incoherent (Brown, 1984). Berthoud et al (1993:120) described the social security system as a 'Russian doll of complexities'. For further criticism of these Social Security reforms see NACAB (1988).

All disability benefits have been cited as having poor take up rates, and welfare rights campaigners such as the Child Poverty Action Group continue to document the significant proportion of disabled people who are not claiming their entitlement. Where disabled people are taking up these benefits it is not addressing the poverty they face. The structure of the benefit system often results in disabled people being ignorant of and misinformed about their benefit entitlement. Further, the increase and more stringent enforcement of means-tested benefits have resulted in the act of claiming benefits becoming increasingly stigmatising. This, on top of the impenetrable complexity of the system, may deter many disabled people from claiming the benefits they are eligible for (Casserly & Clark, 1977; Phillips & Glendinning, 1981).

In relation to DWA, West (1988) found that some, admittedly a minority, of claimants did not like the idea of having their wage subsidised by the state as to them this meant their continued reliance on the state (see also Miller *et al.* 1988). Rowlingson and Berthoud (1994:16 *authors' emphasis*) reported from a case study that 'many disabled people feel they have to show what they *cannot* do to the DSS and what they *can* do to the prospective employers. They are forced to assume one identity or the other and then act accordingly'. In their view neither benefit system nor employment opportunities recognised an identity based on partial incapacity. Further, the process of claiming disability benefits concentrates on the negative rather than the positive attributes of the disabled person. Several studies have demonstrated that claiming disability benefit is complicated by such factors as stigma and humiliation related to the procedure of medical assessment (Walker & Walker, 1991) and claiming means tested benefits in general as associated with stigma, ignorance and misunderstandings. These may be extremely important factors to explain the low rate of take up of disability benefits. This may be particularly so where a benefit both is disability related and means tested, or how Barnes (1991) described it, a 'double means-test', a test of income and a test of functionality. Though medical assessment was partly removed with the self-assessment claim forms used with the "new" disability benefits, this type of assessment still figured high in the overall issue of eligibility. Adjudicating Officers would be assisted by medical staff. Where self-assessment and verification from a claimant's doctor were in doubt, Adjudication Officers could take recourse to subjecting the claimant to a medical examination by the regional Benefits Agency's own appointed doctors. Further, periodically a small number of claimants would be called up to undergo a medical assessment so as to audit the overall administration of the benefit system (DSS, 1990a).

The move away from medical assessments also resulted in its own problems as the claim forms have increased in complexity to capture the level of medical information the Adjudicating Officer required. These forms could humiliate claimants themselves, or transfer the potentially embarrassing encounters with Benefits Agency personnel onto family, friends or independent advisors if the claimant sought their help in filling in the forms in answering questions related to their ability to perform key daily tasks (Barnes, 1991). Prior to recent changes in the administration of DLA, claimants were required to undergo medical assessments that were described by the National Association of Citizen's Advice Bureaux as humiliating and distressing (NACAB, 1990). Additionally, most of the doctors employed by the DSS were male, which may have caused particular discomfort and embarrassment for female claimants. If the claimant was seeking MA or AA they were required to discuss in depth the particular problems they had, involving activities such as washing, dressing and going to the toilet. It is no wonder the NACAB described such assessment procedures as degrading and demeaning (NACAB, 1990; Barnes, 1991). Complaints were also made against doctors for their curtness, rudeness and their being uninterested in the claimant's circumstances (Berthoud et al. 1993). Further, such assessments were often criticised for being too superficial. Means-tested benefits in general have been described in similar terms - degrading and humiliating (McGhee & Fryer, 1989; Barnes, 1991).

> Overall, disabled people still have to supply sensitive and intimate information to professional 'experts' in order to receive benefits, and it is those experts who will decide on the basis of that information whether benefits should be granted. In short, functional or medical means-testing will not disappear and the welfare bureaucracy will remain intact.
> (Barnes, 1991:114)

Also, the focus of the assessment was for the claimant to prove their inabilities, a particularly negative process of self-reflection for people to go through (Berthoud et al. 1993).

> It is obvious that in such a complex system of benefits it is extremely difficult to establish rights clearly. The system is very costly to maintain, not only in terms of the administrative costs involved in calculating often very small sums of supplementary income, but also in terms of the physical and psychological impact on social workers, welfare rights advisers, and, of course, people with disabilities and their families. In addition there is the problem of stigma which attaches to low means-tested benefits and helps deter people from claiming them. For people with disabilities, these problems of complexity are worsened by physical, intellectual or emotional handicaps. The processes of seeking information and claiming are, in fact, extremely difficult for some and impossible for others without help.
> (Walker 1981b:47)

I experienced the sensitivity of asking very intrusive medical questions to people when I acted as a benefit advisor for some of the research participants involved in this project. This had an impact on the nature of research relationship that developed between us and I describe this more fully in Chapter 10.

A final criticism I wish to cite concerns the lack of equality that is integral to disability benefits. The system contains a noticeable lack of parity both within and across different disability groups (Simkins & Tickner, 1978; Oliver & Zarb, 1989; Barnes, 1991; Berthoud et al. 1993). Here cause is more important than effect. A person disabled in a car accident while driving to the shops for their personal shopping would receive less compensation than someone driving to get goods for their place of work, who would received less than someone who was driving to the shops to get supplies for their army regiment, even though the resulting disability in each case was the same. A person's benefit entitlement depends on how the impairment occurred, the person's age when it happened, the length of time the person had been living in the UK, ability to work and the amount of national insurance contributions the person had made. Having a greater severity of disability would also not always mean a disabled person would automatically be entitled to higher rates of benefit (Daly & Noble, 1996). The exclusion of people over sixty-five to many disability payments, such as DLA, is problematic (Berthoud et al. 1993). Walker and Walker (1991) reported that at its maximum this disparity could amount to more than two hundred pounds per week for two people who essentially had the same impairment, but attained the impairment under different circumstances. For a fuller discussion of these points see Walker (1981c) and for parallels with US welfare policies see Erlanger & Roth (1985). This established a form of hierarchy - certainly with respect to income - within the disabled population (Shearer, 1981a; Topliss, 1982).

The focus on cost cutting of disability benefits described earlier continued in the Labour Government's first year of office (Brindle, 1997). The concern is that disability benefits should be targeted at those "most in need". This has, in the past few years, made the process of claiming disability benefits ever more difficult (Barnes, 1991).

2.5 Reviewing the literature on disability and discrimination in employment

Discrimination against disabled people has been well documented in the literature (eg. Deeghan & Brooks, 1985), so much so that Stone and Sawatzki (1980:96) refer to it being 'a virtual cliché in the literature of psychology and related fields'. There is convincing evidence to suggest the employment opportunities of disabled people are considerably restricted (Levitan & Taggart, 1973; Asch, 1984; Hahn, 1984b). For example, in the 1970s disabled people were three times as likely to be unemployed as any other group in society (Walker and Sinfield, 1975; Bowe, 1993) and this ratio remains high today. The 1995/6 Labour Force Survey reported the unemployment rate for disabled people was approximately two-and-a-half times that of non disabled people. Further, of those disabled people in full-time work, male workers earned about a quarter less and female workers earned about a third less than non disabled workers (Barnes, 1991). The OPCS survey found that disabled men earned between £1 and £1.50 per hour less than non disabled men. In the study disabled women did not show a statistically significant difference in earnings from non disabled women, though earnings for women are known to be lower than that of men (Lonsdale, 1990). Johnson & Lambrinos (1985) found a third of the disparity in wages between disabled people and non disabled people was attributable directly to discrimination, ie. rather than lower levels of productivity on the job. Further, only 12 per cent of disabled people were in professional or managerial positions, whereas 21 per cent of non disabled people were in such positions. The OPCS survey also showed disabled people were often underemployed, with disabled people being over represented in lower skilled occupations. However, Berthoud et al. (1993) point to the fact that lower level occupations may expose workers to higher risks of illness or injury.

Discrimination may be particularly harsh against disabled women. Fine and Asch (1985) reported that between 65 and 76 per cent of disabled women were unemployed. There is further evidence that disabled women are less likely to be employed than disabled men (Hanna & Rogovsky, 1991; Pfeiffer, 1991). Further, disabled minority group members - such as ethnic minority groups - are in a similarly marginalised position in the labour market as women. This often links the lives of disabled people to poverty (Rioux & Crawford, 1990). The poor employment circumstances of disabled people are reflected in the statistic that over 60 per cent of disabled people live below the poverty line (Barnes, 1991). Despite the gross inequality of opportunity for disabled people in the labour market, Floyd (1991) reports disability and employment is a neglected area of research, both internal and external to the Employment Service. Research by Pfeiffer (1991:108) suggests that the dominant characteristics of disabled people who are in employment are people 'having a higher level of education, not being head injured, not being mobility impaired, not living alone, being married or having been married at one time, not being multiple disabled, not being vision impaired, not being a veteran, not having had a stroke, being a woman if working part time, and having a younger age of onset if working full time'.

Employers often hold discriminatory attitudes towards disabled people (Williams, 1972), perceiving them to being a greater risk in respect to health and safety and to have lower rates of productivity than non disabled employees (Johnson & Heal, 1976; Fuqua, et al. 1983; Johnson, et al. 1988; Blanck, 1991). The attitudes of co-workers present particularly unassailable barriers to employment for disabled people (Nathanson & Lambert, 1981; Matthes, 1992). Increasingly, in the face of anti-discrimination legislation, employers are being asked to confront these discriminatory perceptions of disabled workers that circulate in the workplace (eg. Matthes, 1992; Mello, 1992). However, most employers remain unaware of disability employment legislation (Blanck, 1991). Further, disabled people are often subjected to tests that attempt to predict their employability. Such prediction tools are potentially discriminatory (Kelman, 1991) and may stand as an additional barrier to the employment aspirations of disabled people in particular (Rogan & Murphy, 1991) and minority groups in general (Kelman, 1991). Even with anti-discrimination legislation in place, Yelin (1991) described the employment prospects for disabled people in the US as getting worse more slowly rather than getting better.

> Organisations dominated by members of socially privileged groups will tend to choose organisational ends that require the sorts of skills that the socially privileged more frequently have, even where the choice is unlikely to be a pretext for exclusion. A combination of disguised self-interest and a genuine belief in the universal significance of the aims deemed important within one's own subculture will bias decisionmaking [sic]. Biased decisionmaking will result in the ongoing exclusion of those who would otherwise challenge the tacit consensus about proper ends.
> (Kelman, 1991:1190)

Townsend (1981b) reported that disabled people differ in the discrimination they face in the labour force according to the type of impairment they have. Most severely disadvantaged in the employment market were people with cognitive and psychiatric impairments. Gouvier et al. (1991) point to people with neurological impairments as discriminated against particularly harshly. Such people include both people with learning difficulties and people with psychiatric disabilities. Increasingly, the former typically find themselves working in Adult Training Centres many of which have been recently renamed "Resource Centres" where the work is often monotonous and poorly paid and where there is little prospect of moving on into open employment (Wertheimer, 1981). I have discussed this further in section 2.1.1.3. The latter group has been a category often excluded from consideration as disabled, even though they are disabled in their employment opportunities as much if not more than any other group of disabled people (Hebditch, 1981). Indeed, the discrimination facing people with psychiatric disabilities may be particularly pernicious in relation to the discriminatory attitudes held against them (Carling, 1993; President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, 1994). Combs & Omvig (1988) surveyed the perceptions of employers and found mental disabilities were felt to be more difficult to accommodate than physical disabilities. Research has suggested this discrimination extends to the Employment Service Jobcentre staff where members of Jobclub teams stated they would not want people with a mental illness joining, classing them as a potentially disruptive influence. Staff also held discriminatory attitudes more generally towards disabled people which they rationalised as due to pressures on "throughput" - ensuring a large number of unemployed clients enter the Jobclub and successfully move onto employment - (IFF Research, 1990). As with any other section of the disabled population, people with psychiatric disabilities may have quite powerful ambitions to enter the labour force, but there is little in the way of health and social service provision that is meeting these ambitions at the present time (Bates, 1996).

Along with people with psychiatric disabilities, people with learning difficulties also face employers who hold poor expectations about their abilities. Taylor (1990) reports of low expectations within the Employment Service and Local Authorities of the prospects of people with learning difficulties leaving sheltered employment and entering open employment.

> It was widely believed that no employer will employ a section II disabled person without a subsidy, because it is simply too uneconomical. Whilst clients with severe physical disabilities may be taken on in a tight labour market, this is thought to be unlikely for those with mental handicap [sic] and mental illness [sic].
> (Taylor, 1990:25)

The decision over whether or not to identify oneself as disabled is most common in adult life when people are seeking employment (French, 1994b). With high levels of discrimination in the labour force against disabled people it may be prudent for disabled people, for those that can, to hide their disability. In an empirical study by Gouvier et al. (1991) they concluded that disabilities that were most visible were particularly discriminated against in regard to employment. Hahn talks of a disability continuum based on the visibility of a disability (Hahn, 1984b). He suggested that the greater the visibility, the greater the level of discrimination. He suggested the visibility of a disability was crucial to the level of prejudice and discrimination directed against that disabled person. Further, it may be difficult for people to keep their disability undisclosed particularly as employers are geared up to highlighting an employee's disabled status. Sometimes job applications require the applicant to include a photograph of her/himself which Lloyd believes to be a 'none-too-subtle instrument of employer discrimination' (Lloyd Junior, 1985:301) this being particularly the case for people whose disability is more visible. Barnes (1991) comments on the prevalence of medical tests as employment selection devises and the presence of "health" related questions on applications forms as effectively screening out disabled job applicants. Here this is a deeply embedded connection with the medical profession's power to define disability which adds strength to the stereotype that disability means ill-health. Disabled people have typically found medically based assumptions about the nature of their disability are often used to discriminate against them in employment (Barnes, 1991). For example, the stereotype that disabled people pose a risk to health and safety at work is mostly centred on people who have impairments that affect mobility, sensory system, or that entail periods of loss of consciousness (Ide, 1993). Ide describes how these fears are unnecessary, showing how people with, say, epilepsy are usually perfectly safe in operating potentially hazardous machinery such as lathes and bandsaws.

Yelin reported on recent changes in the nature of the labour market, where there has been a move away from physical jobs to more information-managing jobs. He suspected this would create employment opportunities for physically disabled people. However, he reported that labour force participation of physically disabled people was actually decreasing during that time (Yelin, 1991). Discrimination was widespread in the labour market even when the nature of jobs in the market was, theoretically at least, benign to people with physical impairments.

Particularly pertinent to discrimination in employment is the issue of age. As well as the incidence of disability increasing with age (Rumbol, 1988; Martin, Meltzer and Elliot, 1988; Prescott-Clarke, 1990), many employers discriminate against age irrespective of disability. Jones and Longstone (1990) found in their review of Jobcentre vacancies that 39 per cent had age restrictions written into the advertisement. It is certainly not guaranteed that the other 61 per cent were free from such restrictions. Therefore, many disabled people find themselves facing a further barrier to employment premised both on their disability and on their age (Pfeiffer, 1991). Disabled people in older age groups are less likely to be in employment than those in younger age groups.

Employers also discriminate against the long term unemployed (Crowley-Bainton, 1987). This places disabled people at a further disadvantage as research has shown that disabled people are more likely to be out of work for longer than non disabled people. Additionally, many young disabled people are unlikely to secure employment after secondary education and therefore have no work experience to offer an employer (Prescott-Clarke, 1990). Jones and Longstone reported that 27 per cent of job advertisements in Jobcentres asked for previous employment experience. Where employers prefer candidates who have work experience, disabled people face a further disadvantage.

As discussed earlier (section 2.3), socio-economic factors play an important role in the employability of disabled people, disabled people becoming more employable when unemployment levels are low. Yet, dominant in the discourse surrounding employers' concerns is a model built upon a functional-limitations model that locates the reason for low employment levels in the disabled population with the impairment of individuals with disabilities (Hahn, 1987). Under this model, discrimination does not occur as employment decisions are based on level of functioning of the individual. This is often the claim made by employers: that theirs is a concern over worker productivity not disability history or type (Fuqua, et al. 1983). Often the whole issue is drawn up in dominantly cost-benefit terms (Williams, 1972). This is also a familiar discourse in rehabilitation literature (eg. Misra et al. 1992).

However, the cost-benefit discourse can be used effectively to support the retention of disabled people who develop their disability while in employment. For example, the cost of replacing a member of staff in an organisation ranges on average between 7 and 175 per cent (Teel, 1983). This may be a useful statistic to be used to argue for the retention of staff who become disabled during their working life - which makes up a large sector of the disabled population. The cost of replacing an employee who becomes disabled may be prohibitive for many employers. It will often be cheaper to retain the disabled employee. However, cost-benefit calculations are all too often narrowly defined and seldom used in this way. Rarely would we hear of an employer including *costs* of *not* employing a disabled person as turning a potential tax earner into a recipient of state benefit. They often envisage costs and benefits on a short-term basis, ie. immediate financial returns for the employer rather than more distal returns to the economy. The costs and benefits employers are prepared to attend to are limited to and used in a way that supports their discriminatory views towards disabled people.

Statistics on the employment performance of disabled people goes against the discriminatory views held by employers. Navran (1992) cites a study conducted by the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) in the US where employers who actually employed disabled people judged the reliability, attendance and punctuality of disabled employees to be better than for non disabled employees. Navran further asserts there to be no evidence to show disabled employees are less productive, less motivated, less willing to work hard or less likely to assume leadership roles than non disabled employees and further that they may often be better than non disabled workers on such factors. Indeed, disabled workers generally have fewer days of sick and are more productive and less likely to have an accident than non disabled workers (Brisenden, 1989) as well as having a better employment record in general (Lester & Caudill, 1987). Further, costs of accommodating disabled workers are usually minimal. Navran (1992) cites a JAN study from 1987 that found accommodation costs were fifty dollars or less in half of the cases and less than five hundred dollars in 75 per cent of all cases they surveyed and that employers reported a nine to one benefit-cost ratio for these disabled employees. Similar figures have been reported elsewhere (eg. Friedman, 1993). However, it must be remembered that these statistics may be misleading as up until now the majority of disabled people getting employment are those whose impairments are less severe. Thus low accommodation costs reported by employers may be an artefact to a legislative system that is not yet working properly (Chirikos, 1991). In a pithy but pertinent remark, Chirikos concludes that 'no pain, no gain' may be a useful indicator of the impact of anti-discrimination legislation. Further, the statistics that show disabled employees generally take fewer days of sick and are more loyal employees may be more characteristic of the hostile labour market conditions than the individual characteristics of disabled employees. With the temporary, insecure nature of employment contracts and the fierce competition for employment which I will describe in Chapter Three, these may be artefacts of fearful and trapped disabled employees. They may be too fearful to take time off work when they are sick in case this is seen as a reason for dismissal (such absence from work may be more distinct than with non disabled employees if employers hold negative perceptions of the health status of disabled workers). Further, many disabled workers may feel trapped in employment contracts due to a lack alternative employment opportunity. Thus, statistics that indicate disabled employees are more loyal to their employers through staying with them longer may in fact be a sign of the lack of employment opportunities for disabled people.

Present day society is heavily influenced by the ideologies of individualism and the meritocratic state - where society will reward based on merit alone. Individuals are called to prove themselves through pitting themselves up against one another to attain merit, status, wealth and additional social privileges. Under this ideology it is assumed that equality will be achieved simply if 'the contestants in a race are lined up evenly at the starting line' (Hahn, 1984a:362). The starting line, though, is difficult to trace in the face of the enormous socio-economic and physical barriers that confront disabled people. More often than not, disabled people are less favoured than non disabled people and for them merit is not enough. '...to be a person with a disability is virtually synonymous with being a person who either does not contribute to society through employment or participates only within narrow, socially devalued economic parameters... to be disabled is to be poor' (Rioux & Crawford, 1990:99).

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

3.1 The initial research interest group: contextualising the research question

The initial research interest group was a group of individuals who were central to the beginnings of this research project. It would be difficult not to disclose their collective identity as it was integral to both their activities in the field of employment and disability and to their ultimate demise as an organisation in the final year of the project. Further, due to the intimacy of their involvement in this project coupled with their high profile on disability and employment issues in Central Scotland, hiding their identity would require a quite exceptional conjuring trick. However, I will replace individual's names with pseudonyms to try to protect them from any adverse effects of research publication.

This interest group was the Central Scotland Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities (CEPD). CEPDs were statutory local organisations established under Section 17 of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act of 1944. Sixty local CEPDs were established throughout the UK, ten of these located in Scotland. Their remit was to advise the Secretary of State for Employment on issues relating to the employment of disabled people. They were expected to work closely with the Employment Service (ES) and to be actively engaged in activities that promoted employment opportunities for disabled people in their region.

More specifically their statutory duty was to advise on matters referred to them by the ES concerning the Quota Scheme and the Disabled Persons Register also set up under the 1944 Act (see Chapter Two). However, this role was weakened following the reconstitution of the committees in 1991. After that time they were instructed to concentrate on assisting the ES in promoting local employment opportunities for disabled people and to publicise Department of Employment (DE) Disability Services. In 1992 these committees increasingly became involved in public relations activities and less involved in policing the Quota Scheme. They focused on promoting good employment practice, as laid out by DE and ES, to employer organisations. The reduction of emphasis placed on their role of monitoring and assisting with the management of the Quota Scheme and Disability Register was clearly shown in Section Four of *CEPDs: A guide for Chairmen and members* (ES, 1994a) which states 'CEPDs are required by statute to give advice or make reports on items referred to them concerning registration as disabled and the provisions of the Quota scheme. This role does not usually generate much activity'. (ES, 1994a:31). The focus for CEPDs at the time of my involvement in the field continued to be on public relations for ES initiatives and on a general public relations exercise regarding the employment potential of disabled people to local employers.

Constitutionally, the membership of a CEPD had to include a chairperson not employed by the DE or ES, a mix of persons representing employers and workers, and members who had experience of and/or an interest in employment and disabled people. The total membership of each committee was not to exceed fourteen. CEPD chairpersons were appointed by the Employment Minister on behalf of the Secretary of State for Employment. Members were usually appointed by the ES Regional Directors, though each CEPD chair had influence over and were consulted on the appointment of members. Each meeting was to be held in private, though non members could be invited if members felt they could help the committee. This was the opening that offered me access to the committee. Every three years these committees were reconstituted and membership was reviewed. Positions on the committee were unpaid and committee funds were held by the ES. These funds would be used for members' expenses and to cover marketing and publicity costs. Committees were not permitted to raise or hold funds of their own. The ES additionally gave each CEPD secretarial support.

The CEPD's statutory role was to support Government initiatives and schemes . It was not to represent disabled people either individually or collectively and thus it was not allowed to lobby on behalf of disabled people. Nor was it allowed to lobby publicly for legislative change. Its responsibility was to the ES and DE. Further, committees were required to take up positions consistent with ES policy and not to depart from them. Any divergence from Government policy had to be clearly identified as that of an individual and not that of the committee. CEPDs were also barred from conducting research or survey work themselves. Such activities were under the direct monitoring and control of the Government Survey Control Unit. Instead they were pointed in the direction of local Placement Assessment and Counselling Teams (PACTs) and Job Centres within the ES, Local Enterprise Councils, or to a nearby university to conduct such work. This again afforded me an opening into the organisation.

Each committee was required to meet a minimum of twice a year. The main purpose of meetings was to develop marketing strategies and plan public relations events. These activities were to promote ES initiatives to employer organisations. Committees were asked to make annual plans rather than, say, three-yearly plans in order to be able to respond flexibly to new initiatives from the ES. Further, the ES were involved in agreeing these plans to ensure they were consistent with the DE's agenda. The ES were also instrumental in providing marketing materials for CEPD activities, such as publicity on ES schemes: leaflets, posters, displays etc. Where the CEPD sought to develop their own marketing materials, these were vetted by the ES.

During their activities, the Central Scotland CEPD believed they had identified a problem. They were becoming more successful at opening employment opportunities for disabled people through marketing ES initiatives to local employers. However, though disabled people were getting employment interviews, the CEPD was finding the outcomes of those interviews were often unsuccessful. The committee's concerns developed into a research question. The question was communicated to the local university and interest was expressed from the university department of psychology where I was studying as an undergraduate at the time. However, this suggests a rather formalised, neat presentation of the research question to a "community" of researchers. In fact, the question appears to have been posed quite opportunistically and casually during a meeting between the CEPD chairperson and the university Principal early in 1993. A member of the psychology department who had substantial research experience in the field of unemployment (David Fryer) was put in contact with the CEPD and he became involved in developing research ideas in that setting, seeking to secure funding for some form of research project with the committee. Around this time David Fryer and I were discussing future opportunities of working together. We had worked together on my final year dissertation for my degree during 1993 and 1994 and were seeking ways of continuing to work together. We put together a research proposal that gained support from the department of psychology and was eventually successful in competing for funding from the Economic and Social Research Council for a three-year PhD studentship. In this proposal, David Fryer and I renegotiated the initial research question.

During my early involvement with the committee, while we were drawing up the research proposal, there were ideas circulating relating to possible directions the research project could take. During my first meeting with the committee chair and secretary, one suggested focus for the project was towards exploring: how disabled people might be helped with job search skills; how they could be trained in effective employment interview skills including redressing any loss of confidence disabled job applicants may have experienced; and, how their completion of job application forms could be improved. It is not clear whether these suggestions were those of the committee chair, the CEPD secretary (and thus of the local PACT in the ES), or the committee more generally. They may have been suggestions developed when the committee chairperson was making initial enquiries to the university. Thus, they may have been suggestions made with the intent of making the research question appear attractive to what the committee and/or the committee chairperson thought to be the interests of academia in general and a psychology department in particular. However, these reflections are purely speculative as the course of the project was renegotiated before I had time to adequately reflect on these initial suggestions. With hindsight I wish I had pursued where these suggestions had originated. In light of my earlier discussion of the Medical and Social Models of disability (Chapter Two), the research question may have been framed with a greater focus on impairment than on social barriers. The focus I was to adopt through the course and content of the project was to be quite different from these early research ideas. I describe the assumptions I brought to this project in Chapters Four and Five. The committee adopted a facilitative rather than directive role that allowed me to take this alternative direction with the project. I will reflect more fully on some of the issues involved in engaging with organisations, such as the CEPD, during the course of this project in Chapter Ten. Thus a complex set of circumstances led both to the framing of the research question and my involvement with it. However this picture is perhaps incomplete, particularly where I have had to reconstruct events that took place before I became engaged in the research itself - I was absent from the early days when the research question was germinating.

Between August 1994 and February 1997 - the date after which the committee was dissolved - the CEPD met on sixteen occasions. Further, some members met on several other occasions as working parties to plan committee events. During that period the committee held four major events. These included two workshops, one dinner/talk and one exhibition. The emphasis during all these events was to invite representatives of major employers in Central Region and to promote the employability of disabled people by reporting on the positive employment outcomes of local disabled people and publicising the disability services offered by the ES and DE. In my new role as a researcher I was present at all these meetings and events. During that time I got to know the members of the committee and their aims and activities as an organisation.

During my involvement with the CEPD I was to witness many changes in the nature of topics discussed during committee meetings. I reflected on these in a paper I wrote for the committee that focused on the reactive nature of the committee to the then political climate surrounding disabled people's employment rights (Duckett, 1996b). The impetus behind this report was the committee's engagement in a Government consultation exercise on the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995, in particular the questions raised by proposed legislation concerning the future of CEPDs. The CEPD subsequently sent my report to the DE. My report explored the activities of the committee and situated this in the political climate of the time. Among my conclusions I reported that a considerable amount of committee discussion time was taken up over issues of defining disability. Also, I wrote of how committee discussions became polarised on issues concerning the future role of CEPDs which I felt created a considerable degree of insecurity within the committee. I believed this posed a potential threat to what I viewed as the committee's effective role in promoting employment opportunities for disabled people. In my report I concluded that:

> It is apparent to me that legislation is already altering the role of the committee, though in the present climate of legislative uncertainty, in a detrimental manner. I believe the Central Scotland CEPD shows a healthy divergence and openness in its decision-making processes and has developed effective means with which to influence the employment practices of local organisations. I would anticipate this will continue to be the case if their future is secured within the coming months.
>
> (Duckett, 1996b:14-15)

3.2 The socio-economic and political climate surrounding the research project: 1994 to 1997

The report I cite above which I made for the CEPD is now outdated. Indeed, it was outdated with a few weeks of my writing it - CEPDs were dissolved under the incoming Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Such was the nature of the fast moving political arena at the time. As such, this project had the problem of being aimed at a 'moving target' (Oliver, 1991a), where in this case the target was disability legislation. The socio-economic and political landscape altered dramatically during the period 1994 to 1997 and this made the field I entered at the beginning of the project a very different place by the time I wrote up the research.

In 1981 Townsend suggested the struggle to improve the employment circumstances of disabled people was 'becoming fierce' (Townsend, 1981b:52). This struggle became increasingly fierce during the mid 1990s with many changes in the field such as the dissolution of CEPDs. The future of CEPDs was beginning to look uncertain in the early stages of the legislative process during 1994. With the repeal of provisions of the existing 1944 Employment Acts (see Chapter Two), the reason for their existence was effectively removed - CEPDs were established under statute to advise Government on the provisions of the Acts. The future of CEPDs was partially secured during consultation exercises on what was to become the DDA and they played an important part in this consultation process[1]. My research role would intimately involve me in the consultation process and I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Ten. However, once legislation was in place the position of CEPDs was compromised by the proposed new National Disability Council and, at the local level, by new Disability Consulting Groups. These two new bodies would effectively take over the role of the National Advocacy Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities (NACEPD) and the CEPDs respectively, though their remit would be wider than employment issues. CEPDs ceased to be by the end of 1996.

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[1] *Here I am speaking primarily of the committee I was involved in as not all CEPDs were as active in the consultation exercise as the one in Central Scotland.*

These changes to CEPDs leads me into considering the significant socio-economic and political features of the time this research project took place. I include them as they have had a profound effect on all aspects of the research. Here I document some of the main changes that have occurred in legislation regarding both disability and un/employment. Thus, this section updates my literature review on legislation (Chapter Two) by detailing the particular events that occurred during the course of this project. To begin, I turn my attention to the nature of the labour market at the time of my research.

3.2.1 Changes in labour force demographics and labour market conditions

The climate surrounding this project was influenced both by expected and actual changes in the nature of the labour force in the UK and by the present and past labour market conditions. Fryer (1997) urged those undertaking unemployment research to contextualise their empirical findings and theoretical venturings to the particular labour market context from which their findings came. Unemployment can have a differential impact at the experiential level of the underemployed, unemployed and unsatisfactorily employed depending on the type of labour market conditions in which these experiences are embedded. Specifically in relation to my research project, Moriarty et al. (1987) point to the need to measure the state of labour market conditions in any definition of occupational disability, as a person may become more or less occupationally disabled according to the level of demand for disabled people in the work force. Thus, the condition of the labour market is an important context in which to situate the course and content of the research project.

Demographers and economic forecasters had predicted the 1990s to be an era that would witness sharp falls in labour supply. Labour shortages were predicted from a decline in the birth-rate and an increase in the life-span of the UK population. By the end of the century it was forecast one in six of the population would be over retirement age and there would be a significant drop in the proportion of the population of working age. These expectations were common around the beginnings of the 1990s (eg. Skills Bulletin, 1989; Labour Market Quarterly, 1990). These expectations would carry on well into the mid 1990s.

During the course of this research project these forecasts were increasingly met by policy makers and researchers with disbelief and cynicism. The labour shortage predictions had first led to a guarded optimism within the disability field. There were hopes a shortage in labour supply would mean employer organisations would need to search wider in their recruitment activities, a search that would include the disabled population. The rhetoric of the time was of employer organisations *increasing diversity* in their workforce - seeking alternative sources of labour market supply as the traditional labour supply shrank. By the time I entered the field there was a loss of faith in "demographic salvation" for the employment of disabled people. There was a realisation that even if the size of the available labour pool shrank, disabled people 'would be competing against members of other marginalised groups, such as women returners, who might be easier to recruit with current work environments and practices' (Berthoud et al. 1993:42-43). It was legislative change in policy rather than demographic change in the population that became the hoped-for panacea for the employment prospects of disabled people.

Table 3a: Scottish workers waged below half the median male earning (£4.42 per hour - 1996 rates)

		Percentage	Numbers
full-time	Women	21.0	110,000
	Men	7.0	65,000
	All	12.5	175,000
part-time	Women	53.0	225,000
	Men	51.0	50,000
	All	52.6	275,000
All		23.5	450,000

Source: Scottish Low Pay Unit, June, 1996

However, there was a noticeable change in type rather than size of the labour force. There was a marked growth in part time employment and short term, temporary contracts. In mid 1997 there were 1,673,000 people working on temporary contracts (Unemployment Unit, 1997a,b). Recent estimates suggest that between 1981 and 2001 the UK labour market will lose 2.3 million full-time jobs and gain 2.7 million part-time jobs (Ford, 1995). Further, between 1992 and 1994 almost nine-tenths of the net rise in jobs had been in non-permanent, insecure employment (Trades Union Council, 1995). Throughout the 1990s there were additional concerns over working conditions and low wages. Oppenheim & Harker (1996) reported that in 1994 37 per cent of full-time workers and 77 per cent of part-time workers were living below the Council of Europe's *Decency Threshold* (£221.50 per week / £5.88 an hour). Between April 1994 and April 1995 there was a considerable increase in the number of workers earning less than £3 per hour (Low Pay Network, 1996). Recent figures from the Scottish Low Pay Unit show large numbers of workers in part-time, low-waged employment (see Table 3a).

The estimates mentioned above of a loss of 2.3 million full-time jobs and a gain of 2.7 million part time jobs between 1981 and 2001 in the UK also estimated four-fifths of the new part time jobs gained to be low paid (Ford, 1995). In August 1995 the Low Pay Unit reported four-fifths of job vacancies previously protected by wages councils were offering rates of pay lower than Income Support levels. (Wage councils were abolished by the Conservative Government in 1993). During the course of this research project there was no minimum wage in the UK. During my write up of the project the new Labour Government introduced a minimum wage, though it was considerably below the Decency Threshold set by the Council of Europe. When we are informed of job creation in Government press releases these jobs will often be temporary and insecure. In October 1997 the Scottish Poverty Information Unit wrote: '...fewer people have job security. The demand for a 'flexible' labour force, together with poor employment protection, has led to an increase in part-time, insecure and low paid employment' (Scottish Poverty Information Unit, 1997:3).

As suggested in Table 3a, this type of employment has been increasingly taken up by female workers. The workforce is becoming characterised by higher numbers of female workers. Such workers are often being used to fill temporary, insecure and poorly paid employment opportunities. For many their domestic obligations, as socially constructed in a patriarchal society, mean they cannot choose full-time work. In this respect, the workforce has been described as becoming feminised, but perhaps a better description would be that female workers are increasingly finding themselves oppressed into new employment settings. In the Spring of 1995 44 per cent of the economically active population in the UK were women. Sixty-six per cent of all women of working age were in employment. Further, the economic activity of women with at least one child under the aged of five rose from 42 per cent to 52 per cent (Department for Education and Employment, 1996). Forty-two per cent of women in employment worked part-time compared with 6 per cent of men. Women were increasingly occupying this growing sector of the labour market: part time, short contract, and insecure employment. At the same time employment opportunities that were traditionally taken up by men were being lost or renegotiated as more poorly paid, less secure and with shortened hours. This has arguably placed additional pressures on women in family settings to take up employment opportunities.

Unemployment levels throughout the UK were high during the time of this study. There are varying figures on the number of unemployed people during that period. All the figures below come from the Unemployment Unit (1997a). Looking at the Government released seasonally adjusted figures in Spring of 1997, there were 1,625,700 people unemployed which amounts to 5.9 per cent of the economically active population in the UK (27.5 million people). This figure is based on a claimant count for all those in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and is the official Government figure. However, this figure may not accurately reflect the unemployment rates in the UK and other figures have been calculated that suggest unemployment was considerably higher than the Government's official figures suggest. The Labour Force Survey (LFS), using the International Labour Organisation's measure of unemployment, cites 1,980,000 unemployed (7.2 per cent of the economically active population) for the same period. While in the Government's claimant count only those in receipt of JSA are included, in the LFS those who are unemployed, available and looking for work over the past four weeks, and are willing to start work within two weeks but who are not claiming JSA are also included. A broader LFS measure cites 2,802,000 (10.2 per cent of the economically active population). Here the stipulation of having to be actively looking for work over the previous four weeks is relaxed, but to be classed unemployed the individual must still be prepared to start work within two weeks. This may be a particularly important criterion for calculating rates of unemployment. It has been well documented that psychological consequences of unemployment include unemployed people becoming demotivated and demoralised and more likely to disengage from actively seeking employment. This may be particularly so for those unemployed people who have been unemployed for longer periods. Indeed, during this period larger numbers of people were staying unemployed for longer, there were 1.1 million long-term unemployed in 1994, which was forty-four per cent of the unemployed population at that time (Oppenheim & Harker, 1996). In an ironic twist to the Government's official figures, the number of people calculated in the unemployment count may be artificially lowered due to the mental health consequences of the very phenomena the count is *purporting* to measure. I use italics as it is not at all certain the employment count is purporting to estimate the prevalence of unemployment but may be more a rhetorical device used for political purposes ie. to artificially lower the unemployment count. The figure calculated under this broader LFS measure becomes much larger if we include as unemployed all those who are seeking employment but are on employment training schemes and are underemployed (ie. in part-time work when they want to be in full time work). Here the figure rises to 5,171,000 (16.8 per cent of the economically active population). This is known as the Unemployment Unit Slack Labour Force Measure. This figure would approach six million if we include 703,000 of the 1,673,000 workers on temporary contracts who are accepting such contracts only because they are unable to secure permanent employment (Unemployment Unit, 1997b).

Turning to the number of jobs available, in May 1997 there were 274,000 unfilled vacancies notified to ES Jobcentres (Unemployment Unit, 1997a). If we use the Government's claimant count this works out as six unemployed persons potentially competing for each ES notified vacancy. If we recalculate the ratio of unemployed people against employment vacancies to include the Unemployment Unit Slack Measure plus those who are on temporary contracts who want permanent employment this works out as twenty-one unemployed people competing for each employment vacancy. However, this is likely to be a false picture as the number of notified vacancies is likely to be a small proportion of the actual jobs that are available in the labour market. Despite this, from these unemployment figures, whichever measure one chooses to use, there is clear evidence of a high labour surplus in the UK. This in itself introduces a considerable degree of insecurity within the labour market as the security of employees' positions are compromised not only by the high number of temporary contracts, but also by the high level of competition for jobs. To again turn to irony, the insecurity felt in the labour market also extended during this period to employees of the ES itself. ES employees were increasingly on short-term and insecure employment contracts (Naysmith, 1996). Thus, the employment circumstances of some ES staff in Jobcentres meant it is not at all clear which side of the signing on desk they would be sitting in coming months.

High rates of unemployment, high levels of insecurity and low wage levels characterised a labour market hostile to many existing and potential employees. This was the socio-economic context in which many research participants in this project were living. However, this hostility was not restricted to the nature of employment contracts, it was increasingly so also for the nature of contract people signed to receive unemployment benefits.

3.2.2 Changes in social security legislation

The mid 1990s witnessed sweeping changes in social security legislation in both the areas of disability and unemployment. For disabled people social security policy was dressed in a rhetoric of generosity and benevolence (at least for those deemed to be the *deserving disabled*). In contrast, for unemployed people the rhetoric of social security policy was steeped in a more draconian and disciplinarian tone (Berthoud, et al. 1993). However, despite the rhetoric there were many turns in social security policy that had an extremely detrimental effect on disabled people - the air of benevolence towards the "deserving disabled" often gave lie to actions that were as draconian as those directed towards unemployed people in general.

3.2.2.1 Jobseeker's Allowance

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) was introduced to replace Unemployment Benefit on October 7th 1996. The effects of this change in social security legislation on many people in this research project were widespread and ill felt. Effectively, JSA signified a toughening and tightening up of benefit eligibility criteria. This process had begun in 1989 when the Social Security Act introduced the concept of "actively seeking employment". Fairly quickly this new requirement for benefit entitlement was showing itself to be an effective means of getting people off the unemployment register (Kerr and Monk, 1991). However, removing people from the unemployment register does not necessarily mean getting people into jobs, all it really tells you is that people are no longer eligible to claim unemployment benefits. A more dramatic change in benefits legislation for unemployed people came in the Budget of November 1993 with the publication of the White Paper *Jobseeker's Allowance* (HMSO, 1994).

The dominant attitudes towards unemployment at that time are implicitly contained in this White Paper. These attitudes pivot on the concept of the disincentives to employment caused by the provision of state welfare benefits. Unemployed people were often viewed as content to live off benefits rather than seek and secure employment. Articulated most harshly, people on benefits were deliberately avoiding work. Articulated more sympathetically, people on benefits were perceived to be financially penalised if they were to secure employment, as wages were often set so low that they provide less than welfare benefits. However, this was the less dominant of the two discourses. Unemployment was more often constructed in popular and political discourse as the result of disincentives to employment (*mostly* motivational and *partly* financial) rather than as a result of a lack of jobs and/or appropriately paid jobs. The financial disincentive argument does recognise the lack of suitably paid jobs. However, this does not translate in popular and political discourse into an acceptance that people may be more *work restricted* than *work shy*. For example, the strength of opinion from Government and Commerce over the introduction of the minimum wage during the mid 1990s was premised on a belief that such legislation would 'threaten jobs'. This is further evident in the Government's abolition of the Wages Councils in 1993. Thus, unemployed people rather than labour market conditions were the focus for blame and intervention through social security policy in the UK.

Political attention began to focus on the "problem of the unemployed" through concerns over the economic drain benefit expenditure was having on the Exchequer. In the beginning of chapter three of the White Paper on JSA we are reminded expenditure on the benefits system had risen from £10 billion in 1949-50 to almost £75 billion in 1992-93. The concern was that growth in benefit expenditure was exceeding growth in the economy. The authors of the White Paper reported expenditure on benefits had increased by almost 7 per cent per annum since the end of the 1970s. Not explicitly linked, but certainly positioned in a way that makes the suggestion of a link more than plausible - positioned three paragraphs later in the document - was the emphasis on reducing the scope for fraud and abuse of the benefit system. Unemployed people were increasingly thought of as at best a burden to the economy and at worst fraudsters of the economy. Unemployed people were seen as lacking personal incentives to secure employment and burdening the economy by claiming benefit they were not entitled to - they could/should otherwise be in employment. Through policy construction, unemployed people were being made morally culpable for the paucity of available and appropriate jobs in the labour market and for the resulting drain on the public purse of social security expenditure.

JSA claimed to move in the direction of creating and supporting incentives for people to secure employment. However, it was to be translated into a particularly coercive form of support and incentive. In practice, JSA created employment incentives through creating unemployment disincentives. Thus, the legislation made it increasingly difficult and unattractive to register as unemployed. Through JSA, the ES gained increasing powers to remove claimants from what was previously known as Unemployment Benefit and Income Support (both benefits were replaced by the new Jobseeker's Allowance). To turn down a job offer would have been enough for the Benefits Agency (BA) to justify withdrawing benefit entitlement prior to JSA, but with the JSA the powers to withdraw benefit became much more wide-ranging (re: Poynter, 1996). This is contained in a paragraph in the White Paper that potentially has extensive implications:

> Jobseekers can meet the current conditions [for eligibility to unemployment benefit] by adhering to the letter of the law, even though they may take other action which guarantees that they do not get a job. The benefit rules will be changed to enable benefit to be stopped where the unemployed person's behaviour is such that it actively militates against finding work.
>
> (HMSO, 1994:para 4.13)

A Jobseeker's Directive (a written notice issued by an Employment Officer) could, in theory, demand a claimant cut her/his hair, change her/his style of dress and general demeanour and/or change her/his attitude towards being unemployed. Such directives could be issued if an Employment Officer felt a claimant was acting in a way inappropriate for a "jobseeker" to act. In this way, JSA made the process of registering as unemployed increasingly unattractive, uncomfortable, insecure and stigmatising. A jobseeker's appearance, behaviour and "attitude" could all come under the scrutiny of the Employment Officer when the jobseeker signed on for benefit. These were moves not to reduce the levels of unemployment, but to reduce the numbers of those signing on as unemployed in order to lower public expenditure on unemployment benefits and to create the appearance that unemployment was falling. At the time the Government's official unemployment count was based on a claimant count only for those in receipt of JSA.

As well as the threat JSA posed for unemployed people, there was a considerable degree of fear on the part of ES employees concerning JSA. These fears reflected concerns of ES frontline staff, such as Employment Officers, over how claimants would react to the threat of being refused benefit. These fears were exacerbated by civil service reorganisation that occurred along with the introduction of JSA. With the merging of Unemployment Benefit and Income Support (for those claimants who were required to look for work to receive benefit) two Government departments were effectively brought together to administer the new benefit. Thus, staff from the ES (which was then part of the Department of Employment) and the BA (which was part of the Department of Social Security) worked together in ES Jobcentres. ES staff would work with claimants at signing on interviews, while both ES and BA staff would act as Adjudication Officers who would decide each claimant's entitlement to JSA. Thus, some BA staff moved from BA offices to work in Jobcentres and it was there they would have to make their decisions and meet clients to explain their decisions over a claimant's eligibility to benefits. In the past the end of the line, so to speak, for a benefit claimant was at the BA. If a claimant was turned down for what was then Unemployment Benefit they could claim Income Support. If a claimant was turned down for Income Support s/he would often be ineligible for any other benefit payments. It is in this regard I refer to Income Support as sometimes at the "end of the benefit line", ie. the last opportunity for benefit eligibility. This would be where claimants could potentially face the harsh decision of being turned down for eligibility to welfare benefits. A perverse, I think, recognition of the potential hardship that could face claimants was built into the environment of BA premises (though the design of the premises was inherited from the old social security offices prior to the creation of the BA). BA offices were designed to afford physical protection to BA staff. Thus, the layout of offices was closed plan. BA staff were "protected" from claimants by locked doors between their offices and the claimant interview rooms and waiting areas. At the claimant counters, where claimants signed on for benefit or made benefit enquiries, toughened glass would separate staff from claimants. Each BA office would have security guards either visible or readily to hand and often closed circuit television was used to monitor claimants in the waiting area. In recent years soft carpeting and "soothing" music was introduced into BA offices, but on the whole the environment remained characterised by toughened glass and a general closed plan office layout.

Modern Jobcentres, on the other hand, were increasingly based on an open plan office layout. Staff and claimants would mingle openly in the public office space. During claimant interviews or when claimants signed on, staff and claimant would sit either side of a desk, unpartitioned by toughened glass or locked doors. ES Jobcentres administered Unemployment Benefit and was the place where employment vacancies notified to the ES were advertised. Claimants could be notified that benefit would be withdrawn, but they would then be passed on to the BA where they would be "processed" for Income Support. With the merger of Income Support and Unemployment Benefit, Jobcentres would, for some claimants, be the new end of the benefits line. This was at the heart of many fears of ES staff, as characterised by preparations reportedly being made in Jobcentres across Britain: 'Personal alarms, closed circuit TV and training in handling aggressive people are being introduced by the Department of Employment to protect staff, according to a confidential memorandum...' (Hencke, 1995:5).

3.2.2.2 Disability and related benefits

1990 saw the Department of Social Security proposing to introduce new disability benefits for disabled people who were in low paid employment. The intent was to encourage disabled people into employment by supplementing their income from low-paid and/or part-time employment (Disabilities Benefits Consortium, 1990). This policy initiative was part of Government concerns over disincentives to employment created by welfare benefits, as described earlier. As I also mention earlier, this was part of several policy packages that sent what were apparently benign messages to disabled people. There was an extension in the range of benefits available for people requiring assistance with mobility and/or personal care, and there were age-related increases in the rate of severe disablement allowance. I refer to these policy changes as "apparently" benign as these benefit changes ran alongside proposals to abolish other long-term benefits for disabled people, in particular the tightening up of the eligibility criteria for Invalidity Benefit, which was to be renamed Incapacity Benefit.

In October 1994 fears were raised concerning the implications for disabled people of the replacement of Invalidity Benefit with Incapacity Benefit due in April of 1995. The reason for the change was more successfully to target those who were "truly" incapable of work. Government predicted 100,000 people claiming for the new benefit and 220,000 claiming the existing Invalidity Benefit would be found capable of work and thus lose their entitlement to disability benefits. It was anticipated this would make savings in Government public expenditure of £1.5 billion between 1995 and 1997 (Osborne, 1996). In a CEPD meeting in October of 1994 I was informed that already in that year, perhaps in anticipation of Incapacity Benefit, 30,000 people had been taken off Invalidity Benefit in the UK. The Centre for Independent Living in Glasgow (CILG) reported that between 1995 and 1996, 102,000 people failed the new Incapacity Benefit test and were thus removed from disability benefit (CILG, 1997). Rather than the Disability Income Group (DIG) celebrating its thirtieth anniversary in 1995, Pauline Thompson (DIG Director) commented her organisation would be holding a wake in response to these changes to disability benefits, particularly the new Incapacity Benefit (Disability Now, 1995a,b).

Disabled people were not only affected by changes to disability benefits as many would also be affected by JSA, ie. those who would be removed from Invalidity Benefit and denied eligibility to the new Incapacity Benefit. Disabled people who were being redefined as capable of work would need to apply for JSA. However, many such claimants may have wished/needed to restrict the hours they worked and/or the type of work they wished/were able to accept. Such behaviours could be interpreted by an Employment Officer as evidence that the claimant was not actively seeking work.

> The increased powers of front-line employment officers - eg. to issue directions - gave rise to concerns regarding the potential for discrimination against certain groups. Employment officers will have the power to disregard a person's efforts to seek work in certain circumstances - including those 'constituted by or connected with his [sic] behaviour or appearance'.
>
> (CPAG, 1995:5)

As with JSA, fears of changes to disability benefits were not confined to claimants but also extended to ES staff. These fears were of large increases in the numbers of people previously defined as incapable of work now being defined as capable of work. This would increase the workload of Jobcentres. Concern was felt over the lack of resources being invested in the ES to compensate for this, particularly for the ES Placement, Assessment and Counselling Team (PACT) where it was anticipated many of these new Jobseekers would be directed. Further, there were fears that the tightening up of medical testing of people claiming to be unable to work would be done according to questionable criteria. These fears were supported by the high number of successful appeals made by claimants appealing against having their benefit withdrawn. Gibbs (1995) cites a 90 per cent success rate in over eight hundred appeals made in one part of the country. This places serious doubts on the legitimacy of many cases of disabled people initially being refused Incapacity Benefit. The disability benefit system is extremely complex (I explored implications of changes in the system more fully in Chapter Two). Now, I wish to reflect more widely on policy changes in the area of disability that both predated and occurred during the course of my research project.

3.2.3 Legislative changes in the arena of disability

As I entered the research field there was a noticeable climate of reserved optimism concerning legislation on disabled people's civil rights being established. Alongside this optimism were fierce arguments over the form and function such legislation should take. There was a growing impatience for such legislation by the beginning of the 1990s. Calls for legislative action in the UK were considerably increased following the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 and similar disability rights legislation in other countries such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand around that time.

On the 12th of January 1995 William Hague MP (then Minister for Disabled People) published the Disability Discrimination Bill. A series of readings in both Houses of Parliament pitted the Bill with several amendments before it was finally accepted and received Royal Assent on 8th November 1995. The Bill became the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, the way it reached the statute books, in particular the alternative Parliamentary Bills rejected during the process, has cast this piece of legislation under a less than benign light.

The Disability Discrimination Bill was drafted during a politically volatile time. Parliament was under severe pressure from House of Commons backbenchers to instigate civil rights legislation for disabled people. The first attempt was made by Jack Ashley MP in 1982 in the form of the Disablement (Prohibition of Unjustifiable Discrimination) Bill. This Bill received only one reading before the end of the Parliamentary session and proceeded no further. Fourteen further attempts were made before the Government moved their own piece of legislation, the DDA, through the Parliamentary process. The early 1990s in particular saw several backbench members putting forward Private Members' Bills. Most did not receive frontbench support and thus failed to make progress. Indeed considerable controversy was created when one Bill was effectively quashed by a Bristol MP who himself had Muscular Sclerosis. Here a disabled MP obstructed a Bill that sought to establish civil rights for disabled people. The apparent hypocrisy of his actions was not lost on the press at the time. Additionally, a further Bill - the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Amendment) Bill - was voted down by an unofficial campaign by Government whips (Oliver, 1985, 1990; Oliver and Zarb, 1989).

Most of the Parliamentary debates on these Bills were poorly attended and often of poor quality. However, a Private Member's Bill sponsored by Roger Berry MP, which became known as the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill, did make it through the legislative process through to completing the committee stage. This was the first time such a disability civil rights Bill had come close to reaching the statute books. This Bill was to be influential in the development of what was to become the DDA. In May of 1994 the Government obstructed Berry's Private Member's Bill by effectively ensuring it was "talked out" at its Report Stage - Government MPs introduced such a plethora of amendments to the Bill for consideration of the House that the Bill ran out of Parliamentary time (Industrial Relations Law Bulletin, 1995). The voluminous collections of amendments drawn up by Conservative MPs that had so effectively halted and ultimately sabotaged the Bill's progress had been drafted from within the Department of Social Security. At the time Nicholas Scott denied this was the case. Ultimately his peers and the disabled community were left unconvinced and his position as Minister for Disabled People was irreparably compromised and eventually became untenable. The notoriety of this case was made through extensive media coverage that highlighted Scott's opposition to the Bill and his daughter's support for the Bill (much was made of the response of his daughter, who was active in supporting disability rights, which condemned her father's actions). After these episodes he lost the confidence of disabled people and ultimately lost his ministerial position. Further, Ian Howarth MP was to defect from the Conservative Party, stating one of his motivations for doing so as the Government's attitude towards disabled people. He joined the Labour Party and when they took Government in 1997, he began working jointly with Andrew Smith, the new Minister for Employment and Disability Rights, on disability issues. Such incidents were indicative of the level of political volatility caused by Government policies that affected disabled people. Ministers of Disabled People would often feel the volatile nature of these political events perhaps more than most of members of the Government. Indeed, the late 1980s and early 1990s will, perhaps, be a period most remembered by 'the bewildering succession of short-term occupants of the post of Minister for the Disabled' (Abberley, 1991:156). During the course of this project there were four ministerial changes alone, though one was a result of a new Government elected in May 1997. As I began the project, Nicholas Scott was Minister for the Disabled. After his memorable departure described above, William Hague became Minister in the new post of Minister for

Social Security and Disabled People[2]. Hague only lasted some twelve months and was succeeded by Alistair Burt. All three Ministers were involved in pushing the DDA onto the statute books, but none lasted long enough to oversee the whole project. With the change of Government in May 1997, the new Ministerial post became Minister for Employment and Disability Rights, and was occupied by Andrew Smith. However, the position was demoted from its prior Cabinet status. Thus as well as changing ministers, the ministerial post had varying "bedfellows" with Government departments during this period, from Disability responsibilities alone to Social Security and then Employment responsibilities.

During this time of intense political wrangling and shortly before his departure from office, Scott announced the Government's own intention to introduce discrimination legislation. The Government's consultation document - *A Consultation on Government Measures to Tackle Discrimination Against Disabled People* - was subsequently launched on 16th July of that year. However, the Bill that gave added momentum to the Government's pursuit of legislative change, if not instigating it - the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill - was resurrected as another Private Members Bill by Harry Barnes MP and was to accompany the Government's own Bill through the legislative process.

The Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill was published on 14th December 1994. The Government's Disability Discrimination Bill was published a month later on 12th January 1995. The Government's Bill proceeded with great speed (within two weeks) to its second reading in the House. The Civil Rights Bill received its second reading on 19th February 1995 and was passed unopposed. Committee stage for the Government's Bill was entered on 31st January 1995 and Parliament finally accepted the Government's Bill as the one that was to reach the statute books. The Government continually opposed the Civil Rights Bill, refusing to allow it sufficient time to reach committee stage. Though the Bill was eventually granted

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[2] *I feel the move to combine the role of Minister for Disabled People with responsibilities for Social Security as unfortunate. To me this sends a message that Government considered disability had much in common with welfare benefits and dependency and little in common with employment. However, this was later redressed by Government redefining the post as Minister for Employment and Disability Rights which I personally welcomed at the time. I feel it useful to conjecture how a very different message would have been sent to the public had the new ministerial position been that of Minister for Disabled People and the Environment. Indeed, the redefinition of disability developed within the disability movement, which I explore in Chapter Two, would perhaps argue such a Ministerial post is warranted.*

time to allow it to progress to committee stage, it ultimately ran out of Parliamentary time. Subsequently, the Government's Bill was swiftly pushed through the legislative process, receiving Royal Assent on 8th November 1995.

With the Speaker of the House allowing both Bills to run simultaneously through the House until committee stage, the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill was to be instructive as an alternative against which the Government's Bill could be gauged. Many saw the alternative Bill as a more wide-ranging and powerful piece of legislation, and it gained the support of the Disability Movement in the UK and that of a Conservative "think tank" - the Bow Group. This alternative Bill became an important benchmark against which the Government's own Bill would be judged and as such gave rise to interesting and insightful discourses at the time. Such discourses were focused most sharply on the cost element of the legislation, specifically the anticipated cost to industry and commerce. At the time, the Industrial Relations Law Bulletin reported:

> The Government remains implacably opposed to the Private Member's Bill, having calculated its cost to business over a five-year phasing-in period as being £17 billion, plus continuing costs of £1 billion per year thereafter. The Government is concerned that placing such a heavy financial burden on industry would not only damage competitiveness, but might also in effect harm disabled people by creating resentment.
> (IRLB, 1995:2)

In a statement made by Nicholas Scott, he cited the trebling of expenditure on benefits for the long-term sick and disabled people as a mark of the help the Government were offering to disabled people (Scott, 1994). However, this type of polemic was used almost simultaneously to support draconian changes to the unemployment benefits system as I have mentioned earlier and to attack alternatives to the Government's own disability discrimination legislation - ie. rejection of such proposed legislation on the premise of increased costs. Concerns over costs also questioned the future of ES schemes for disabled people, notably the suggestions early in 1996 that the Government was going to increasingly require employers rather than public money to fund the Access to Work scheme (see Chapter Two). Also, in Scott's announcement he cited the 'unworkable' nature of the existing legislation - the Disabled Persons Employment Acts. Effectively blame was placed on the structure of the existing legislation. The strong attack against existing legislation coming from the ES, that I discussed in Chapter Two, often invoked cost/benefit issues. Around that time, unaudited figures were popularly used that described how repealing the Quota System (one of the main provisions of the previous legislation) would save the Government £2.3 million pounds (Industrial Relations Law Bulletin, 1995). The discourse on cost/benefit was further contained in Scott's panacea for employers within his speech: 'There will be a power to make regulations to ensure that adjustments do not involve excessive costs. The duties will apply to employers with more than 20 employees. Employers will continue to be able to recruit the best person for the job' (Scott, 1994). This was to be a familiar discourse throughout my involvement in the research field - the Government's primary concerns were often over public expenditure.

At the close of my involvement with this project, the legislative situation continued to be uncertain. It was not clear whether the paucity of civil rights protection that characterised the field as I began the project was fully redressed under the DDA. Increasingly, the disabled population were becoming disaffected towards Government inaction. This was further compounded following expectations for fresh action to secure full civil rights for disabled people following the change of Government in May 1996. Indeed, during the run-up to the General Election, the Labour Party received healthy levels of support from disabled voters for Labour promises of greater civil rights protection for disabled people. However, the new Labour Government has been more notable for what they have *not* done in relation to disabled people's civil rights. Indeed what action they have taken to date has been to threaten cuts for disability benefits, reported in a leaked Department of Social Security memo. The memo stated: 'The Government has made clear its aim to release resources from social security in order to spend more on health and education, and it is likely that a high proportion of the necessary savings will have to come from benefits paid to sick and disabled people...' (quoted in Brindle, 1997). This disaffection was already growing following the pitted history of disability civil rights legislation since the 1980s and more generally with the system of politics in the UK (Fry, 1987). In examining the money spent on publicising a disability anti-discrimination campaign in 1994-95 and publicising the DDA in 1995-96, £764,883 and £191,691 was spent respectively, compared, for example, with £1,715,744 and £1,962,090 respectively spent on publicising *In-Work* benefits for that same period (re: Hansard, 1996). However, some action has recently been taken through the DDA, with some employer organisations being taken to litigation for cases of alleged discrimination against disabled employees. In August 1997, the Trades Union Congress reported two such cases that were successful for the disabled plaintiff (Disability Net, 1997). Despite the new Labour Government's reluctance to move at any great haste towards establishing full civil rights for disabled people, they did announce that they would establish a disability commission to help enforce the DDA. Roger Berry continues to be a strong voice calling for overhauling the DDA. The field continues to be as volatile as when I first entered it.

1994-1997 will perhaps be remembered most poignantly for the reorganisation of ministerial positions I described earlier. However, the brief scene I have set concerning legislative changes in the field of disability overlooks many of the influences that have come from outside the statutory sector. Employer organisations have traditionally played an important role in the development of employment legislation, though until the time of the recent moves to place disability employment rights onto the statute books, involvement of organisations of disabled people was uncommon. As Berthoud et al. (1993) point out, the Department of Employment 1990 consultation document *Employment and Training for People with Disabilities* acknowledged the role that employer organisations should make in Government policy formulation on employment and disability, but left out any mention of the importance of involving organisations of disabled people in such exercises. Throughout the 1990s, the involvement of organisations of disabled people was becoming much greater.

3.2.4 The disability movement

Since the 1960s the legitimacy of institutional and cultural authorities has been increasingly challenged. Of the most powerful challenges has come from ethnic minority groups and from the women's movement. These challenges have begun to change the dominant ideology and cultural beliefs perpetuated by corporate and statutory bodies that have sustained sexism and racism in the fabric of society. Recently, these challenges have been joined by disabled people through the disability movement's attack on "disabilism". As described in the previous chapter, the disability movement has had a powerful and important influence on the discourse of defining disability.

Following the inspiration provided by civil rights campaigns of ethnic minority groups and the women's movement, particularly in the US, Baird refers to the disability movement as 'probably the most dynamic and profound - albeit quiet - revolution occurring in the world today' (Baird, 1992:4). Much research focuses on the disability movement in the US though there are differences between that and the movement in the UK (Shakespeare, 1993). Where the US movement places an emphasis on affording disabled people equal participation in the consumer market, the UK perspective has focused more on issues of democratic participation that calls for structural changes in the market, not just inclusion in it. However, happenings in the US have had an important influence of the course of the disability movement in the UK. The existence of the ADA was often a cause for growing discontentment over the lack of civil rights legislation in the UK.

> Our final need is for disability to be seen as a civil rights issue. The Americans have finally acknowledged the discrimination and oppression of disabled people in the United States. Disabled people in the UK are striving to obtain anti discrimination legislation to ensure that our right to live in the community, as full and equal citizens, is protected in law.
>
> (Wood, 1991:202)

The US, to a degree, exhibited the radical end of the disability movement. It set examples of effective social protests such as sit-ins, demonstrations on the streets and boycotts of products, and events (DeJong, 1983), and may have influenced the more radical direction taken by UK disabled organisations in the 1980s and 1990s. During this time there were many campaigns of civil disobedience in the UK, the most visible were directed against the transport system such as the *Stop the Bus* sit-downs in Oxford Street, London. Several disabled activists were arrested during these protests that involved disabled people chaining themselves to buses and blocking roadways. Barnes (1991) cites the case of two disabled activists who were arrested after a demonstration in Chesterfield. After having to be carried up to a makeshift courtroom - the normal courtroom proving too inaccessible to wheelchair users - both were given fines. Both refused to pay their fines on principle but their fines were subsequently paid by an anonymous source. Barnes conjectures this "third party" was perhaps a euphemism for the cases actually being dropped due to the legal system's embarrassment at the lack of disability access of UK prisons, ie. most prisons are inaccessible to disabled people so it is doubtful the court could have enforced a term of imprisonment for non payment of the fines. Hasler (1994) notes how these campaigns of civil disobedience gave a much higher media profile to the disability movement than did more conservative means of protest. There was evidence in the early 1990s that ever more disabled people were prepared to 'sit down and be counted' (Hasler, 1994:284). The disabled people's Direct Action Network (DAN) has been particularly active in such demonstrations and continually calls for disabled people to mobilise themselves into direct action, calling for and achieving an impressive mobilisation of disabled people during the 1997 general election.

The disability movement initially gathered momentum during the 1970s. In 1976 the Disability Alliance was founded, largely in reaction to a Government proposal to change the provision of welfare benefits for disabled people that many envisaged as reinforcing the poverty faced by disabled people in the UK (Walker & Townsend, 1981). A year earlier, the United Nations had made a declaration of the rights of disabled people. Organisations such as the Disability Income Group (DIG), set up by two disabled housewives (Megun du Boisson and Berit Stueland) in 1965, grew from strength to strength. This organisation campaigned for adequate disability compensation for disabled people. Only a decade later fifty voluntary organisations of disabled people came together and formed the Disability Alliance (DA) which joined in with these campaigns. By the time of writing, the membership was up to three hundred and sixty organisations (DA, personal communication, January 1998). However, both organisations have had their critics for concentrating on income and leaving more macro issues, such as social exclusion, unaddressed (Oliver & Zarb, 1989). Indeed these criticisms have helped to raise the profile of other disability organisations such as the Union for the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). The BCODP grew from an initial membership of ten disability organisations to sixty by the end of the 1980s. At the time of writing, there were one hundred and twenty organisations run *by* disabled people under the BCODP umbrella organisation (BCODP, personal communication, January 1998). The organisation has been instrumental in organising civil rights demonstrations (eg. *Rights not Charity* demonstration against changes in disability benefits, London, 1989). The BCODP was the product of the efforts of disabled people alone (Hasler, 1991) and it has achieved high status as an organisation concerned with rights of disabled people largely without the financial support of Government. It has been particularly strong on developing policy initiatives on anti discrimination issues (Wood, 1991) and in raising the political awareness of disabled people in general. Certainly, since the 1980s disability groups have grown. Those that have expanded most noticeably are *People First* (a self-advocacy movement for people with learning difficulties) *Survivors Speak Out* (a consumer group within the mental health field), and new groups that offer a campaigning voice for black and ethnic minority disability groups. Most recently, the BCODP has sought to create closer links with other civil rights groups such as Amnesty International. Hurst (1995) describes a major turn around in the move to establish civil rights for disabled people when the Disabled People International organisation received European funding to establish an International Day of Disabled People in 1992 and when in 1993 a large body of disabled people from across Europe was allowed to address the European Parliament. The address contained eighty-one short speeches containing stories of abuse, segregation and isolation. This was to have a major affect on European Commissioners and Parliamentarians which strengthened the UN's support for disabled peoples' civil rights.

The disability movement faces many barriers. Many disabled people do not regard themselves as disabled and, even if they did, would not contemplate the idea of joining a disability organisation (Oliver, 1984). This may be related to points made earlier in Chapter Two that disabled people often do not to identify themselves as such due to the widespread negative social perception of disability (Hahn, 1984a). Shakespeare (1993) parallels this with the 'false consciousness' of the proletariat described in Marxist writings where the working classes fail to recognise the true context of their circumstance, the social relations that render them powerless and alienated. In particular, the disability movement may be attracting young, middle-class members who can sustain a new disability identity, but may be less open to older, working-class disabled people for whom their disabled status may be harder to sustain. DeJong (1983) has suggested this as the case in the US. Shakespeare notes this to be similarly the case in the UK. He points to the fact that a majority of disabled people tend to belong to older age groups while the movement is made up of those belonging to the younger age groups and sees this an anomaly to the disability movement. Further, disabled people who do not live in institutions, which is becoming increasingly the case, may be geographically and socially dispersed (Scotch, 1988) and difficult to mobilise as a collective. Unlike sex and race discrimination, disabled people are unlikely to have generational stories. Disabled people in the past have been denied the right to have families of their own. This is the case at present for many people with learning difficulties (Brown, 1994) with explicit programmes that deny them a sexual life. More generally, disabled people occupy dependent, impoverished roles where they are unlikely to be able to sustain a family life. Common stories of oppression can be shared between mother and daughter. Such stories of oppression have been fed down through generations of families from ethnic minority groups. 'A child with a disability may not know for years that other people with similar physiques exist in this world. For adults whom are newly disabled by accident or disease, a sense of community with others in similar situations is unlikely to exist' (Meyerson, 1988:181). The medical profession's methods that 'divide and rule' the disabled population creates a fractured body of people which may lack the unity required of a social movement (Shakespeare, 1993).

Moreover, even if disabled people join together and form organisations, as they have done, many will survive and have survived as charity organisations which preclude them from becoming overtly politically active (Barnes, 1991; see also Charity Commission, 1994). Indeed, the majority of disability groups have relatively limited influence on policy makers (Borsay, 1986b; Oliver & Zarb, 1989; Oliver, 1990b). Such groups are also often chronically underfunded (Oliver, 1996) and are weakly supported by Government. They tend to be on the periphery of the political spectrum (Hardin, 1982). As of July 1997, BCODP - one of the largest disability organisations run by disabled people - only received some £30,000 from the Department of Health and this funding, at that time, was seen to be in jeopardy (BCODP, 1997a,b). In 1989, the BCODP received some £10,000 from Government while its counterparts run *on behalf of* rather than *by* disabled people received some £225,000 per year (Oliver & Zarb, 1989). In general, organisations run by non disabled people tended to be better funded and more highly staffed and receive greater Government money than those run by disabled people (Drake, 1994). Indeed, both the BCODP and DPI were under considerable financial strain during 1996. The DPI was unable to appoint a new director due to having major financial difficulties. Further, in disability organisations in the voluntary sector, very few are run by disabled people themselves and few disabled people occupy positions of power in these organisations (ibid.). Organisations run by non disabled people tended to campaign *for* while those run by disabled people tended to campaign *against*. Thus, the former type of organisation may campaign *for* increased disability awareness and raise money *for* equipment while the latter type of organisation may campaign *against* segregated schooling and *against* discrimination in the workplace (Drake, 1994). Further, organisations *for* disabled people outnumber organisations *of* disabled people by one hundred to one (Shakespeare, 1993). Groups of disabled people are very different from groups for disabled people. For example the Spastics Society and the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) are run by non disabled rather than disabled people. These organisations initially failed to give support to calls for disability civil rights legislation until they were forced into supporting such legislation through the strength of the disability movement (Oliver and Zarb, 1989). Indeed the fund-raising activities of many organisations for disabled people can actually undermine the interests of disabled people such as media campaigns that rely on stereotyped views of disabled people (see Chapter Two).

Ultimately for the disability movement to make progress it may have to assume the identity which it so fiercely fights against and is seeking to redefine. To call for a greater participation in society they need to do so as disabled people. 'Even among the politically active, the price of being heard is understanding that it is the disabled who are speaking' (Ligget, 1988:273). The medical perspective on disability does not offer an image of disability that people can grasp with dignity and pride, an identity that would sustain a social and political movement (Hahn, 1984a). At present, the dominant definition of disability does not allow for the type of radicalism we have seen in recent disability civil rights demonstrations. Shakespeare (1993) cites the Leader in *The Times* at the time of the Oxford Street demonstrations where disabled activists engaged in civil disobedience: 'Militancy, unlawful demonstration, and the disruption of city life may relieve the feelings of the disabled. But such tactics will eventually alienate the public support on which the disabled have to rely' (*The Times*, cited in Shakespeare, 1993:252). Here the activism shown by the disabled demonstrators did not sit neatly with the journalist's assumption of the dependency of disabled people's role in society. Also, it fails to recognise that rather than the non disabled population supporting disabled people, they are in fact responsible for their oppression. A medicalised view of disability interpreted the actions of these disabled people and, as such, the fact they identified themselves as disabled led to the particular interpretation of their activities as reported in the press.

Further, many disabled people may be drawn away from allying themselves with the disability movement due to the very definition the movement is seeking to construct in replacement of the existing definitional model. Thus, many disabled people may be put off by a movement that appears to pay little attention to impairment. Impairment may be the most salient feature of some disabled people's experience and a philosophy that does not explicitly recognise this may alienate many who would otherwise join the movement. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these issues are complex, and the movement continues to grapple with them today.

The disability movement has made some strong gains through its impact on policy formation and service provision (Oliver & Zarb, 1989). Oliver (1991c) also describes the way disabled people are reclaiming territory in service provision that has traditionally been within the remit of the professional. He cites the following quotation from Ken Davis:

> The disabled people's movement has already done much solid work in re-defining disability and in creating the basis of a new hegemony of ideas which rests on direct experience of the problems we face in our daily lives. We have carried some workers in the disability industry along with us. In supporting our own active participation in, and control over, our affairs, such people are giving us the right kind of help. However, for the majority of the 'professionals', despite their need to cling to power, their careful crafting of our dependence is disintegrating before their very eyes.
>
> (Davis, 1990, cited in Oliver, 1991c:161)

Further, self-help organisations of disabled people can be perceived as threatening to the medical profession (Zola, 1979). Some have been criticised for not being representative of disabled people. Countering this Beresford and Campbell (1994:317) suggest: 'we become "unrepresentative" in ways some service providers do not want. We become more confident, experienced, informed and effective. At the same time, because getting involved is not something that most people are encouraged or have the chance to do, the mere fact of being involved may be seen as making us unrepresentative'. Oliver (1991c) believed the future for professionals working in the disability field would not offer the same level of security and comfort they had previously enjoyed. He believed the disability industry would increasingly come under the control of disabled people themselves. This, of course, has implications for myself as a researcher, which I have discussed elsewhere (Duckett, 1998).

The dynamics involved in the large numbers of disabled people who have become mobilised through the Disability Movement has come about through the particular position disability activists adopt concerning both how they view disability and view social policy directed towards disability.

Table 3b: Taxonomy of attitudes towards self as disabled

Source: Anspach (1979)		ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOCIETY	
		Favourable	**Unfavourable**
ATTITUDE TOWARDS SELF	**Favourable**	Normalisation	Political Activism
	Unfavourable	Dissociation	Retreatism

Hahn (1993) cites Anspach's taxonomy of attitudes towards self as disabled and society's stance towards disability (Table 3b). Where disabled people feel satisfied with disability social policy and are at ease with their disabled status, the emphasis is on normalisation. The disabled person wishes to assimilate her/himself into the mainstream of society. Where disabled people are satisfied with disability social policy, but not at ease with their disabled status they may seek to hide or disguise their disability through dissociation. Where a disabled person is both dissatisfied with disability social policy and their disabled status, they may tend to find themselves marginalised from society and retreat from participating actively in society. Where a disabled person is dissatisfied with disability social policy and at ease with their status as disabled, they may tend to political activism. It is the latter that constitutes the disability movement. Hahn (1993) goes on to describe the way in which political movements based on personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and age have been the major impetus for social change in recent years. The political movement based on disability has shown to have a potential to create further social change.

CHAPTER FOUR

ETHICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL ISSUES

I addressed the ethical and epistemological issues of this project through the community psychology perspective I adopted. My introduction to community psychology was five years ago when I first read Jim Orford's introductory text (Orford, 1992). At the time I was taking a unit in community psychology as part of my undergraduate studies in psychology at university. I was instantly captured by the ideas Orford presented and found myself deeply engaged in the material in his book. Today I am still engaged with community psychology though I am situated towards it in a different role in my university environment. I now both teach on and learn from a community psychology undergraduate degree unit. I have come to practice a form of community psychology that has become informed by my research into disability. Importantly, the discipline, still young in UK academic settings, has provided me with sufficient room to follow the epistemological and methodological paths I have taken which I describe in Chapter Five. I feel it prudent to share my learning in community psychology and my view of myself as a community psychologist.

4.1 My crisis of identity in psychology

I figure community psychology prominently in my thesis due to issues tied to my personal and professional identity. These are prominent concerns of mine and the inclusion of an additional subtitle to my thesis *a community psychologist in and amid action* - was in part due to this. I very much feel my seeking to adopt the role of a community psychologist was central to the direction the research process was to take.

It was almost a year into this research project before I had gained enough confidence in my own abilities and learning and had managed to view my position in the organisational structure of an academic setting with sufficient reflexivity that I felt able to call myself a community psychologist. For that year prior to gaining this confidence I felt unqualified to consider myself as any form of psychologist. Still today I am occasioned by insecurity over the authenticity of my self-ascribed title, though now I feel it insufficient to cause research paralysis whilst sufficient to keep me reflexive as to whether my research activities are congruent with my preferred research role.

For me this identity crisis was a result of interpersonal rather than intrapersonal experiences. I feel it was a result of the rite of passage through university that I was to take as I chased the ephemeral status of "psychologist". The conversations I have had with many "students" of psychology during my research have confirmed my feelings on this point, I certainly do no feel alone in having such self-doubts. I often hear such feelings expressed by undergraduate, recently graduated and postgraduate students, as well as postdoctoral researchers and lecturers. During the period of my research, sectors of the British Psychological Society were flexing their administrative muscle on issues of how and by whom the title "psychologist" could and should be used. This did not ease my sense of insecurity and self-doubt.

My identity crisis was further exacerbated by my ambivalence over the value of having the status of psychologist. I was unsure as to whether I wished to be a psychologist. I was becoming increasingly aware of the discipline's past, a past pitted with what I and others see as calculated and caustic infringements on the human rights of disenfranchised and marginalised members of our communities. George Albee has been a powerful figure in psychology through insuring the impropriety of much of academic psychology does not go undocumented or unaddressed. In my mind are psychological practices such as: the use of IQ testing on people with learning difficulties as a screening device for their incarceration in mental institutions; the construction of IQ inventories that artificially and unjustly lowered the measured IQ of ethnic minority populations which in turn were used to sanction their inequitable treatment in society; and, the reification of intrinsically social and economic problems within communities as individual medical aberrations requiring clinical and medical treatment rather than socio-political intervention. For me, the list is far from exhaustible and many of those items on this list are not historical curiosities but contemporary issues that accompany psychology's "progress" today (the three I have listed are all still evident in psychology practised in the 1990s[1]). An example of the harm psychologists can do through the oppressive politics they espouse is evident in the paper by Lykken (a paper that has grown

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[1] *Here it would be difficult to avoid making a connection with the recent writings of Chris Brand who supported the morally inflammatory and pernicious theories that holds people from ethnic minority groups*

with notoriety) and the ensuing polemic between Lykken and Aber & Rappaport in the *Journal of Applied and Preventive Psychology* (Lykken, 1993, 1994; Aber & Rappaport, 1994).

Lykken was so driven towards a polemical stance against Aber and Rappaport's critique of his paper that he contained in his published reply the morally inflammatory suggestion we should consider chemically neutering adolescents as a means of controlling and stopping the growth of single parent families. He cites the neutering of cats and dogs as benign acts undertaken by compassionate pet lovers as a practice legislators could usefully learn from. Lykken suggests this as a remedy for the increasing crime rates in the US which he attributes to poor socialisation of children from single parent families. Lykken is blind to the damaging effect his discourse has on single parent families. He is oblivious to the damage he causes to the social identity of the marginalised and disenfranchised regarding the way he seeks to bring this psychological discourse into public (if we can view peer review publication as public) discussion on crime in society. He is further blinkered to socio-economic factors that may cause crime, such as the growing income disparity between the rich and poor and the large numbers of people living on the margins of poverty in the US. He prefers to focus on family relations. This is a particularly oppressive political discourse for single parent families. He has become entrapped in a fascination with the "deviance" of the disenfranchised at the expense of leaving the "deviance" of the corporate body unconsidered and unexposed. I speak here of the ideas captured so eloquently by Liazos in his seminal paper *The poverty of the sociology of deviance: nuts, sluts, and perverts* who asks that:

> We should not study only, or predominantly, the popular and dramatic forms of "deviance." Indeed, we should banish the concept of "deviance" and speak of oppression, conflict, persecution, and suffering. By focusing on the dramatic forms, as we do now, we perpetuate most people's beliefs and impressions that such "deviance" is the basic cause of many of our troubles, that these people (criminals, drug addicts, political dissenters, and others) are the real "troublemakers"; and, necessarily, we neglect conditions of inequality, powerlessness, institutional violence, and so on, which lie at the bases of our tortured society.
>
> (Liazos, 1972: 119)

All too prevalent in the discourse of psychology today are researchers and writers like Lykken who contribute to the field in a manner Liazos cautioned against a quarter of a century ago. I

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are genetically disposed to being lower in "intelligence" than ethnic majority groups.

am wary of psychology in this sense as it is practised and theorised today. This is why I retained a measure of caution over adopting the identity of a psychologist without positioning myself towards it in the light of my concerns over such strains of psychology. My crisis was resolved by finding sufficient room in psychology to address such concerns and position myself towards them. For me, the title "community psychologist" did such a positioning role.

The adjunct "community" is less a taxonomical tool signifying the area of psychological enquiry that I study as with the adjuncts "occupational", "clinical" and "educational". For me it is more a signifier that positions me towards psychology irrespective of the field in which it is practised. For me it tempers the title of the psychologist with my ideological and ethical concerns - concerns that will recur throughout this section and my thesis as a whole. I use it not to signify *what* I psychologise about but *how* I psychologise. The interest I take is in how psychology under all its guises (experimental, development, social, cognitive-neural etc.) is positioned towards the distress experienced by marginalised people in communities across the globe. As a community psychologist the stance I adopt towards each of these psychologies is guided by their ameliorative, additive, or ineffective impact on the distress experienced in these communities.

4.2 What is community psychology?

For me, as a disability researcher, the ways community psychology is distinct from other branches of psychology is in the principles I list below. These are different to the original principles of community psychology identified by Rappaport (1977) as I have contextualised them in the research topic of disability, my values and my research priorities.

- Valuing difference
- From fixation to fluctuation
- Seeking authenticity and credibility in the community
- Concerns for causes and cause for concern
- Researcher transparency
- Working with others

Each of these principles lead to my vision of a community psychology, one that I sought to make "real" during the course of this project.

4.2.1 Valuing difference

Dualism splits the social world into binary oppositions. For example, disabled people are split from non disabled people, female from male, non white from white, child from adult, and homosexual from heterosexual. These binary oppositions are sustained in a discourse that privileges one binary over the other. The "other" is seen as too *different* from the "preferred" and this difference is used to deny the "other" socio-economic and political privileges. If you are disabled, female, non white, child or homosexual you may be denied income, social status and voting rights. Difference dealt with in this way creates the opportunity for oppression and this opportunity is realised when difference is classified according to disability, gender, ethnicity, age and sexuality (Watts et al. 1994). Valuing difference is a way of working that moves beyond a dualised account of the world. Valuing difference has the potential to move us away from oppressive practices, and to take us towards a discourse that sustains multidimensionality, equality and democracy.

The issue of diversity is the focus for the book edited by Trickett, Watts and Birman (1994) titled *Human Diversity: Perspectives on people in context.* In the paper that pre-empted this book (Trickett et al. 1993) the authors reflect on the place of diversity in the history and future of community psychology. While psychology has spawned a diverse number of specialised sub-disciplines, each of these sub-disciplines is typically founded on a common ideology - a white, male, middle-class way of thinking. Trickett et al. detail the challenge made to this common ideology in psychology that has come from the psychology of women, ethnic psychologies, gay/lesbian psychologies and, the most recent development, a psychology of disabled people. For me, each of these critiques views difference positively and finds a valued place for the "other" that has been marginalised in the past. Each of these critiques points to the need for diversity to be explored both through the nature of the questions we ask (multilevel analysis), and the people with whom we work (multidisciplinary approach).

4.2.1.1 Multilevel analysis

Multilevel analysis is a key theme in the work of Cicourel (1981). Reiterating Lewin's field theory, Cicourel reflects on the multi-causality of organisational phenomena where each line of causality involves a variety of both micro and macro variables. He asserts all should be attended to in any effort to understand organisational phenomenon. He further suggests the choice to concentrate on either macro or micro processes is more to do with research convention that epistemological concerns. Macro factors are those such as social structures and micro factors are those such as an individual's perceptions. Traditionally, in psychology the research convention has been to focus on micro processes - the individual. In clinical psychology this has led to intervention in psychological distress to focus on the individual. Psychotherapeutic interventions more often tackle how people think and feel about the difficulties they are experiencing than tackle the social and economic causes of psychological distress. The depression of a client who has been laid off from her/his employment and has found her/himself living on the margins of poverty without purposeful activity to occupy her/his day is treatable by cognitive therapy or antidepressant medication. A disabled client who has become marginalised in their community and faces harsh discriminatory attitudes may be the target for interventions that ask the client to rethink their feelings towards themselves and others in more positive ways. Stated this way, the level at which clinical psychologists intervene in the field of mental health is questionable and possibly misplaced. Everyday understanding of the job of psychologists is that they concern themselves with what is "inside our heads" rather than what "our heads are in". Social psychology would suggest a focus away from the individual and onto the social, but even here there has been a historical tendency, particularly in the US, of an individualising psychology. For example, the present day popularity of theories and empirical work on social representations is more an interest in the social that is inside our heads than the social settings in which are heads are in. The most prominent of empirical work in social psychology, such as the classic conformity studies of Asch and obedience studies of Milgram, centred their concerns and developed their theories on the individual's disposition first and the social and organisational disposition second. The legacy of their individualised approach remains with social psychology today.

There have been challenges to psychology's fascination with the individual. Ecological and Environmental Psychology (eg. Barker, 1968; Moos, 1974) moved the focus of psychology and set the individual back in the context of the social settings they occupy. Community psychology builds on such work and adopts a multi-layered exploration of the empirical world and embraces, like Cicourel, the multiple factors at interplay in an individual's life. Community psychology considers the interplay of the individual, the family, the organisation, as well as the socio-economic, political and cultural contexts of *all* human interactions and *all* psychological phenomena. At the heart of the concerns of community psychologists are the health and well-being of the individual, but they do not allow themselves to develop a fascination for the individual which would otherwise blind them to the wider context in which human lives are lived.

4.2.1.2 Multidisciplinary approach

Psychology has become a distinct discipline in the social sciences. The boundary between psychology and the other social sciences has become increasingly reified. Psychology is distinct from the "other" social sciences (eg. sociology, anthropology, and political science). The social is the stuff of sociology, culture the stuff of anthropology and politics the stuff of political science. These interdisciplinary boundaries are followed by the drawing of intradisciplinary boundaries (eg cognitive psychology, clinical psychology, and developmental psychology). Psychologists may feel the need to draw for themselves an identity distinct enough to allow themselves recognition as a separate intradisciplinary field and give them a separate, professionally and financially recognised status.

The need to make psychology distinct from other disciplines in the social sciences does not hold towards the natural sciences. The observation that social psychology is more the stuff of sociology than psychology may be more damning than the observation that neuropsychology may be more the stuff of neuroscience than psychology. In recent years psychology has sought to align itself closer to the biological sciences than the social sciences. This may lead psychologists to "medicalise" and "biologise" psychosocial phenomenon such as disability to emphasise the biological and de-emphasise the social. More overarching concerns of psychology's academic standing may lead psychologists to prefer a Bachelor of Science over a Bachelor of Arts accreditation earlier in their careers so as to position themselves closer to the sciences and further away from the arts, viewing the former as holding greater scientific prestige. Community psychology adopts a more inclusive perspective, seeking to work with the disciplines that more traditional psychology has sought to distance itself from.

It is by no accident that researchers talk of "staking claims". Familiar in scientific discourse is a struggle for intellectual real estate. Twenty years ago the influential community psychologist Seymour Sarason aptly addressed this issue. Sarason was keen to avoid entering the rhetoric of boundary reification. In discussing the distinctiveness of the community psychology approach from clinical psychology and the community mental health movement in the US, he wrote '...it is not my intention to... assert the superiority of one over the other, or, heaven forbid, to plant a flag of possession on new academic turf' (Sarason, 1976:317). The metaphoric use of academic territory as soil for me usefully links to the agricultural research presented in Whyte's book on Participatory Action Research (PAR). Here, several examples of research and development in agriculture demonstrate the enrichment of knowledge through including diverse perspectives and crossing academic boundaries in the search for positive programmes of intervention. Where professional sensitivities can be calmed and the cross-fertilisation of ideas between previously separate disciplines achieved, the prospects are for an enrichment of scientific discourse.

This call for multidisciplinary work is, in part, a pragmatic response of community psychologists and others working in complex and rich social and organisational settings. Very seldom do we find ourselves equipped with sufficient expertise in the variety of relevant "professional" fields implicated in the research settings in which we work. In discussing ways to overcome the single-discipline perspective, Whyte et al. (1991) state:

> No student... can master all of the disciplines relevant for the problems we study, but we work in the field with those who have expertise in engineering, finance, accounting and cost control, and so on. As we participate with them, we learn enough about disciplines we have not studied academically to arrive at a far more useful and scientifically valid research strategy than would be possible if we simply tried to analyse a problem from the standpoint of sociology, psychology, or social anthropology.
>
> (Whyte et al. 1991:40)

For researchers to work in a multidisciplinary way they will have to adapt their language in order their ideas can be communicated to others who do not share their academic background or interests. The drive to make inter and intradisciplinary distinctions has led researchers to develop different ways of talking about theory and practice. Ultimately they may have to concede academic territory in the interests of wider empirical and pragmatic aims. We will need to find positive ways of working with others in our academic settings if we are to deal effectively in complex social and community settings. The call for diversity is not just on what we talk about but who we talk with.

4.2.2 From fixation to fluctuation

A further focus brought into empirical enquiry by community psychology concerns the dynamics of fieldwork. A key defining aspect of community psychology is its emphasis on action. A fortunate and promising direction is provided by Action Research, where knowledge is sought through praxis (the practice rather than theory of fieldwork). The interest for community psychology is the active agents of change found in community settings. Research participants in particular and community members as a whole are viewed as active agents in the context of rich and diverse socio-economic settings. This is not so much community psychologists seeking to create change than seeking to identify and facilitate patterns of change that already exist in communities. The change that is supported is that which counters the oppression of marginalised and disempowered groups in society. Community psychology should be as involved in sustaining action as initiating action. This is very much the theme of Freire's work. In relation to my research topic, the disability movement has been active for several decades (Swain et al. 1994) and there is little that is attractive in professionals reclaiming this activism as products of their own work (Oliver, 1991b). This is similar, I believe, to the discomfort community psychologists have with the notion of "empowering" communities. The discipline risks adopting a paternalistic role where communities are dependent upon the psychologist's benevolent predisposition to act. I believe community psychologists should see themselves *amid* action not just *in* action. Adopting a theory that thinks of communities as fluid and active allows community psychologists to sustain their roles more as facilitators than just initiators.

I feel it is further important for community psychology to think of itself as in a state of fluctuation, to avoid professional identities that restrict movement and to seek those that allow fluidity in the research process. The way I give meaning to this concern is to encourage researchers to avoid remaining in research roles that limit them to the empirical activities of collecting and collating data from the field. Though important activities, these may preclude researchers additional opportunities of interacting in positive ways in research settings. Adopting a focus on change, not just in terms of seeking to facilitate interventions in the field but also through reflecting on the nature of our engagement with the field, allows greater room to develop new and innovative roles in research settings. These may be difficult to anticipate before entering research settings, but I will suggest the nature of different roles it is possible to occupy as I reflect on my experiences with this research project in Chapter Ten.

4.2.3 Seeking authenticity and credibility in the community

For those who practice community psychology, the basic drive for authenticity and credibility is not solely to the academic community of which they are a part. They seek to create a sense of involvement, accountability and relevance for community members, involving research participants from the community in all aspects of the research process. They inherit a potential pool of research participants who have often been alienated from research (O'Brien, 1993). The task now is to reclaim credibility with such participants. Community psychologists need to establish a degree of confidence that what they do is appropriate to the field. As empiricists, the concern is: 'in whose interest is it for the participant to be authentic, open and honest with me? ' As social scientists, the concern is: 'in whose interest is the research being conducted and who will directly profit from the outcomes of the research process? ' This second question was voiced with considerable veracity by Becker in his book *Outsiders* (Becker, 1963).

Maruyama (1981) picks a research environment that makes the implications of vested interest in research on how participants may engage with researchers in research settings particularly clear. He discusses how prison inmates might react to being interviewed by social scientists such as psychologists, sociologist or social science students. He describes how the motivation of the researcher for conducting the interview may be for publication in a peer review journal, for writing a book, for career advancement or for getting a degree. These concerns are all inconsequential to the inmate. The motivation for the inmate to help the researcher in her/his enterprise is hard to ascertain, indeed like me one may find it easier to imagine reasons why the inmate should be deliberately obstructive to the researcher's enterprise, since s/he is essentially being exploited for the furtherance of the researcher's career. There may be little of gain for the inmate her/himself. Maruyama's use of a prison environment may seem one of the extremes of possible social science research settings, yet his use of it is pertinent to research involving marginalised and disenfranchised groups in society. The issue of whose interests are vested in research practice become clear in Maruyama's example as the research setting is potentially hostile, and the participant's identity is socially sensitive and open to widespread and malign social stereotyping. Working with minority groups who have been excluded from mainstream society has, I feel, many parallels with such a hostile environment and stigmatised identity.

If, however, it were in the interest of the participant to be open and honest in the research setting, due to there being tangible positive outcomes for being candid with the researcher, then I would have a greater level of confidence that a participant was telling me "how it is" from their perspective. This, I feel, would be an excellent starting point to develop and render an authentic account of the research participant's reality. It is only a starting point as authenticity also depends on how researchers in turn render their accounts through research reporting. The important lesson researchers should learn is how to ensure becoming involved in a research project is in the interests of the research participant, not only in the interest of the researcher

The typical way of making research participation in the interest of the participant is through paying a fee. Thus, researchers may pay a participant a sum of money, or as practised in research involving undergraduate participants, pay with a form of "course credit". Making such payments strikes me as a potentially mercenary way of ensuring a participant gains a positive, tangible outcome from the research process. It positions researchers as paymasters or pay makers and participants as employees or pay takers. A possible consequence of making the participant's interest a financial interest is participants may become calculative in their involvement in research (cf. Manz & Gioia, 1983). If a participant is paid ten pounds for an interview, they may feel this is worth an hour of their time and no more. They may feel ten pounds is worth sharing some of their thoughts for, but not enough to "prostitute" their deepest and most intimate understanding and experiences. Researchers may get what we pay for. The nature of such calculative involvement may go one stage further: researchers may attract the 'professional respondent' (Haywood & Rose, 1990). These are respondents who may be motivated to participate in research primarily for financial gain. Though they may be sincere in other reasons for participating, there is the risk that their calculative involvement distorting the sincerity and spontaneity of their engagement with the research project.

Such levels of cynicism may be inevitable in light of the history of alienation of participants from the research process in traditional research practice of the past that has placed both researchers and participants on the defensive. However, this is not to argue that financial payment should not be made. Financial payment for research participants may be massively important for participants on low incomes. My argument is that there should be something additional to paying participants. This leads us into more reflexive and challenging thinking on how to secure the interests of participants and on the nature of participants' involvement in the research process. Paying participants is all too easy, a "quick fix" way of giving something back to participants. It seldom requires much thought. Seeking authenticity through credibility asks researchers to contemplate farther reaching changes to how they engage in reciprocating relationships with participants in research interactions.

To gain authentic data and secure a sense of confidence in that data, researchers can seek to create opportunities for the participant to have a greater stake in the research, a say in how their experience is processed as "data" and how it is ultimately used. It should be in their interests to give authentic renderings of their reflections on the research topic if they have a stake in the research process. This is a dominant theme to PAR where a reason for creating opportunities for participants to take ownership of elements of the research process increases the investment of time and energy people are prepared to make in that process. Researchers could seek to secure authenticity in their work by making the research socially relevant to their participants. "Contributing to the knowledge base" and the "furthering scientific understanding" are claims researchers may make when asked what good has come or will come of their research. These claims are made particularly when the research process and topic appear socially distanced from the immediacy of problems experienced and solutions sought in community settings, and when the research topic appears to have little by way of immediate relevance to research participants.

How then do we engage in research that is relevant to participants' lives? Two ways appear attractive. First, we could involve participants to a greater degree in the research process. We could think of their roles as co-researchers rather than as data contributors. Thus, we could seek ways of engaging co-operatively with participants in the planning of the research process and the collecting and interpreting of the research material. This may further help ensure that not only are participants being authentic with us but that those accounts are authentically developed and rendered in research reporting. Rather than participants being "ancillary" workers they can become central stakeholders and co-constructors of the research process. Second, we could generate our empirical focus directly from the concerns of our participants. We could seek to generate our empirical enquiry from the immediate concerns of the participants we seek to engage with. Rather than focus on the problems researchers feel need addressing, we could focus on the problems participants feel need addressing. This is the importance of the community identifying their own needs. Our concerns over gaining *authentic* accounts of the research phenomena, with it being our research project that is at stake, could change to becoming *their* concerns over gaining authentic accounts with it being *their* research project at stake.

4.2.4 Concern for causes and cause for concern

Here I relate to the concern originally phrased by Ryan (1971) of *blaming the victim.* This theme underpins the concerns voiced by Liazos on sociology's fetishism with the deviance of the individual that avoids incriminating corporate and statutory organisations for the state of "tortured" societies. I have already discussed the concerns of community psychologists over focusing on the individual and neglecting the social and the political. In that section those concerns were largely motivated by a sense of empirical propriety - ie. concerns to capture multi-layered meaning of social phenomena and concerns of not losing the social context in which participants' lives are lived. However, I also pointed to concerns over intervening at the most effective and appropriate level. I now wish to turn to the causal links researchers make in generating understanding of research phenomena and our sense of moral propriety over such causal links. Community psychologists seek to avoid blaming the victim where wider corporate and political forces are more readily culpable. I feel that this is at the heart of our concern over causes: to redress victim-blaming causal links when they are made.

Issues that lie at the very heart of community psychology are problems experienced and identified by people in communities. This is a theme captured by Balcazar et al. (1990) who felt their work: '... required breaking with the practice of conventional research, which relies on theoretical constructs as the basis for field research. Instead, it required a pragmatic approach, focusing attention on problems identified by group members and developing strategies to deal with them' (Balcazar, et al. 1990:284). The problems that scar many communities and the problems that are in need of most immediate attention are those tied to economic deprivation - lives lived on the margins of poverty and the consequences and fear of unemployment and financial insecurity. To turn close to home, Scotland in general and its major cities in particular have been the focus of increased attention over recent years with concerns over the health and well-being of its citizens. It has, for example, been the sharp focus of media attention in respect to high mortality and morbidity rates in the inner city population of Glasgow. Of the causal links made, prominent are those that focus on the eating habits of the Scots. Stereotypes of 'steak pie supers and Iron Bru' and 'a nation of hardened beer and whisky drinkers' are typically used to portray the dietary habits of the "typical" [male] Scot. The blame for heart disease in particular is linked to the Scottish diet, a diet rich in saturated fats, salt and sugar. I have yet to come across rigorous empirical data to show this is indeed the common habit of the "typical" Scot, but that is not the point I hold as contentious. The nature of this causal link between diet and health explicitly blames the individual, in particular the individual's *choice* of lifestyle, for the high incidence of health problems in the population. High mortality and morbidity rates are a result of people *choosing* to eat and drink the wrong things and *choosing* not to take enough physical exercise. Considerable amounts of money have been poured into media campaigns that seek to raise awareness of the dangers of unhealthy lifestyles encouraging people to change such lifestyles (eg. Health Education Board for Scotland television campaigns throughout 1996 and 1997). In this way, blame is allocated on individuals' choice of lifestyle and is diverted from the psychosocially corrosive effects of living in communities that experience acute economic deprivation - such deprivation characterises the majority of Scotland's inner cities as well as Scotland's more rural areas.

Wilkinson (1996) has written with much rigour and precision on the link between relative economic deprivation and psychosocial and psycho-physiological well being. He documents powerful epidemiological evidence suggesting income disparity between the rich and poor of continents, countries and counties/regions is positively correlated with high rates of mortality and morbidity. Wilkinson finds greater causal power in the links with socio-economic factors than with individual behaviour patterns to explain the 'unhealthy societies' we live in. Yet his argument, and others who have argued in a similar vein, remains poorly attended to in programs of prevention.

Concerning ourselves with individualised causes is in the interest of corporate and state organisations. To focus on and problematise the behaviour of the individual asks no more from corporate and state bodies than their benevolence and charitable acts supporting and promoting individual interventions to stop people "damaging themselves". In the face of distressed communities, we may look to the "social conscience" of these institutions to help individuals mend their ways though we hold these institutions in no way culpable for the distress we seek to ameliorate. Were we to attend to the link between health and income disparity this would focus our attention on corporate and state institutions that hold the purse strings to the economy and we would look at them in a different light, looking to them to change their policies and practices which are damaging communities. For example, we could turn with renewed vigour to scrutinise corporate and state policies that are opposed to establishing a minimum wage comparable to the Council of Europe's 'Decency Threshold'. This would require political and organisational intervention and would directly challenge the status quo of the social and political structures in society. To leave individualised causal accounts unchallenged would be an act of complicity in maintaining the socio-political structuring of society, much of which is damaging communities and the people living in those communities.

This primary drive to find causal links other than victim-blaming links comes from adopting an emancipatory perspective. The explicit focus is to avoid entering a discourse that adds either implicitly or explicitly to the distress of disenfranchised and marginalised sectors of our communities. At worst we should seek to engage in a discourse that avoids accentuating and at best seek to ameliorate such marginalisation.

4.2.5 Researcher transparency

Academic researchers may become unknown to the communities in which they work. Typically they occupy an opaque position in the fabric of communities. They are often situated within academic institutions and research organisations. Physically they are often removed, several universities around the UK are built on specially designed campus locations that make clear the boundary between the institution and the community. Universities and academics who work there often have a *removed presence* in communities.

Social science researchers may become known to individuals within communities when they embark upon field work - when they conduct interviews and field observations - though researchers who choose to study social phenomena in laboratory settings do not make it even this far. Even when researchers do venture into field settings they may retain their opacity through the research roles they choose or are asked to adopt. They typically make themselves opaque by, as social scientists, asserting themselves and their actions as socially and politically value neutral. The traditional research approach explicitly separates science from social and political values. The researcher is concerned that objectivity be maintained so her/his role becomes freed from the research setting, and their role can be conferred as neutral to the empirical observations they make. In this way, empirical facts are seen to exist independent of the observer (Nidditch, 1977). These facts are the property of objects and phenomena presented to the researcher's senses. Research findings sit independent of the researcher who "finds" them. In this way researchers become dispensable. It does not matter they did the research, other than it matters for personal career development. Anyone "properly" trained in research techniques would arrive at the same results. The aim is for their research procedures to be replicable by others. This is the sense of what I mean by researchers having a removed presence. The research does not identify them as social or political beings, they disappear as they become automatons of the research process.

I discuss more fully in Chapter Five how it is a mistake to assume researchers enter research settings unaccompanied by social and political values. Further, the point I develop is that within all areas of empirical research, even where research topics appear removed from the socio-political agenda, there are political implications to the work they do. This entails researchers making explicit their social values and political leanings or at least to be candid and reflexive about the social and political values inherent in their research activities. For example, psychological research into face recognition may appear an academic pursuit that takes us towards increased understanding of human faculty and potential, contributing to the universal knowledge base that is science and being in the interest of the "common good". However, it does not take a large leap of imagination to conjure with the idea of how the military may benefit from such research in their surveillance of social and political "deviants". Face recognition researchers who may think of themselves as engaged in a politically neutral scientific pursuit of knowledge and understanding may in fact be working in the interests of very powerful political institutions - though this may be too worrisome a connection for many such researchers to make personally.

The political involvedness of empirical work can be appreciated at differing levels. Campbell (1967) and Heller (1986) acknowledged the potential for political bias in the actions of research administrators and in the way research is funded and results are reported. Such commentators direct our attention outwards to view how research products are used. However, they either ignore or overlook the political values held by the researcher her/himself. To adopt the stance that scientists may provide the fuel for the fire of political debate and activity but that others fan the flames is, for me, untenable. It is not enough to concede that research products may be used to either condone or condemn socio-economic activities and political practices. A belief that scientists are politically non culpable through their occupying a distal relationship to how their findings are interpreted and used is inadequate. Nor is it sufficient to acknowledge limited responsibility by admitting to being "accessories" to an act. Such positioning constitutes a dangerous misgiving in today's academic environment. Chris Brand would perhaps claim he only uncovers the "fact" that members of ethnic minority groups are intellectually inferior due to their genetic makeup and that others use these "facts" to support racist beliefs and activities.

To recognise that research can be administered politically is not as controversial or as troublesome to traditional research as the view that researchers are essentially "political beings". My position is that politics are involved at the very core of scientific enquiry. This position is informed by Critical Theory that asks our attention be focused on the political constitution of the researcher and, as such, the political nature of the research process, not just research outcome. Our research practices represent the very social and political values we hold. Our research reportings are representations of the values we bring to our research observations. These are very much issues further addressed by Social Constructionist thinking. The version of "truth" we arrive at may not necessarily agree with the version arrived at by others. In particular it may differ quite radically from others who hold a different world view to our own. Therefore, we need to make clear the social and political values we have brought into our process of enquiry.

Increasingly, both everyday and academic understanding is arriving at the conclusion that empirical activity is essentially a political activity. For example, in the film *The Band Played On*, the central characters exhibit not just the institutional but the personal politics that affected the nature of the scientific community's reaction to research into the AIDS virus during the 1980s. Here politics operates not only in how research administrators decide to manage empirical findings, but how empirical findings are affected by individual politics among researchers including such factors as between peer competition for research resources, and securement of tenure and enhancement of professional reputation through peer review publication. This is a side to research activity that researchers are often reticent to share with the public. All empirical research is affected by both the nature of the funding that supports it as well as the relationship and standing of the researcher in respect to her/his peers. Rarely do researchers reflect upon such matters openly with their research participants during the course of the research or do researchers include such issues in their write up, yet the influence of these issues is often pronounced. Further, we are rarely offered biographies on researchers until they have made sufficient progress in their field to gain widespread public recognition or they have captured the imagination of the media. It is doubtful a researcher's biography would have been known to participants when the researcher was starting out as a novice fieldworker.

Thus, my assertion is that communities must know where researchers stand on social and political issues, that they become visible as social and political agents. Community members may then be better able to judge whether they think researchers and what researchers do have any relevance to their lives. If researchers are to be relevant to community needs and a resource for community action, at the very least they need to be known and visible to community members.

4.2.6 Working with others

In the section on valuing difference, I mentioned the difficulty of interdisciplinary collaboration between professionals working in diverse fields due to the way distinct disciplines have developed their own distinct ways of talking about what they do. A further immediate effect is that these ways of talking may become distanced from everyday conversation such that research activities become incomprehensible and mystifying to those situated outside academia. Qualitative enquiry goes some way to redress this in so far as the reporting of empirical enquiry should, ideally, be presented in a form that is comprehensible to the many rather than the few. The research process can be presented as the means by which researchers seek authentic and thickly descriptive accounts of the meanings participants hold towards the research topic and these descriptions can be used in the presentation of the research results. However, there is still the risk of losing a wider readership if reports divert into dense, highly conceptualised and jargonised language and shroud data collection and interpretative activities in a scientific "techno-babble". Further, a wider readership may be lost by restricting research publications to peer review journals that fail to attract readerships beyond an academic audience. Qualitative enquiry perhaps stands more attractive regarding accessibility than the process of quantitative enquiry (Boyle, 1998). The latter often require readers to have an understanding of experimental and statistical procedure before they can interpret and judge the research process and products reported. Research often becomes understood by the few and incomprehensible to the many.

The importance of getting access to a wider readership is suggested in a previous section where I talk of the need to work more closely with community members and to create opportunities for research participants to become more fully engaged in the act of researching rather than being confined to the role of being researched. It is further contained in the need to diversify among the people with whom researchers work. Where I have mentioned these issues earlier, I focus on crossing interdisciplinary boundaries to make full use of the expertise generated in other fields of enquiry that may further enrich our own fields of study. However, community psychology asks us to go further than this. We should not restrict our research collaborations with our peers, whichever discipline they work in. We must, as is suggested by PAR, work with community members. This is central to community psychology's emphasis on working with non professionals and paraprofessionals and was made memorable by the seminal paper by Cowen (1982). These are the "others" with whom researchers should be working and in doing so researchers are asked to make the way they talk about their research topics accessible to non professionals and paraprofessionals alike.

The implications of working with "others" involves taking seriously the need to encourage a common language across interdisciplinary boundaries, and for this language to be grounded in the language of the many outside rather than the few inside academia. This is what Miller alluded to almost three decades ago when he talked of 'giving psychology away' (Miller, 1969). The idea, however, needs some unpacking. It could sound quite a benevolent act, psychologists sharing their learning with a wider audience, and passing on the skills psychologists have learned through their "trade". This, however, contains a rather paternalistic attitude to the others with whom psychologists seek to work. Orford similarly felt reservations over the idea of giving psychology away. 'Those who work with people, in whatever capacity, nearly always possess a rich fund of psychological expertise, and it is by tapping this source, freeing it up from some of the constraints that prevent its use, and perhaps by adding a little extra specialist knowledge, that improvements can be made' (Orford, 1992:138). It is in recognition that people outside academic settings have a rich source of expertise on issues that hold such importance for communities that we seek to work with them. As mentioned earlier, just as one would find it impossible to cover the depth and breadth of expertise required to work effectively in community settings without collaborating with colleagues across other disciplines, one would also find it too cumbersome a task to work effectively in community settings without collaborating with people who know those settings most intimately. To give psychology away is more about giving away ownership or copyright over what constitutes psychological expertise and recognising researchers cannot have all the answers. Communities are not there just for researchers to *learn about* but to *learn from*. This should be at the heart of research collaborations.

However, this may not be an easy task, researchers may not be accepted back in community settings with as much warmth as they may expect. As mentioned earlier, they inherit a pool of potential participants that have become alienated from the research process and who have been excluded from academic research through the derision of everyday understanding and the privileging of more academic forms of understanding. Academics have convinced people they are learned women and men and have excluded those from their camps who did not pass the academic finishing posts set at schools and colleges. Potential collaborators might therefore be suspicious that we now think of them as having expertise we wish to tap, or may begrudge us calling on their knowledge due to us deriding such knowledge for so long. We may also have our task cut out to convince those we seek to work with that ours, as Santos (1991:82) puts it, is not a science of the occult: 'The positive sensation of joint progress and of co-ownership of the research, along with the realisation that social research is not an occult science but that, given some concepts and an appropriate context, it makes good use of intelligently applied common sense'. The public's trust needs to be regained. In doing so we must seek to remove any aspect of the professional status we have accrued for ourselves that has distanced us from communities.

CHAPTER FIVE

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Epistemology (the meta-theory of knowledge) and methodology (the system of techniques, tools and principles used to gather knowledge) are intimately linked. The types of questions we ask influence the answers we get. The answers we expect determine the questions we ask. To use the popular metaphor of the hammer and nail, if the only tool you have is a hammer, you will tend to treat everything as a nail and if all you expect to find are nails, there is little point equipping yourself with any tool other than a hammer. Here the hammer is the question (method) and the nail is the answer (knowledge). In relation to my research topic, if you assume disability relates to an individual's impaired functioning you will tend to ask individualising questions.

5.1 Adopting an epistemology and methodology appropriate to disability research

5.1.1 Sustaining positive values towards disabled research participants

In many ways, the epistemology and methodology I have adopted are in reaction to the implicit and explicit ideological violence towards disability that I felt while working in the field and familiarised myself with in my literature review of the field. By ideological violence I am referring to the promotion of ideas containing negative, stigmatising and prejudicial views of disabled people and practices that demote disabled people to a marginalised and impoverished position in society. In Chapter Ten I reflect on such violence as I personally related to it and previously in Chapter Two I presented some literature that convinced me of the centrality of such issues to the field. I feel it useful to briefly summarise the nature of this violence to place my epistemological and methodological concerns in context.

Still today, disability is used to justify abortion, segregation and incarceration. Clinicians may recommend parents to abort their unborn disabled child. A disabled child may be segregated from her/his non disabled peers through placement in a "special" school for children with "special needs". Disabled children and adults alike may be incarcerated in institutions removed from community settings: hospitals for the "mentally ill" and "mentally handicapped". Disabled people are denied full citizenship resulting in their termination, segregation or incarceration. Disabled people are thought of as pathological persons at best and at worst their personhood is questioned altogether. People diagnosed with dementia have often been thought of and written about as non persons (Downs, 1997).

Such violence is enacted and perpetuated through cultural and societal forms. It is found in popular disability imagery promoted both by the "disability industry" (organisations providing social and health services for disabled people) in particular and by the mass media in general. It is embedded in community narratives - the stories of disability shared by a group of people through either 'social interaction, texts (although texts are not necessary), and other forms of communication including pictures, performances and rituals' (Rappaport, 1995:803). These narratives tell of disabled people in need, burdened by impairment and reliant on the benevolence and charity of others. It is also implicit in the socio-economic structures of corporate and state institutions - the way corporate and social policy is constructed and implemented. For example, employment practices can be exclusionary and health care provisions can be paternalistic to disabled people. The impact of marginalisation and discrimination upon the lives of the disabled people who participated in this research project was very much evident to me and this has penetrated to the core of my work. My reaction to these concerns was to focus on promoting *inclusion* and *emancipation* in the research *process*. I addressed this focus through the methodology I adopted.

'A first requirement of social research ... is fidelity to the phenomena under study, not to any particular set of methodological principles, however strongly supported by philosophical arguments' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:7). For me, marginalisation and discrimination were fundamental to the phenomenon of disability. These were aspects of the research phenomenon that I was drawn to with the greatest passion and felt the greatest urgency to address. The personal values I brought into this research project were important in this way. They moulded the way I both identified marginalisation and discrimination as prominent issues in the field and also my reaction to this - my focus on inclusion and emancipation. This would lead me to add to Hammersley and Atkinson's call that such fidelity also be sought with the values a researcher brings to the phenomena - the things s/he feels are important and is concerned about. Thus, we should not be only reflexive as to the appropriateness of our methodology to the research phenomena but also to the values we hold towards the research phenomena. With my own values focused on the themes of emancipation, tightly controlled experimental methods or highly structured interviewing techniques would have been ill fitting. I discuss this later in the chapter. I make these points to emphasise that social phenomena do not exist outside the way we think about the social world. Social values are intricately linked to how we view social phenomena. Thus, whenever we are engaged in research, our values are also engaged. My methodological approach was greatly influenced by the values I held towards disability. I will show in Chapter Ten how this had a positive impact on the research process.

There were additional reasons for my personal value system taking such a central role in the research process. As with any other field of research, social values are pivotal to disability issues. To seek to disengage from these within the research process would not have been appropriate for the research phenomenon. The values we hold shape the way we view and feel about disabled people. This calls for the disability researcher primarily to make her/his own values explicit, to make this visible through the research project and to consider the effect that holding such values will have on the research enterprise for all those involved. The different implications of a researcher who holds disability issues to be of medical and clinical interest and one who holds they are issues of human rights and minority group interest will lead each to very different directions in research activity. Work consistent with the latter position is called for by Oliver (1994b). He points to the methodology used by Wolfensberger in the field of learning difficulty (Wolfensberger & Glen, 1975) and of Finlay's investigation of 'housing disability' (Finlay, 1978) as good research practice through their fit with a model of disability that focuses on disabling environments rather than disabled people. Similarly, we see such concerns in the values Abberley brings to disability research - politicising rather than individualising the disability issues he writes about. 'Disability must be recognised as a political matter, with ramifications in our understanding of work, sexuality, literature, design, humour and all other areas of human life, and discussions of the more obvious and immediate sphere of social policy cannot take place in isolation from a recognition of all of this' (Abberley, 1991:174). This stands in contrast to researchers who hold disability to be a medical and/or clinical phenomenon. An example, one that has become notorious certainly by those holding to a human rights perspective of disability, is that of Miller and Gwynne (1974:89): 'by the very fact of committing [disabled] people to institutions... society is defining them as, in effect, socially dead, then the essential task to be carried out is to help the inmates make their transition from social death to physical death'. Their book perhaps represents one of the extremes in social research on disability that adopts a pathologised view of disability. Morris remarks how this piece of research: 'tells us more about the psychology of researchers and the way that the non disabled society reacts to disability than it does about the lives of disabled people who were supposedly the subject of the research' (Morris, 1994b:87). What Morris refers to are the values held by the researchers, values that directly influenced the knowledge they acquired on disability issues.

My own values led me to put to the fore those practices that enrich disabled people's participation in society. I sought to promote ways of thinking and acting that set disability in a positive light. I sought to distance myself from clinical and medical perspectives that focus on negative and pathologised aspects of disability. Therefore, I committed myself both to a way of working that framed disability in a positive light and a way of working that fitted with my personal concerns over themes of inclusion and emancipation. I articulated these concerns in the theory of knowledge I adopted (epistemology) and the process through which I sought that knowledge (methodology). I viewed knowledge as an interplay of divergence as constructed through action (praxis) and as informed by subjectivity.

5.1.2 Rejoicing in difference

The knowledge I was seeking was such that I would value and affirm difference and diversity (see Chapter Four). I adopted a theory of knowledge that made me attentive to distinctiveness rather than familiarity and to develop a methodology that would bring the former to the foreground and the latter to the background. I felt difference as a crucial and enriching part of social phenomena and my research methodology was attentive to this. My process of empirical enquiry thus became one of seeking increasing levels of diversity rather than seeking for increasing instances of similarity. I give meaning to such concerns in Chapter Six where I describe the methods I used. Here I wish to focus on how my epistemology was appropriate for social research on disability issues and how this contrasted with other research approaches to the field.

The very reason for the existence of marginalisation and discrimination against disabled people pivots on the way difference is thought of. Discrimination only becomes associated with marginalisation when negative values are attached to the idea of difference. These negative values are attached through community, state, corporate, and scientific ways of thinking and acting.

The epistemology I have adopted is one that contrasts with traditional processes of empirical enquiry in the social sciences. The dominant epistemology in the social sciences is Logical Positivism. This approach promotes the experimental method in social science research (Glenwick et al. 1990) and allies psychology in particular with the epistemologies and methodologies of the natural sciences. It is characterised as a value-free, politically neutral and an objective form of empirical enquiry. The type of knowledge preferred is that which comes under the conceptual umbrella of a universal law, a formal theory. This is a nomothetical approach to knowledge and contrasts the ideographic research approach I have adopted. The first chooses comparison and the latter contrast as their main system of generating knowledge.

> Are there forms of study where comparison is unnecessary? In the anthropological distinction between etic analysis (using an imposed frame of reference) and emic analysis (working within the conceptual framework of those studied), those who do the latter argue that comparison is inappropriate.
>
> (Fielding & Fielding, 1986:21)

Nigel and Jane Fielding draw out this distinction between nomothetic and ideographic research approaches through the idea of etic and emic understanding. The former approach pivots on logocentrism. This is a belief system that views science as able to identify the "objective truth" about things. This belief system centres upon a dualised view of the world where there are thesis and antithesis, most fundamentally "truth" and "falsehood". Two opposites are pitted against each other in what is often termed "binary opposition" (see Chapter Four). Positivism holds a preference for one opposite associating it with truth or rationality (ie. the norm) and rejects the other as falsehood or irrationality (ie. difference). Thus we have such dualisms as objectivity/subjectivity, nature/nurture, facts/values, with objectivity, nature and facts being the opposites privileged in positivist thinking. Hollinger captures the idea of how difference becomes associated with irrationality.

> Whatever is other - difference, absence, madness, the female becomes marginalised and devalued. The consequences of this are perhaps most obvious in the cases of male/female, reason/madness, and nature/culture, but the overall effects are much more pervasive. This hierarchy of binary opposition, this either/or metanarrative, leads to what Heidegger calls "the Europeanisation of the Earth".
> (Hollinger, 1994:108-9)

Rappaport also argues for an epistemology that values the "other" - values difference and diversity - in his thought provoking paper on the epistemological requirement of empowerment strategies in social policy research.

> The crucial task for anyone interested in social/community problems is to look for paradox so as to discover antinomies... in social and community relationships. Once discovered, we will often find that one side or the other has been ignored and its opposite emphasised. ...The action part of our job is then to confront the discovered paradoxes by pushing them in the ignored direction. To take this seriously means that those who are interested in social change must never allow themselves the privilege of being in the majority, else they run the risk of losing their grasp of the paradox.
> (Rappaport, 1981:3).

Rappaport points to the need to counter the privileging of one side of the argument, one side of the binary opposition, and asks us to reflect and engage more fully with that which has been marginalised, that which is different. For me, diversity is very much a central issue to the epistemology and methodology I used. I viewed difference positively.

Adopting a Critical view of psychology in particular and the social sciences more generally, the preference for the universal, the homogeneous, and the rejection of the idiosyncratic, the heterogeneous, the different is linked to the cultural context of scientific thought, namely a predominantly Western European culture. This is captured in the quote from Hollinger cited earlier when he refers to Heidegger's idea of the "Europeanisation of the Earth". This is a culture that has, among its least attractive traits, the scars of ethnocentrism, colonialism, fascism, sexism, racism, ageism as well, of course, disabilism and ultimately Eurocentrism. Tolerance is not a trait conspicuous in the history of Western European culture. This cultural setting is where a view of knowledge that constructs difference as a negative concept, well illustrated by the positivist approach, was first espoused. The cultural inheritance of the dominant forms of social science in particular and science in general is the cultural context that has particularly disadvantaged disabled people. The binary opposition between the non disabled and the disabled and the privileging of the former has led to the marginalised position disabled people occupy in mainstream society. Those who have been labelled as "marginal" have, however, begun to shake the foundations of this view of knowledge and challenged cultural values that have been so oppressive towards them. 'Normality is a construct imposed on a reality where there is only difference' (Oliver, 1996:88). The task I set myself was to avoid oppressive research through the epistemology and methodology I used. I sought to engage in research with an oppressed group and avoid engaging in oppressive research.

5.1.3 Nurturing research sensitivity and subjectivity

Disability is associated with a considerable degree of stigma. Further, unemployment and unemployed people are often subjected to stigmatisation. To be labelled as either disabled or unemployed can entail being given a negative social identity. As such, my research required that I be sensitive to the ill effects of such labels being imposed upon research participants and sensitive to the social outcomes of the research in general (re: Renzetti, 1993). I was keen to ensure the research process would not have psychosocial or economic costs for disabled and/or unemployed research participants. The experiences, feelings, motivations, beliefs and attitudes of disabled and unemployed people are suffused with social and cultural meanings of themselves and others. My research task was to seek entry into the social world of disabled and unemployed participants. The psychosocial costs that may be involved in seeking such entry are the potential feelings of embarrassment, guilt, and shame that the act of focusing on a person's disabled and/or unemployed status may evoke. Research conducted by the Employment Service (ES) illustrates the difficulties researchers experience in investigating the attitudes of unemployed people (West, 1988), and of Job Centre staff's difficulty in collecting data on clients' disabled status (Foster, 1990). The economic costs relate to possible negative consequences for the benefit entitlement of disabled and unemployed participants when they disclose personal information relating to their domestic, financial and "health" circumstances. Such information has the potential to be used to withdraw an individual's unemployment and/or disability benefits or, more generally, research results could be used to justify the imposition of tighter benefit entitlement regulations. For example, if an unemployed participant was to disclose to me they were not actively seeking work, this information could be used to withhold their Jobseeker's Allowance if it was accessed by Employment Service staff. If a disabled participant told me they felt their disabled status did not cause them difficulties in day-to-day living this could be used to withdraw their entitlement to disability benefits if such information was passed on to Benefits Agency staff. More generally, if my results reported that large numbers of unemployed people were not engaged in purposeful, job seeking activities, this could be useful data to support the ES's increased surveillance of unemployed claimants' jobseeking activities.

Sensitivities to research topics, such as those I focused on, can be addressed more thoroughly through using a qualitative rather than a quantitative methodology (re: Barnes, 1992). Qualitative methodology offers room for the researcher to use her/his empathy and compassion when relating to participants more so, I feel, than a quantitative methodology. The standardised techniques of data collection that are common to a quantitative methodology may come across as impersonal with the emphasis on maintaining objectivity, and may further be experienced as mystifying or even manipulative. Abberley (1991) criticises the use of quantitative procedures in his discussion of the relevance of research methods used in the OPCS survey on disability, particular the survey's heavy use of statistics. Turning the results of the survey in on itself, Abberley suggests the OPCS researchers follow up their survey by '... talking to disabled people themselves, after all there are now six and a quarter million of us to choose from - and that's official!' (Abberley, 1991:174). Abberley calls for a turn towards greater use of qualitative inquiry in disability research. Qualitative research is a means of getting closer to an understanding of the meaning of disability from the perspective of the disabled person her/himself and can offer a vehicle to address sensitivities involved in the research topic. For example, when claiming Disability Attendance Allowance disabled people '...are expected to go into detailed explanations about the difficulties they experience when doing such intimate things as washing, dressing, eating and using the toilet. Such interrogations are undoubtedly degrading and demeaning' (NACAB, 1990:11). In claiming Disability Attendance Allowance, this is exacerbated by imposing a medicalised view of disability which I have critiqued earlier. When the content of the questions asked is of a highly personal and sensitive nature we risk offending and humiliating research participants. Researchers are further opening themselves to being duped by participants who, seeking to maintain their dignity in the face of the researcher, may give socially desirable answers.

The objective role of the traditional researcher was not appropriate to this research project. I was required to get close to the research issues and to interact with research participants in a more intimate way and a way that communicated the positive social values I held towards participants. I needed to get to know participants as individuals rather than a homogeneous group, ie. a disabled population. Booth (1985) points to the fact that through learning difficulty being treated as a clinical phenomenon, it has become a phenomenon embedded in generalised and stereotyped descriptions and diagnoses. Booth argues this to be an inappropriate approach to learning difficulty. He says that to learn the physical and psychological status of an individual who has a learning difficulty, indeed any individual, requires that the investigator become acquainted with the individual on a personal level. Rather than treating research participants as objects, we need to engage with participants at a more subjective level.

I further felt the need to focus on the relationship that would develop between each research participant and myself during the research process. Warnings of being inattentive to relational aspects of the research process have been voiced in a previous piece of research where the research relationships between participants and researcher were not fully addressed before the study began. This was the SCPR survey on the prevalence of disability where they found most people would only disclose their mental health difficulties once sufficient rapport had been established in the research interview between the participant and the researcher (Prescott-Clarke, 1990). A relationship needs to be established that creates a safe environment where participants can feel free to talk about such sensitive topics. Essential to creating such an environment is the need for trust to develop between researcher and participant. Positioning ourselves closely to research participants in particular and the research topic in general is unlike the position we are advised to adopt as researchers under more traditional social science approaches.

Critiques by both feminist and qualitative investigators have questioned with particular vigour the objective, distal positioning of researchers working under a positivist approach. The feminist critique has highlighted the male dominated perspective inherent to the positivist way of working (eg. Hollway, 1989). Such an approach is characterised by the masculine trait of independence. The emphasis is on maintaining the researcher's independence from rather than dependence on the researched. Also conspicuous is the preference for male ways of knowing: understanding through intellectualising and using rationality and logic rather than intuitive forms of understanding such as empathy and feeling. This way of thinking in science keeps the researcher at a distance from the research topic and research "subjects" separate and removed from the researcher. Emphasis is placed on maintaining the objectivity of the researcher (Fielding and Fielding, 1986). This methodology is grounded in concerns and fears that if the researcher were positioned too close to the researched this will some how pollute the data (Fryer and Feather, 1994).

These concerns are highlighted by the sensing metaphors used to describe empirical enquiry. Under a positivist approach data is *examined*, ideas are *viewed*, new *perspectives* are encouraged, researchers seek *insight*, and when they feel they are mistaken they attribute it to *oversight*. Vision is the privileged sense. Touching, feeling, hearing and smelling are further means of acquiring empirical understanding but they are marginalised under a positivist approach. Sensing with our ears, our skin and our nostrils usually entails us being close to the objects of our study. Vision, however, can work both with proximal and distal objects and it is the latter positivists prefer. The senses that keep researchers at a "safe" (objective) distance from the research phenomenon are favoured.

Indeed, a disability metaphor prevalent in several texts I have reviewed for this project is the researcher's fear of becoming myopic. It was, for example, used in the editorial comments by Eder and Ferris in their seminal review of research on the employment interview. They critique the '*myopic* attention on the individual interviewer' (Eder & Ferris, 1989:111 *my emphasis*) in previous research in the field. What these authors fear is losing their ability to *see* the object of study from a *distance*. I have not yet reviewed a researcher who was fearful of becoming hyperopic (long-sighted). Indeed, I needed to consult a dictionary to even construct the metaphor! (a sign that I have not been over familiar with its use). I would suggest this gives the lie to empirical enquiry that seeks to place distance between us and the objects of our study and discourages us from getting too close to that we are seeking to understand. This is evident in positivism's choice of metaphor. Traditional researchers fear short-sightedness more than long-sightedness. They fear being forced to come up close to the research phenomenon. Sensing by means other than seeing is dismissed as anecdotal and lacking substance. Indeed qualitative researchers are often dismissed as "touchy, feely types", though this description is only dismissive if you view the sense of touch less worthy that sight. Where such means of sensing have been associated with more feminine ways of knowing and where the female has been marginalised and devalued in Western European culture, this dismissive view is the most common one.

Through asking us to get close to our research phenomena, feminist researchers encourage us to engage our subjectivity with our research topic. It encourages intuitive as well as intellectual understanding. We are encouraged to get close to that which we seek to understand. Subjectivity is not considered a data polluter, but rather a data enricher. We improve our understanding through the process of getting as close as possible to the subject matter and interacting with it subjectively.

The challenge to positivism posed by modern physics has wide ranging implications for the social sciences, though it is seldom heeded. The assumption of the Heisenberg Principle implies that our observations of social phenomena *will* change the phenomena we observe. Even if we were to hide behind one-way mirrors or monitor from closed circuit television or use other clandestine means of observation, we still cannot escape the challenge of the Heisenberg Principle: 'the end of this chain of processes lie always in the consciousness of the human observer' (Capra, 1982:86). I find it particularly unfortunate that many social scientists have in effect become covert social science operatives. They occupy voyeuristic roles when they hide behind video monitors or one-way mirrors. They become confidence tricksters when they lie and deceive participants about the purpose of their research. All this is done in the quest for objectivity, but they lose their moral integrity in doing so and all for a quest that is ultimately futile. I deliberately use provocative imagery as these are for me particularly emotive issues. We cannot avoid being situated proximally to that which we observe. Our subjective involvedness in our research will always be present. The issue is whether we recognise and reflect on it in our process of enquiry and our research reportings. A danger of not attending to our subjective involvedness is that the personal values we bring to our work become identified by others. Dramatically, such was the case with Miller and Gwynne's research on disabled people. In disability research in particular, if we fail to engage with sensitivity and subjectivity, we may end up colluding in oppressive research.

5.1.4 Promoting and sustaining positive action

Disability has long been transformed into something inorganic, something lifeless. Theoretical models that encourage us to think of disability as "social death" (see Chapter Two) seek to remove the vitality and life of human spirit from the phenomenon. This is most often the done through disabled people having their identities transformed into diagnoses. The person becomes lost. People are categorised according to disability type. We speak of paraplegics, schizophrenics, diabetics, the blind. In disability research there is a need to redress this dominant way of thinking and reaffirm the status of disabled people as active social agents. However, the call for a focus on action moves beyond definitional issues. Disability research has often been charged with documenting the inequitable treatment of disabled people in society, but doing little to redress such inequity. The proactivity of such work is resigned to placing such concerns in the public arena, but doing little to move beyond that. Researchers often become those who chronicle distress, documenting unjust treatment of marginalised groups in society rather than taking action against such injustice. The risk of researchers becoming denizens of the disability industry, professionals who profit from the "needs" of disabled people while doing little to improve the social standing of disabled people in society, is great. Indeed, for some professionals it is to their advantage that disabled people continue to occupy a marginalised and disadvantaged position in society, though for them to reflect upon this vested interest may be too painful to do.

Disability researchers need to focus on how both the research processes and outcomes can sustain positive action in the lives of disabled people. This emphasis on change is again a departure from more traditional forms of empirical enquiry in the social sciences. The thoughts of Paulo Freire are critical to the points I wish to make, and I will begin by quoting him at length.

> The investigator who, in the name of scientific objectivity, transforms the organic into something inorganic, what is becoming into what is, life into death, is a man [sic] who fears change. He does not see in change (not denying it, but not desiring it either) a sign of life, but a sign of death and decay. He wants to study change - but in order to stop it, not in order to stimulate or deepen it. However, in seeing change as a sign of death and in making people the passive objects of investigation in order to arrive at rigid models, he betrays his own character as a destroyer of life.
>
> (Freire, 1972:80)

Freire captures what are, for me, the central ideas that underlie my concern to avoid a research approach that seeks to generate knowledge through a process of control and prediction. Rather, I adopt an approach that more fully captures the dynamics and fluidity of the research phenomena. When using methodological procedures that are highly standardised, the researcher's behaviour is tightly specified and the empirical procedure is systematic and highly structured. For Freire, control, prediction and manipulation are tools to be used in an autopsy of social life. These concerns become important in disability research where disabled participants already live with social identities that pathologise and pacify their role in society. In traditional research practice, researchers would offer disabled participants roles that equated with their already disempowered and marginalised position in society.

For me, these are concerns central to Action Research (AR). AR suggests to us the best way to come to understand a social system is to change it. This was originally a view articulated by Lewin (1948). If we involve people in action we may get a richer level of understanding of their lives. Understanding is predicated on observing phenomena in a state of change. Further, this approach acknowledges the researcher's and the participant's roles as active agents of change. These ideas can be found in the Person-Centred approach to research (Mearns and McLeod, 1984). Originally developed by Carl Rogers in the field of clinical psychology, the Person-Centred approach recognises that the perceptions and values of clinicians are likely to be very different to the perceptions and values of clients in the psychotherapeutic setting. The Person-Centred clinician is aware that her/his own value system may drive the therapeutic process and that this may not be congruent with the client's needs. S/he therefore allows the client to direct the process and allow the client's values to determine the course of therapy. Growth is pivotal to this philosophy of the approach. Participants are thought of as active agents, purposeful and self directed. Just as in Person-Centred psychotherapeutic settings, where the direction for the healing process is seen to come from the client who is experiencing mental health difficulties, in Person-Centred research the direction the research takes is seen to come from the participants who have the contextualised knowledge of the research topic. They live the research topic, we just study it. For example, in disability research this would ask that the research direction comes from disabled people. Also central to a Person-Centred approach is an appreciation of the importance of recognising the value laden nature of our activities, a theme I have discussed in the previous section.

A strength of qualitative enquiry is the opportunity it allows us to focus our attention on the research process. The positivist project typically involves the testing of previously formulated hypotheses. Knowledge is hypothesised and then the researcher works backwards to see if the knowledge has validity and reliability through testing and retesting. The dynamics of such an epistemology, known as deduction, are often retrogressive rather than progressive. Qualitative inquiry often adopts the project of generating theory. Through this process known as induction, the momentum is forward looking. The drive is to accumulate understanding and knowledge.

This research orientation, which focuses on moving fluidly and moving forwards, is supported by postmodern thinking. Postmodernism posits uncertainty to be central to the empirical world. Nothing is static and hence nothing is knowable in its static state, certitude will always escape us. If we seek certitude, we may risk spending our scientific lives chasing ephemeral rainbows. For the postmodernist, prediction becomes redundant. This is often conceived as the Achilles Heel upon which most criticism of the approach is couched. The empiricists' fear of losing their sense of control and certitude lead to accusations of postmodernist's nihilism and unreined scepticism. Postmodernism becomes an irritant in psychological, social scientific discourse. Postmodernists are said to be involved in a project of deconstruction; thought of as a fetish of tearing apart, derision and destruction. Yet critics fail to acknowledge that typically their own science is often built upon cynicism and suspicion. There is nothing so sceptical than imagining a truth, imagining the opposite of that truth and pursuing a process of enquiry that seeks to prove that doubt is founded. This is, in essence, the practice of developing and testing null hypotheses that sits at the heart of the positivist enterprise. Where postmodern thought opens up the possibility that there are multiple realities, and none of these realities are more valid than each other, this opens up the possibility that participants may enter research settings with the "right" to control the research process. Their views on research direction are no less valid than the researchers. This is similarly a focus of Participatory Action Research (PAR).

> The difference between the two socially created realities is both the methods used to create them (everyday, "espoused" thinking versus data-based scientific methodology) and their formal presentation (informal, "natural," everyday language versus highly stylised, formal forms of scientific discourse). Theory is influenced by the local situation in which it is created. PAR is a way of learning how to explain a particular social world by working with the people who live in it... so they can better control the circumstances of their lives.
>
> (Elden & Levin, 1991:131)

This approach, which offers opportunities for research participants to have a greater input in the direction the research takes, fits with the values I hold, my concerns over promoting opportunities for inclusion. Thus, participants have additional opportunities to become involved in the research project other than occupying the role of "informant". With this approach, participants would have the opportunity to occupy the role of research collaborators and opportunities to co-direct the course of the research process. This empowers participants' roles through opening additional learning opportunities not just for the researcher and the research community but for research participants. Traditionally, it is the researcher alone who extracts meaning from the research process. S/he analyses the research data and writes up the research so that her/his peers may also learn from the process. Participants usually occupy the role of informing rather than being informed. PAR democratises the research process for participants. It creates opportunities for participants to explore a fresh understanding of their social world and fresh insight into how to create possibilities for action in their own lives. Further, participants can learn about the research process through their participation in the research at a more involved level. Rather than learn what it is like to be an informant, they learn how to be informed. These ideas resonate with Freire's approach to pedagogy.

The values embedded in a positivist approach to the social sciences, despite its claimed for political neutrality, think of research participants as passive. Their role is not as neutral as positivism asserts, they do not occupy neutral roles in research settings. Even in the most contrived and controlled experimental settings that seeks to create a depoliticised, value-free social environment, relations between researcher and participants remain socially and politically framed. What I see as the ethically inflammatory practices of controlling, coercing and deceiving are held under the positivist paradigm to be unproblematic in an empirical research setting. Yet such practices establish a unique polity in the research environment where participants occupy subordinate, disempowered positions in relation to researchers. Through thinking of the researcher-participant relationship in neutralised terminology we omit from consideration the effects of power, inequality and general asymmetry in research relations. Such factors can have an insidious effect on both the research process and outcome. Both qualitative enquiry and feminist critique in the social sciences adopt empirical approaches that are most clear in focusing our attention on the inequality of research roles. The former has highlighted the importance of considering the research relationships in empirical enquiry in general - researchers seek to enhance research relationships and build relationships of trust. The latter has been attentive to the marginalised position of women as both researchers and participants. Typically women's presence in the past has been under represented in many areas of empirical enquiry. In particular, through unemployment research and disability research we have a wealth of knowledge on the experiences of unemployed and disabled men, but little of the experiences of women. Where researchers and participants are included, their experiences are typically framed within a male viewpoint. Where the socio-economic and political identity of both researchers and participants and the political nature of the relationships they engage in is not adequately reflected on we risk creating research settings that are socially oppressive and politically undemocratic. This was the very stuff I was seeking to avoid. I sought to build a more liberating and inclusive approach to constructing knowledge on the research topic.

5.2 My chain of reasoning

In this Chapter, the epistemology and methodology I have adopted stands in contrasts with the traditional positivist approach to research in the social sciences. In particular, my approach contrasts the elements of positivism that promote value neutrality, objectivity, a nomothetic view of reality and a focus on control and prediction. I have engaged with the concerns expressed by Critical Thinking, Feminist Discourse, Participatory Action Research, Person-Centred Research, Postmodernism, Qualitative Inquiry and Social Constructionism. These positions are not as complementary as my borrowing from each of them might suggest. For a fuller examination of each research approach I would direct the reader to the following texts: Fox and Prilleltensky (1997) on a critical approach to psychology; Hollway (1989) on feminist critique of psychology; Whyte *et al.* (1991) on Participatory Action Research; Rogers (1978) on the Person-Centred approach and Kirschenbaum and Henderson (1990) for the Person-Centred Approach to research; Kvale (1992) on Postmodernist Psychology; Walker (1985) on Applied Qualitative Enquiry; and Gergen (1985) on Social Constructionism in psychology.

These were the roots of the epistemology and methodology I adopted in this project. It is not meant as a rejection of traditional research approaches, but as a challenge to the hegemony of the traditional approach in social science research, particularly as it relates to the topic of disability. '... reasoning should not form a chain which is no stronger than its weakest link, but a cable whose fibres may be so slender provided they are sufficiently numerous and intimately connected' (Pierce, 1936:141).

CHAPTER SIX

MY USE OF QUALITATIVE METHODS

Here I overview how I invited participants to join the research process and how I sought to explore the research topic. The first task involves explaining whom I invited to participate in the research, how I invited them and why. The second involves describing in detail the methods I used in working with participants to construct an understanding of the topics of disability and employment interviews.

6.1 Recruiting groups of research participants

My means of recruiting research participants used naturally occurring social networks between individuals in the research population. Through making use of such naturally occurring groups it can be thought of as an "ecologically sensitive" way of recruiting people into a project. By this I mean the groups of participants who are invited to participate in the research are not contrived for the research project - these groups pre-exist. This way of recruiting participants taps into the nexus of experience and knowledge possessed by the research population. It allows the research population to direct the researcher to these locations of knowledge and experience.

We can first approach a naturally occurring group in the field and invite them to participate in the research. From this initial group of participants we can ask they either contact other individuals, who have an interest in the research topic, on our behalf or give us details of how we can contact other people with a view to encouraging them to participate in the research. Thus, research participants are recruited through a process of chain referrals. The initial contacts we make in the field lead to additional sets of contacts that form the research sample. To do this effectively, participants need to be fully informed of the purpose of the research and how it will be conducted. It also entails establishing trust between the researcher and initial participants. These factors become important as each individual who takes on the role of identifying additional research contacts becomes responsible for establishing potential contact between the researcher and members of their own social network. Any negative consequence of becoming involved in the research for people belonging to a participant's social network could have negative consequences for that participant.

This type of technique has a history of use in qualitative studies (Patton, 1987) and has been called *snowball sampling.* Snowball sampling is a useful method of sampling for researchers who seek to generate theory from the field. Just as the researcher seeks to generate understanding from the field rather than from testing predefined theories, the drive for researchers inviting people to participate in the research comes from pre-existing social networks within the field rather than pre-defined criteria developed from theory. The appropriateness of this way of recruiting research participants is most clear when researchers find the population difficult to define and when the researcher is external to the research population. For example, a heterosexual researcher working with a gay community or an ethnic majority researcher working with members of ethnic minority groups. Where the researcher is not a member of such groups, s/he may find it difficult to know who "should" be invited to participate in the research. It further becomes appropriate where there is widespread negative social stereotyping of the research population. Here, identifying potential participants could impose psychological costs for those participants. For example, a snowball sample was pivotal to the work of Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) on AIDS research with ex-heroin addicts. Identifying ex-heroin users who have AIDS is socially sensitive and potentially inflammatory. Identifying someone as having AIDS typically, at present, entails imposing a negative social identity upon that person as does identifying someone as a heroin user. This can potentially be extremely costly to participants in respect to the social and economic opportunities available to them. When researchers directly recruit participants into socially sensitive research projects, this may result in the researcher imposing a negative social identity onto each potential participant approached. In recruiting participants through snowball samples, the researcher does not directly impose a social identity on each participant. The researcher does not initiate the contact, this is done from within the participant's pre-existing social network. The participant may have to accept the social identity by coming forward and agreeing to participate in the researcher, but the researcher seeks to avoid imposing this identity in the first place. This does not avoid the risk of participants who become involved in socially sensitive research having negative social identities attached to them. Instead, it seeks to limit the extent to which researchers become active agents in such a labelling process.

My position is that a snowball sample is highly appropriate to social research on disability issues. The stigma and negative social stereotyping of disability and the subsequent negative social label that is often attached to disabled people will become apparent later in Chapter Eight as I present the research products I gained from the various research methods I used. It is also apparent in my review of the literature in Chapter Two.

In setting out to recruit participants it is important to know exactly where to start. It is important the initial contacts the researcher makes have access to sufficient additional contacts for the needs of the research project. The concern is not necessarily for sufficient numbers, but for sufficient opportunities to meet people who can offer a diverse and rich source of material (experiences, opinions, feelings) on the research topic for the researcher to engage with. The researcher asks her/his initial contacts to actively search for potential research participants whom they feel can contribute to the depth and breadth of meaning the researcher seeks. The researcher needs to carefully consider the nature of the initial participant group's contacts, ie. what types of social networks do the initial participants have access to and are these sufficient and of the type that will allow the researcher to explore and fully engage with the research topic. This can only be accomplished effectively with the help of these initial contacts. If they are fully informed of the issues the researcher wishes to explore with participants, they will be best positioned to direct the researcher to useful potential research participants who can provide material for the researcher to engage with. They can also direct the researcher to additional contacts who may have potential research participants in their social network.

The *first generation* of participants (initial research contacts) will provide the context for the material the researcher initially engages with. This will also be true for the *second generation* of participants. By this I refer to the next group of participants the researcher is directed to by her/his initial contacts. For example, if the research topic is the experience of racism from the perspective of ethnic minority disabled people, the researcher might initially choose to work with an ethnic minority human rights group to ask if they might suggest people who have experience of issues concerning racism and disabilism. The material the researcher engages with from this first generation of participants would always be set within the contexts of these participants being part of the social network of a human rights group, or at least to being known to such a group. With further generations the context of the material changes and multiple social contexts come into play. Thus, if from our initial contacts in the human rights group we recruited a group of participants, who in turn directed us to further people who had the experiences we were wishing to explore, the material from this *third generation* of potential participants would be set within a different context. They would be in a different social network to the first and second generation participants we originally worked with. The more generations of participants we make, the further we move from the original social networks of our initial research contacts and into new and more diverse social networks.

The meaning the researcher uncovers becomes contextualised in these social networks used to create the sample and this context should not be lost when reporting on the research. In my research, the initial contacts who helped me to generate groups of research participants were the Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities (CEPD) and the Employment Service Placement Assessment and Counselling Team (PACT).

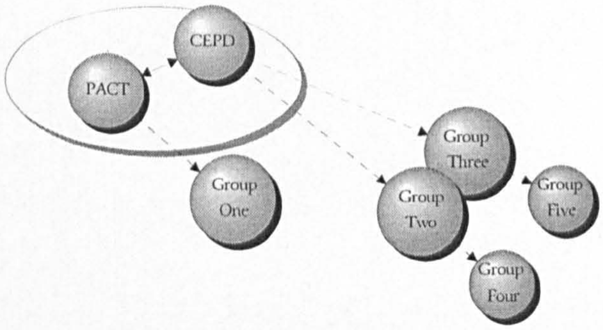

Figure 6a The generation of participant groups

Through this process of recruiting participants, I generated five main groups. I have represented these in Figure 6a. The spheres to the top left are the initial contact groups: PACT and the CEPD. Individuals from both these organisations formed the first contacts I would have in the field. As I have described in Chapter Three, the CEPD was involved at the earliest stage of the project when the research ideas were still germinating. PACT became involved in the project through the PACT manager who also occupied the role of CEPD secretary. In Figure 6a, I have placed both PACT and the CEPD on a "plate" to represent that these organisations provided the initial backdrop to how I recruited participants into the research project. The two organisations are linked through the role of the PACT manager. In the figure, the spheres rolling from top left to bottom right are the different generations of research participants. I have grouped each according to the way I recruited them into the project.

At the beginning of the project I negotiated a role with the CEPD and PACT for them to identify potential research participants. CEPD, PACT and I generated three separate groups. In the first (Group One) were potential research participants suggested by the PACT manager and PACT Disability Employment Advisors. This was the earliest initiative to recruit participants in the research project. PACT drew up lists of potential research participants from the disabled people on their client list. Each member of staff in the local PACT office drew up a list of potential research participants. They further checked with each person they put forward if it was okay for an external researcher (myself) to contact them. My requirement was that a disabled person had the potential to become involved in the research project if they had a recent experience of an employment interview. I contacted each individual on the list by letter or telephone (where no postal address was available). During this initial piece of correspondence, I introduced the research project, detailed how their name had been passed on to me, and invited them to become involved in the research project (Appendix One).

Members of the CEPD and I generated two additional groups of participants (Groups Two and Three). With Group Two, individual members of the CEPD provided the names and addresses of potential participants. Here I asked for CEPD members to suggest people who had experience of employment interviews. By that stage in the research project I was seeking to hear from both disabled and non disabled participants who had experiences of employment interviews and from experts in the field of disability and/or employment interviews. Again, I asked that members checked to ensure that approaching each contact they suggested would be okay for me to do. As with the previous group of participants, I contacted each potential participant by letter or telephone. For Group Three, an individual member of the CEPD invited me to visit a training centre for unemployed people where she worked as a manager. I was introduced to groups of trainees whom the manager identified as potential research participants. Once trainees had the opportunity to meet me and discuss the research both with the manager, centre staff and I, participants would approach me to become involved in the project. I made regular visits to the centre and recruited a number of participants to the project over a period of time.

I was also involved in generating two "third generation" groups. Through my contact with participants in each of the three "second generation" groups, I asked participants if they could suggest names of further people they felt could help me with the research project. As when I was recruiting participants from groups Two and Three, by this stage of the research project I was seeking to hear from both disabled and non disabled participants with employment interview experiences. In particular, I was keen to hear from experts in the field of disability and employment interview. With Groups Two and Three, several research participants suggested names of further potential participants to me. I followed the same method of contacting them as for the previous groups. These third generation groups (Groups Four and Five) came from the context of research participants' own social networks rather than the networks of the CEPD membership and PACT employees.

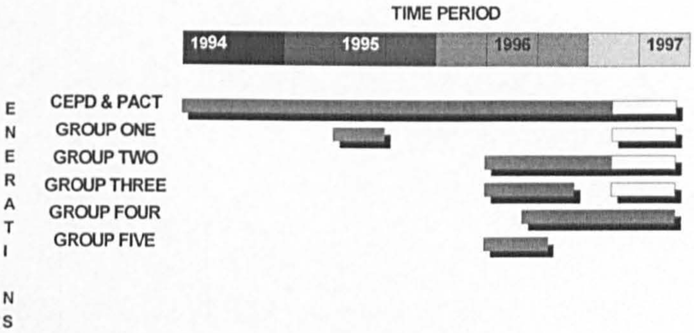

Figure 6b Time bar showing each group's involvement in the project

I recruited each of these groups of participants over a period of time rather than at one point in time. In figure 6b I have shown how each of these groups of participants overlapped in respect to when they engaged, disengaged, and on occasion re-engaged with the research project. Usually, individual participants from the various groups rejoined the research process through becoming involved in the intervention stage of the research (the lighter shaded time bars towards the right hand side of the time bar). The CEPD was involved throughout the research process until the early part of 1997 (the point at which the committee dissolved). The time bar also shows how, while I was working with research participants (throughout 1995, 1996 and early 1997), I moved from working with Groups One and Two in series to working with a combination of people from different groups in parallel. This context is important due to the nature of changes in the field which I discuss in Chapter Three. Thus, I worked with participants from Group One before the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) became law. This group was made up solely of disabled participants. By the time I was additionally concerned to engage with more "experts" in the field, the DDA had been established for a time.

The nature of the time bar does not offer information on the nature of an individual's participation in the research. However, in this section I wish to give an overview and I will present more detailed examination later. First, I will detail the way I generated each group of participants through describing the process of their inclusion in the research process.

As mentioned above, I recruited participants through writing to or telephoning individuals. Group One was the earliest I generated. I sent a letter of invitation (Appendix One[a]) along with a participation questionnaire (Appendix One[b]) or made a telephone call (Appendix One[c]). When I later recruited participants from Group Three, I used the same invitation process as before, though I did not send the questionnaire and did not seek such information over the telephone. By that stage I had become fully sensitised to problems of labelling people according to medical criteria - this was what a section on my questionnaire was effectively doing. By the time I had reached the point of generating Group Three, I had repositioned and rethought how I was to approach the subject of a participant's disability. I had decided that I did not need to know the nature of a participant's disability, all I asked was whether prospective participants were likely to experience any social or environmental barriers through engaging with me in an interview setting. For example, I asked if participants would require wheelchair access to any premises where we may meet, or required a sign interpreter or communicative aids during our interview. This decision had implications for the insight I would later gain, and I reflect upon one particularly clear instance of this in Chapter Ten.

There was an additional participant whom I recruited into the research project who did not come from the method of recruiting contacts I have so far described. I recruited this participant to help me understand better the method I was using, in particular the effect of offering benefit advice to research participants on the research interaction with participants as a whole (I discuss this in Chapter Ten). However, this participant would later become involved more centrally with the research topic as she engaged with other participants in the intervention stage of the project (Chapter Eight). The way I recruited this participant had more to do with convenience than seeking ecological sensitivity. Here I used an undergraduate psychology "subject panel". This is a university system where first and second year psychology undergraduates are required to participate in research conducted in the psychology department. While recruiting a participant in this way, I was mindful of the potentially coercive nature of the participant's involvement - they were not participating voluntarily but as a requirement of their undergraduate programme. I therefore sought to redress this through the methodology I adopted. Indeed, this participant's inclusion in the research project was initially to explore and help me redress inequitable research roles in the methods I was using.

I recruited participants from Group Three through establishing contact with people at a training centre for unemployed people. Participation in the research became either a matter of self-referral or staff referral. On my first visit to the centre I introduced myself and the research project and trainees would either volunteer to participate or staff would encourage trainees to participate. As with the participant I recruited through the university subject panel, the latter practice was potentially coercive. Staff had the power to take out sanctions against trainees if they refused to participate. Though I did not hear of this happening, I sought to redress any ill-effects of trainees participating due to coercion through the methods I used.

6.1.1 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling describes the momentum behind the procedure of recruiting research participants. It helps guide the researcher's efforts to recruit participants and identifies moments during the research process where sampling closure is appropriate and where new sampling efforts are required. A fuller account can be found in Glaser & Strauss (1967). The researcher performs analysis during the period they are collecting research material. Through this analysis the researcher identifies areas where their material is lacking and points to material that could advance her/his understanding of the research topic. This leads the researcher to direct her/his efforts to recruit participants who might possess such material. For example, during my data analysis I found I had recruited participants into the project who had given me insight into the job interview experiences of disabled people but I had gained limited insight into the job interview experiences of non disabled people. I therefore sought to generate a further group of potential participants who could offer me such insights. This is why I sought to generate Group Three. Also, during my analysis I was not comfortable that I had a sufficient depth and breadth of detail on the barriers faced by disabled people at employment interviews. I generated a further group of potential participants (Group Five) with the help of research participants I had recruited from Group Two for this reason. The reason why I did not go beyond generating five groups of potential participants was that by the time I had reached five groups I was satisfied I had sufficient material to inform the research process. I was satisfied I had enough material to construct an understanding of the experiences of disabled people at employment interviews.

Here the momentum behind seeking to generate groups of potential participants is not driven by the researcher's concern to reach a predefined proportion of the research population or perform a predefined number of, say, interviews. The researcher only knows how many participants and interviews are required after the project is completed. Glaser and Strauss call this *ongoing inclusion* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:50).

> As we have said, the sociologist trying to discover theory cannot state at the outset of his [sic] research how many groups he will sample during the entire study... the sociologist usually is engaged in collecting data from older groups, or returning to them, while simultaneously seeking new groups. Thus he continually is dealing with a multiplicity of groups, and a multiplicity of situations within each; while absorbed with generating theory he would find it hard to count all these groups. (This situation contrasts with that of the researcher whose study involves verification or description, in which people are distributed throughout various categories, and he, therefore, must state the number of groups that will be sampled, according to rules of evidence governing the collection of reliable data).
> (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:61)

Sampling closure is suggested when the researcher feels s/he has sufficient material from which to come to an understanding of the themes that have emerged from her/his analysis. At this point the researcher would have sufficient confidence that their understanding had become *saturated* so that no additional material would be needed. This point of saturation is reached when the researcher feels that adding more material or data to a theme in their "databank" would no longer increase her/his understanding of that theme. The researcher then concentrates her/his efforts on other themes. The researcher seeks to gather sufficient material to satisfy their understanding and increase the level of conceptual diversity they have in that understanding through saturating additional research themes. In this way, recruiting participants becomes an 'active purposeful, searching way of collecting data' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:76).

6.2 Constructing knowledge from the research

I used a series of qualitative methods to construct knowledge on the themes of disability, unemployment and employment interviews. I used qualitative methods to explore and capture the richness and complexity of participants' thoughts, feelings and experiences concerning the research topic. The nature of the research topic influenced the methods I adopted. By this I mean that I developed and employed each method to be sensitive to the research topic of disability (as I have described in Chapter Five). Centrally, I was sensitive to the widespread negative social stereotyping that occurs with issues concerning disability and unemployment. To do this I adopted two themes in my methods. First, I used my interpretation of a Person-Centred approach. Second, I sought to suspend the structure of each method I employed. I will explain the specifics of these two themes through giving them meaning in the rules of engagement I used in the research. Before I do so, I will offer more general detail on these two themes. The Person-Centred theme largely subsumes the suspended structure theme, but the latter is, I believe, clear enough in the rationale of my methods for it to be included in a section in its own right.

6.2.1 A Person-Centred approach to research

Here, I put into practice a Person-Centred approach to my research methods. For more details of this approach to research refer to Levant and Shlien (1984). I have previously used this approach in seeking interactional symmetry in research interviews with people with learning difficulties (Duckett, 1994; Duckett and Fryer, 1998).

First, as a researcher I held an unconditional positive regard for each research participant. This involved my adopting a non judgmental acceptance of each participant's experiences, opinions and feelings. I sought to take care in my role not to dismiss or denigrate any participant's input into the research process. I sought to communicate a positive regard for each participant's involvement in the project. Secondly, my task was to understand and explore each participant's frame of reference. Each participant's personal experience of the research topic was seen as the prime source of information sought in the interview and of greater value than the researcher's understanding of the research topic. This led to my reinterpretation of the traditional researcher/participant roles; the participant became the *expert* and I, as researcher, became the *novice* concerning the topics discussed. Thirdly, I further valued each participant's role in the research process by viewing participants as research collaborators rather than "subjects" of investigation. Fourthly, I avoided any act of deception and sought to freely elicit my own feelings and experiences if participants asked me to do so. I accepted and reflected upon my own subjectivity and sought to avoid dehumanising my role as researcher. Developing from this, during each research encounter, I sought to develop a relationship of trust, openness and informality with each participant. Finally, I remained aware that the research relationship was a product of both the active involvement of participants and researcher and that this relationship was not static but was constantly developing.

More generally, through adopting a Person-Centred orientation towards each method, I paid constant attention to the equality or inequality of research roles between each research participant and myself. In political terms I sought to establish a democratic relationship with each participant. I sought to relinquish any power that I may have had through my role in the research project. As principal researcher I had potential power in deciding who should be involved in the research, what questions I should ask, how I should ask questions and how the answers should be interpreted. One way I sought to promote equality between each research participant and I was to avoid the use of technical and psychological jargon and to converse in a way that was meaningful for participants - an everyday way of speaking. Another means was to open up opportunities for participants to take more control over the research process.

Additionally, I was cautious to follow a dress code that would not suggest a power differential between participants and myself. I felt dressing formally in a suit and tie may have conveyed to participants an impression that I was either a "professional" or at least that I considered myself a "professional". This was not an impression I wished to create, particularly in light of my view of participants as experts and myself as novice. Therefore, on most occasions I wore jeans and a jacket in preference for a suit and tie, ie. informal rather than formal dress. I kept to this dress code on every occasion where I was invited to a participant's home. However, there were occasions when I did dress more formally. I did so when the setting required it such as at formal dinners and events run by the CEPD. I also did so during consultancy meetings with employers. Here, research participants also dressed more formally as the impression we sought to make on employers was of a group who were informed and "professional" in our capacity to function as a consultancy group (I describe this later in this Chapter).

6.2.2 Using a suspended structure

Throughout my use of each research method, I continuously cautioned myself against the nomothetic, and sought to remain faithful to the idiosyncratic detail of each research account I listened to. I gave meaning to this concern through adhering to what I call a *suspended structure* methodology. The structure I speak of is one extrinsic rather than intrinsic to the particular method. By extrinsic structure I refer to the actual content of the method such as the sequence of questions and type of questions asked in, say, an interview. By intrinsic structure, I refer to the general rules of research engagement. This involves the nature of the social interaction between researcher and participant and the rules that would guide that interaction. I have described earlier the intrinsic structure I adopted in my methods through my Person-

Centred approach. Extrinsic structure is commonly denoted by the descriptor of "structured", "semi structured" or "unstructured" to the method of interviewing. It refers to any set ordering of topics to be covered, questions to be asked and prompts to be used during the interview. The methods I employed are closest to those described as unstructured. However, I find this description problematic as it leads one to view the content of the interview as unstructured and leaves unmentioned the possibility or reality that structuring occurs during the interview. I believe this was the case in the methods I used. Thus, unstructured interviews do not lack structure, but they open up a greater degree of freedom over how structure is imposed and by whom it is imposed. I therefore have used the term "suspended structure" to describe the way I developed and used the methods in this research. I entered each research setting with the extrinsic structure of the method I was to use suspended. This suspension of structure took its most tangible form through my entering each research interaction with a willingness to allow participants to guide the topics we would focus on. This allowed for the method to be structured during or prior to the research interaction by the research participant/s or co-developed between research participants and I in the interview. This did not prevent me from directing an interaction to cover research topic areas that were of interest to me. However, it cautioned me against privileging the direction I sought to take in the interaction over the direction preferred by participants. Therefore, participants had sufficient space to direct the interaction and to approach research topics in their own way and in ways more comfortable and natural for them to do.

6.3 Putting my methods into practice

The following are the key aspects to how I sought to engage with research participants through the research methods I adopted. They are informed by my interpretation of a Person-Centred approach and of adopting a suspended structure in each research setting. However, these aspects do change in each particular method I used. I mention these where I describe each method later.

(Person-Centred)

i) I sought to promote an equality in role relationship between research participants and myself through using a way of talking that was meaningful for participants. Thus, I avoided using psychological and academic jargon. Further, I rethought the role of research participants as collaborators in the research project rather than respondents or informants to the research project.

ii) I sought to encourage an informal climate in each research interview. I sought to reflect this by dressing informally when this was appropriate.

iii) I held an unconditional positive regard for research participants. I was therefore careful to adopt a non judgmental acceptance of each participant's expressed opinions, experiences and feelings.

iv) I sought to be honest and open concerning my own experiences, opinions and feelings and to be forthcoming with these if asked to do so by research participants.

(Suspended Structure)

v) I suspended my aims, objectives and sense of research direction at the moment I entered each research interaction. I sought to ensure the course and content of each research interaction was decided as far as possible by research participants. I allowed myself to be directive only to the extent of refocusing on the general research topic, though if research participants expressed a wish to discuss other issues they were encouraged to do so.

vi) I adopted the role of novice regarding the participant's experiences, opinions and feelings and thought of research participants as experts concerning their frame of reference. I sought to actively communicate this to each participant.

vii) I adopted the role of facilitator in each research interaction. I sought to use my comments or questions for initiating, maintaining, clarifying and nurturing discussion.

I focused on a Person-Centred and suspended structure approach to respect and protect each participant's rights. I viewed each participant's rights extending to the following:

- The right to be treated with dignity and respect throughout the research process and reporting;
- The right to have a say in deciding the course and content of the research process as it affects theirs' and others' lives;
- The right to represent their own views in the research and to have a say in the research conclusions; and,
- The right to engage in action through the research process to redress patterns of social exclusion against disabled people.

6.4 The qualitative methods I used

The qualitative methods I used throughout the research project included the following: interviews (including individual depth interviews, individual benefit advice interviews, focus group interviews and telephone interviews); discussion groups (including support groups, consultancy groups and steering groups); and, observations (including participant observation and field visits). I originally thought of the benefit advice interviews as establishing a bilateral exchange of useful information between participants and myself to counter what in research is predominantly a one-way exchange of information from participant to researcher. I sought to offer this information to participants who had low-incomes and who used welfare benefits. This offer was also extended to the participant's family and/or friends. However, much rich information came from these interviews, and I gained considerable insight into many aspects of the research topic additional to our discussion of benefit entitlement. I therefore found myself using these interviews as an opportunity for participants to share their insights into the research topic with me. Thus, it became an empirical method, I feel, in its own right and took on additional importance other than being a method of improving the equity of research relationships. Thus, I have included these interviews as a method I used although I had not originally thought of it in this way. Similarly, the consultancy groups and steering groups were part of the interventionist phase of this research. In these groups participants and I were seeking to put the research findings into action. They are included here as they added breadth and enrichment to the knowledge I gained and to the process through which this knowledge was gained. Below, I describe the nature of these methods. I include a brief description of the practicalities of using such methods, including brief details on how each type of these research interaction occurred. I then describe additions and revisions I made, in light of the context of the particular type of method, to the Person-Centred and suspended structure approaches I have described.

6.4.1 Interviews

Research interviews formed a major part of the methods I used. I used qualitative interviews to open up room for participants to explore with me the depth and richness of their experiences as they related to the research topic. I entered dialogue with research participants either individually (depth, benefit and telephone interviews) or collectively (focus group interviews). As such, I entered into both private and public dialogue with participants through the research interview method. This method offered me the opportunity to engage intimately with the research topic. From these interactions, I heard multiple accounts of participants' employment interview experiences, though as our dialogue unfolded in these encounters we would broach the more general topics of disability and employment. These were interactive research encounters where participants taught me about the research topic as brought to life through their personal experiences. The result was that I obtained thick, descriptive accounts of the research topic.

Research participants and I engaged in research interviews often during the project. Indeed I was involved in just short of one hundred such encounters. I initially contacted most participants by letter of invitation (Appendix One[a]), detailing what to expect: ie. individual, benefit-advice and/or focus group interview. I included brief summaries of the nature of these interviews (Appendix One[c] & [d]). These summaries remained open and non specific on the expected content of these interviews and I briefly explained the Person-Centred and suspended structure approach I would adopt. I also asked potential participants to state any other means of involvement they would prefer if the three alternatives offered were not desirable. This question remained open and I asked the participant to detail in their own words how they wished to become involved. Following from this, seven participants asked to be interviewed over the telephone. Where participants wished to become involved in the research, I either contacted the participants by telephoning or writing - according to each participant's preference - to arrange a time and place to meet. However, not all participants were contacted in this way. The participants who became involved in benefit advice interviews at a local training centre for unemployed people were informed by staff at the centre that benefit advice was available from me during my field visits to the centre. To my knowledge, limited detail was given to these participants concerning the nature of my research prior to their involvement in the benefit advice interview. The only initial source of information coming directly from me that concerned the nature of the research was contained in posters I placed in the centre that detailed the interview times available and the title of the research project (Appendix One[e]).

6.4.1.1 Individual depth interviews

I feel the individual depth interviews brought me towards a particularly close level of engagement with the research topic. I would talk with participants for between one and two hours. In these interviews participants had the opportunity to share with me their experiences, thoughts and feelings and I could explore each participant's sense of meaning and develop my own understanding of the research topic. Our conversation would typically cross many different issues and would often involve quite deep and sensitive levels of personal disclosure.

I took part in thirty-five such interviews involving thirty-two research participants (three participants were each involved in two interviews). I conducted these interviews intermittently over twenty-nine months. In each instance, I had previously asked each participant to decide a convenient place and a time for the interview - note that by this I mean convenient for the participant, not necessarily convenient for me. I subsequently held all but one of these interviews either at the participant's home or at the participant's place of work. The remaining interview was held in a local town café. Unlike the interviews held at a participant's place of work, the interviews I conducted at people's homes were mostly out of working hours. All fell between five and eight o'clock in the evening as a result of the interview times and locations being based on the convenience of each participant. At the beginning of each interview, where it was the first time I had met the participant, I briefly introduced myself as researcher from Stirling University. I then recounted the general area of the research, negotiated with each participant whether it was permissible to audio tape the interview and gave assurance over the confidentiality with which I would treat their involvement in the research. At the end of each interview I sought to leave the possibility of future contact open by ensuring each participant had the address and telephone number of my office, and by asking if they would like feedback on how their input into the project would eventually be used. I also told each participant that there was sufficient space on the project if they wished to become involved further at that time or at some time in the future. However, I ensured to include a date after which time I may no longer be working on the research topic. Further, where I had not been previously involved with the participant in a benefit advice interview, and where this seemed appropriate, the opportunity to take part in one was offered.

6.4.1.2 Individual benefit advice interviews

As I have said earlier, I had not anticipated this form of interaction between research participants and myself to be a method. Soon into the first series of interviews, I realised it was. Again, these were private interactions, and as with the depth interviews, participants and

I became intimately involved with the research topic. However, the nature of the material we covered was focused both on the research topic as lived and to be lived by research participants. We talked about the participant's past lived experiences and future anticipated experiences. There was a greater degree of reflecting forwards. Where participants were checking on their present and future eligibility for welfare benefits, this sustained a dialogue that was more anticipatory than reflective and there was a greater sense of immediacy in our interactions. As with the individual interviews, an intimate level of social disclosure was apparent, though encroaching more directly into each participant's financial, domestic, health, and employment status. Participants needed to disclose such information to accurately calculate their benefit entitlement advice. These interviews generated sufficient sharing of knowledge between participants and myself to successfully calculate participants' benefit eligibility and provided me with additional understanding of the lived and to be lived experiences of participants as related to many facets of the research topic.

I was engaged in thirty-eight individual benefit advice interviews that took place intermittently over a period of twenty-six months. This included a total of thirty-six research participants (two participants were each involved in two benefit interviews). Six of these interviews followed immediately after an individual interview. The remaining participants were either involved in a benefit interview prior to becoming involved in a further research method or after becoming involved in an additional research method between a week and a month later. Sixteen of these interviews were held at the participant's home. Each participant chose the time and location for the interview. I held eighteen benefit interviews at a local training centre for unemployed people. In these instances, the location was decided by my availability on-site during my field visits to the centre. Of the remaining four benefit interviews, I held two in my university office and two at the participant's place of employment. Interviews lasted between forty minutes and one and a half hours, and all but four were held during the day (these other interviews were held in the evening at the participants' home, following individual interviews).

Where each of these research encounters were the first meeting between the participant and myself, I briefly introduced myself as a researcher from Stirling University and made clear my independence from the Benefits Agency. This disaffiliation was necessary as benefit claimants were potentially in a situation where disclosure of their economic, employment and household circumstances to Benefits Agency staff could result in the reduction or cessation of their benefit entitlement. I then recounted the general area of the research topic. With participants from the training centre, this entailed offering more detail than that offered to participants in individual interviews due to my not having the opportunity to enter into written correspondence with them. I further explained the benefit advice interview as a service I was offering as part of the research process, but that the offer of benefit advice was not conditional upon their becoming involved in the research in any other way. I explained the benefit interview as a method of returning information back to research participants. I explained that as well as asking people for information I was wanting to return information to the research population in a practical and useful way. Unanticipated by me, during benefit advice interviews participants often told me stories connected to their employment and/or disability status that was of direct relevance to the research topic. I therefore negotiated with each interviewee whether it was permissible for me to note such stories during the interview for possible inclusion in the research project. Each interviewee was reassured that anything I took note of would be held and treated in confidence.

During the interview, I calculated benefit entitlement on a laptop computer using the *Lisson Grove Benefits Programme.*[1] This computer programme typically presents seventy to ninety open and closed ended questions concerning the participant's household, financial, health and employment circumstances. The programme presents each question sequentially on a separate screen. After entering a participant's response, the programme would either present a summary of entitlement on the screen or present the next question. The programme displays approximately twenty screens of benefit entitlement information and summaries at intermittent intervals and an overall benefit entitlement summary at the end. The programme further provides extensive help screens on each question asked and on the information provided.

At the close of each interview, I offered each participant a printout of their benefits case as

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[1] *Available from Department of General Practice, St. Mary's Hospital Medical School, Imperial College of Science Technology and Medicine, Norfolk Place, London.*

calculated by the programme, and assurance that they could get back in touch with me if they required additional information on any aspect of their case of on any information they required that had not been covered by the programme. I was helped in offering benefit advice through taking out a membership of the Child Poverty Action Group (UK) which gave me access to an advice line for advisors and up to date benefit entitlement information beyond that provided by the Lisson Grove programme. Following each benefit advice interview, I offered to recalculate each participant's case any time in the future, though I added a proviso - the date after which I would no longer be working in the field. In this way, I maintained continued contact with fourteen participants. This was usually either by telephone or by post. This continued contact ranged from two to six months involving between and two and six further consultations on benefit cases. I further restated the overarching aims of the research, to those who had not been involved in an individual interview. I told each participant that they were welcome to become more fully involved in the research, either at that time or at some time in the future, though I made it clear they should feel no responsibility to do so, ie. the benefit advice was offered unconditional to whether a participant wished to become further involved in the research.

Though this type of interview was highly directive and structured, with the agenda being set by the predetermined sequence of questions on the computer package, I remained committed to the Person-Centred and suspended structure methodology. However, there were some changes to the general rules I have drawn up in section 6.3. Concerning point (i), as well as cautioning myself against psychological jargon I took care to avoid using welfare benefit jargon and to work collaboratively with participants in using the computer programme. I was careful to avoid alienating participants from the process of obtaining benefit entitlement advice by involving participants fully in interacting with the computer. I also freely elicited my own particular experiences of claiming welfare benefit (point iv). I had been claiming welfare benefit immediately prior to becoming engaged in the research process. However, I avoiding communicating a role of expert on the intricacies of the benefit system (point vi), instead I conveyed to participants my role as being able to facilitate participants access to "expert" knowledge (point vii) such as the Lisson Grove programme and Child Poverty Action Group. Further, as the nature of the interview was highly determined by the sequence of questions presented by the Lisson Grove programme, I sought to promote opportunities for participants to initiate and nurture additional dialogue on related or unrelated topics (point v). This would have later implications when I reflected upon the democracy of the research relationship I established with each participant (see Chapter Ten).

6.4.1.3 Focus group interviews

Here participants and I entered a more public dialogue than we had in the individual interviews described above. These were open and permissive public settings that created space for participants to share their knowledge and experience both with fellow group participants and myself. There was a multiple interplay during our conversations between both responding to the other group members' contributions and making contributions of our own. As such, there was the potential in each group for a rich level of interaction through multiple perspectives coming together in a sharing environment. Through the social context of the interaction, participants and I became more dynamically engaged in dialogue. The presence of multiple participants enhanced the intensity of interaction and, I believe, contributed to the richness of the research material. It did so as our dialogue was being listened to, interpreted and reacted to by people besides myself which created opportunities for new ways of exploring the research issues besides my way of exploring them. During these group meetings, the research topic became both contextualised in the lived experiences of each participant and contextualised in the interpretations of others, some of whom had divergent and some parallel experiences. Further, the dialogue between group members offered us opportunities to clarify our own perceptions in the context of the perceptions of other group members. This offered me a greater level of understanding into both the range of experiences and perceptions held by participants and the circumstances that permitted or did not permit their disclosure in a social setting more complex than that of the individual interviews.

I was involved in nine focus group interviews with a total of sixty-nine participants. Groups ranged from three to twelve participants. I held these groups intermittently over twenty-two months. I did not facilitate three of these groups as they ran concurrently while I was facilitating one of a group of four focus groups at a local CEPD workshop. These four groups were arranged through the CEPD as part of a workshop event. At the workshop, the three other facilitators had been briefed by me on rules of engagement for running the groups, and the material that resulted from these groups have been included in the research project as a whole.

I arranged one focus group at a local training centre for unemployed people while I was there on a field trip. In this instance, participants volunteered to be involved in the group when an announcement was made by a member of staff in the centre's workshop. The remaining two groups were made up of participants whom I had contacted individually by letter and invited to become involved in the research. In replying, they asked to be involved in a focus group. One set of participants all worked at the same place of employment and subsequently chose to hold the focus group there. I held the remaining focus group at a local hotel. This group of participants did not know each other prior to meeting as a group. Apart from this latter group and the four groups held at the CEPD workshop, participants decided themselves the time and place of the meeting. With the group held at the hotel, I arranged the time and place, negotiating between participants to find arrangements that would suit all participants. Organising these groups was considerably more complex and time-consuming a task than organising individual interviews. I needed to negotiate between multiple participants to find a time and place that would be convenient for several rather than the one participant. For participants attending the CEPD focus groups, these were arranged by members of the CEPD.

At the beginning of each group, I briefly introduced myself as a researcher from Stirling University and stated the general area of my research. Where I had not had the opportunity to engage in correspondence with participants prior to the interview - as with the focus group at the training centre and the CEPD workshop - I gave a slightly longer introduction. I then negotiated with each group whether it was permissible to audio tape our discussion. The exception to this was with the three focus groups not facilitated by me at the CEPD workshop. Here the nature of my research was described during the opening address at the workshop and facilitators took notes for me, and summarised the major themes of the discussion on some flip charts during the group discussion. CEPD facilitators and I instructed all focus groups on the following rules of engagement which were similarly adopted for all the other focus groups I was involved in:

a) Participants were asked to keep details of the discussion confidential to the group.
b) Participants were reminded of the research topic and were asked to reflect on their own and others' input to make sure we, as a group, remained focused on that topic.
c) Participants were asked to reflect on how often they and others contributed to the discussion to make sure that everyone in the group had the chance to contribute.

d) Participants were encouraged not to feel the need to reach a consensus on the topic of discussion, and that divergent perspectives were as valuable in the discussion as congruent perspectives.

Each focus group interview lasted between one and two hours. At the end of each interview I kept the possibility of future research contact open by making sure each participant had my university address and telephone number. Where I had not already done so and where appropriate, I also offered participants benefit advice interviews. Within each setting I also communicated the opportunity for each participant to become further involved in the project at that time or at some time in the future.

I adjusted my approach as I have described earlier (section 6.3). As this was a group setting, I thought of participants as collaborators and myself as facilitator in a group context (points vii & i) and saw the expertise of participants held in a collective frame of reference rather than any individual's frame of reference (point vi). I sought to reduce the prominence of my role in group settings and to encourage group members to jointly own responsibility in facilitating the group (point vii). Further, I encouraged participants to adopt an unconditional positive regard (point iii) towards other members of the group. Where possible, I sought to promote an informal climate (point ii) in the group setting by arranging the seats in a circle so that as a group we could maintain eye-contact between ourselves. I avoided more formal seating arrangements (ie. sitting squarely around a table).

6.4.1.4 Telephone interviews

During these interviews the social context of our interaction was somewhat removed, being on either end of a telephone line. I consider these interactions to be the ones where I was least intimately involved with research participants, though the method did offer material valuable to the project. I conducted telephone interviews with participants who either were unable or did not wish to take part in other methods, but wished to contribute to the research. The time we talked was considerably shorter than with other methods. Removed from more intimate social contact, our dialogue was situated in a less personal context. During these conversations, participants and I explored, to a considerable depth of detail, a number of issues. As with other methods, participants shared with me their experiences of the research topic. Additionally, these conversations would offer me an understanding of reasons why some participants felt their experiences would not be of such value to my project to sustain a more intimate level of engagement. A telephone interview was sometimes suggested as the participant did not feel they had enough material to contribute to the project to warrant us meeting for an individual or group interview. Here, I explored the reasons for this with participants.

I conducted a total of seven telephone interviews over twenty months. Each interview lasted between fifteen and thirty minutes. In all cases participants were familiar with who I was as I had written to each participant before hand. I first made sure that I was telephoning at a convenient time, and if this was not so, arranged with each participant a time that would be convenient. Once I was sure the participant was free to talk, I restated my research topic and gave detail on the project until a point where the participant wished to begin a discussion. The telephone call was always closed by the participant. I would take notes during the conversation, but first would ensure the participant was happy for me to do this, with a view to including their comments into my research.

6.4.2 Intervention groups

Here I include three types of groups: support groups, consultancy groups and steering groups. As with focus group interviews, these were essentially times when participants and I engaged in a public dialogue, ie. these were not private conversations but were discussions shared with a group of participants. I separate them from the focus group interviews as they were more easily identified as elements used in the intervention phase of the project. I am caught between a desire to discuss these interactions as part of the method and postponing discussion until I move to reflect on the intervention phase of the research. However, I do feel it is pertinent to briefly reflect upon them in the sense I have made of them as a research method.

These research interactions were distinct from the other group settings such as the focus groups. The distinction centres on the purpose driven nature of these group meetings. Each of these groups was task oriented. Unlike the other research methods I describe, where my engagement with the method was principally research driven, these groups had a quite different dynamic. In support, consultancy and steering groups, our task was to decide joint action and to reach a consensus. Such activities are not a part of a focus group rationale, where differences of opinion are not only tolerated but actively encouraged. However, as with the focus group, these group settings were enriched by the dynamic interplay between group participants. Thus, participants and I could share experiences, thoughts and feelings and reflect upon the contribution of fellow group members and reflect on their reactions to ours.

During the research project I was involved in a total of twenty-three group discussions involving thirty-nine participants. I initiated support groups at a training centre for unemployed people. Participants involved in support group meetings were first encouraged to attend by staff at the centre, and were later self-selected through attending voluntarily. The consultancy and steering groups were made up of research participants who had been involved in the research and had expressed an interest in becoming further involved in the intervention stage of the project. I contacted all these participants by post. These two types of groups were run serially. The support groups ran once a fortnight for two months. The steering group meetings ran once monthly for six months. The consultancy groups ran intermittently for six months. Four separate consultancy groups were formed which each met between two and three times.

6.4.2.1 Support groups

I was involved in a total of five support group meetings over two months. Each ranged from five to sixteen participants per meeting. These groups were initiated during my field visits to a local training centre for unemployed people. I established these groups following a series of individual benefit advice interviews, a focus group interview, and several informal conversations with trainees at the centre during my field visits. I established these meetings through responding to trainees at the centre who wanted to get together to discuss issues of mutual concern to them. Participants at the centre sought a meeting where they could share their experiences of unemployment, employment interviews, welfare benefit claimancy and/or disability. We held each support group at the training centre. Meetings typically lasted between one and two hours. Following each support group I sent out minutes that I recorded at the meeting and my own reflections of the meeting (Appendix Three[k]). I sent these out to group participants and confirmed the time for the next meeting. At the beginning of each meeting, if there were participants present who had not met me before, I introduced myself as a researcher from Stirling University and briefly summarised the research project. I then negotiated with all those present whether I could audio tape the discussion and whether I could use issues discussed in group meetings in my research project as a whole. We would then begin our discussion, following an agenda the group had decided upon in the previous meeting. At the final support group meeting, I left the possibility open for continued contact, both at a group level and an individual level, by ensuring everyone had my university address and telephone number and stating that I would be happy to continue to have contact with them. I also extended invitations of benefit advice interviews to those whom it had not previously been offered to and invited anyone who was interested in becoming more involved in my research to contact me.

As with the focus groups, I modified my approach (see section 6.3) to this method through adapting to a group setting. However, one of the points I originally listed was compromised in the support groups. I was required to vacate the room we were allocated for the meetings by a set time. This meant that where I was avoiding a directive role in the group (point v) I had to close meetings if we ran over time.

6.4.2.2 Consultancy groups

Consultancy groups ranged from one to two research participants per meeting - excluding myself. Altogether there were four different consultancy groups that met over six months. These groups were set to meet twice with an individual employer representative and once separate from the employer. Each meeting lasted between one and two hours. Meetings were located either at the employer's place of work (for those involving the employer representative) or around either a member's house or at university (for those not involving the employer representative). Though upon occasion the size of the group resembled more of a dyadic interview, its remit was quite unlike an interview. The task of the group was to co-develop and jointly instigate a plan of action for each employer organisation involved in the intervention programme. I will describe this in more detail as I reflect on the consultancy group as an intervention strategy rather than a method employed during the research in Chapter Eight. Here I will detail those aspects of my methodology I adjusted in the context of this method. Where I sought an equality in role relationship between myself and research participants (point i), here I had to recognise that there was a third party, the employer. I was additionally careful to ensure I was not perceived by the employer representative to occupy a status of expert any more than fellow consultancy group members. I sought to create a climate where consultancy activities would feel collaborative in nature. I further sought for consultancy groups to similarly engage with employer representatives in a collaborative manner, ie. working with employers, not for or against employers, on a joint project. I also modified point (ii). Though consultancy group members and I sought to establish an informal climate with the employer representative, we did not extend this to our dress code. We would all dress formally to give an image of competency and professionalism to our activities. Further, as well as group participants being thought of as experts on their own frames of reference (point vi), employers were also thought of as experts in the particular needs and circumstances of the organisation they represented and we respected the customs of their organisation. We sought not to privilege any one person's perspective, ie. consultant or employer, but to reach consensus on the matters we discussed. As with focus group meetings, where I asked participants to adopt an unconditional positive for fellow group members, I similarly did so here and asked members and reminded myself to extend this to our view of the employer representative. I encouraged this particularly where the employer representative held views of disabled people that were to diverge from our own views - however difficult this was for us to do. Where previously I had sought to allow participants sufficient room in the interaction to direct the process themselves (point v), I also sought to allow the employer representative sufficient space to direct the process to address their concerns as an employer. I also encouraged fellow consultants to add direction of their own, but not to neglect the concerns of the employer.

6.4.2.3 Steering group

Steering group meetings ranged from five to eleven participants per meeting and met once monthly for six months. Five members of the consultancy groups were also members of the steering group. Each meeting lasted between one and a half and two hours. We held our meetings in a local statutory service building, offered to us by a member of the CEPD, except the initial meeting that was held at the university. At the time of writing the steering group is ongoing, though I am no longer involved in it as a researcher. Additionally, the responsibility for running the groups has been taken over by one of the steering group members. The task of the group was to develop and monitor the overall strategies adopted by the four consultancy groups. As with the consultancy groups, I will describe the activities of the steering group in a later section on the intervention stage of the project. My Person-Centred and suspended structure approach was modified in line with those I adopted for focus groups which I mention earlier.

6.4.3 Observation

Here I became engaged in organisational settings. As with the interviews and discussion groups, the method of observation (participant observations and field visits) allowed me to have sustained and intensive interactions with research participants. This produced thickly descriptive accounts of participants' experiences of the research topic. Unlike the other methods these were situated in more natural settings. The interviews and discussion groups were not naturally occurring but were, in a sense, manipulated by me into being. I set up meetings with participants which other than for the research project, were unlikely to have taken place. Through observational methods I could interact with research participants in naturally occurring settings. Further, through engaging in these settings I could explore organisational dynamics as they affected the research topic. I was engaged with "real-time" access to the field. By this I mean I was engaging in organisational settings at the time organisational decisions were being made and directives were being taken. I was recording these events at the time they were occurring, ie. before participants would either forget or reconstruct the events - reconstructing events inevitably happens when we interview people about past events. These methods further sustained my intimate involvement with the research topic and research participants. They were, I feel, similar to the nature of the material I explored in group settings (focus groups, support groups etc.), though here my concerns over not pre structuring the research agenda eased somewhat. Here, I was entering a pre-existing setting with a pre-existing culture and organisational remit. I was not establishing an essentially new setting which could have been pre structured by my own research concerns.

I was invólved as observer on a total of forty-nine occasions involving ten separate organisations. Three of these organisations were in the statutory sector (Ability Development Centre, PACT and CEPD). Four organisations were in the voluntary sector (two organisations for unemployed people, one organisation for citizen advice and one disability advocacy group). Three organisations were contracted out to statutory organisations (one supported employment organisation, one supported employment forum and one training centre for unemployed people). I made my observations over twenty-nine months. My observations involved orienting myself to a research setting (field visit) or my more active participation in a research setting (participant observation). All but two of these organisations invited me to visit after they had been made aware of my research by either the CEPD or PACT. I initiated the invitation to the remaining two organisations myself. The timing of field visits was fixed at the convenience of the respective organisation. The participant observations were made during times when the respective organisations were meeting naturally, ie. they were not meeting especially for my visit. I either recorded my observations while I was in the setting with pen and paper, or recorded them immediately after I had left the setting - usually on a tape recorder - whichever was best suited for those in the setting.

6.4.3.1 Participant observation

As a participant observer I interacted with research participants in a way that opened up considerable scope both to explore rich, contextualised research settings, and to open up access to further settings such as access to PACT and local employers. The most intimate link I developed with an organisation in the field was with the CEPD. Rather than having to seek a means to access this organisation and its network of contacts and sources of information, I became a part of that organisation. My close involvement with the committee offered me opportunities to obtain research material from a variety of sources, including committee minutes, internal documents and my observations of their activities. Through taking an active part in organisational settings I interacted with participants in these settings as more of an "insider" than an "outsider". This allowed me to engage closer with participants and, I believe, gave me the opportunity to share and explore participants' experiences, thoughts and feelings that may have been more difficult for an observer situated outside the organisation. These environments were so rich in material that at times the material to which I had access was overwhelming, though this was a fortunate problem to have.

I engaged in participant observation on thirty separate occasions. Twenty-three of these were CEPD meetings (including sixteen committee meetings, three subgroup meetings and four CEPD events), and seven additional meetings with organisations in both the statutory sector (four committee meetings) and voluntary sector (three committee meetings) active in the field of disability and employment. Meetings usually lasted between one and a half and two and a half hours. I attended these meetings and events as a participant observer over twenty-nine months. At each meeting, or at the first meeting in the series of CEPD meetings, I asked permission from those present to either audio-tape or take notes during the meeting. All those active in the setting were assured the taping and/or note taking would be handled confidentially. On my initial entry into each organisation I would introduce myself as a researcher from Stirling University and give an overview of my research topic. Where I only met with an organisation on one occasion, I ensured that I offered the opportunity for the organisation, or at least those present, to become more involved in the research project. When leaving an organisational setting I would leave assurance that I could be contacted during the three year period of the project if I could be of use to their organisation.

As a participant observer I modified my methods (see section 6.3) to adapt to this new context. As well as offering my own thoughts, feelings and experiences when asked to do so by those in the research setting (point iv), I sought to offer my skills and knowledge and to invest my energies when those in the setting asked me to do so, or offer them where I felt it to be appropriate. These issues very much reflected my role as *participant*, not just *observer*. Further, in each of these settings, there was in each instance a predefined organisational agenda and group direction. In each instance I acquiesced to both the agenda and direction of the organisation. I also thought of those present in the setting as occupying the role of experts in the field, sought to avoid privileging my own perceptions of the organisation's activities, and sought not to present my own actions and reflections as more important than any other in the setting.

6.4.3.2 Field visits

During field visits I engaged with a multitude of research participants in varied social settings. Though I was not as active as in the previous method, I was situated such that I could explore issues with participants in the field as they were directly impacting upon the field. During field visits I was engaged less intimately with research participants and the research topic, though I still became immersed in rich sources of research material. The method was particularly useful in sustaining my engagement in the field, bringing me into contact with a variety of organisational settings. Again, these visits opened access to materials additional to the experiences, thoughts and feelings shared with me by participants. Here the research material was contextualised within complex organisational settings.

I engaged in nineteen field visits over a period of thirty months. Seventeen of these visits were serial visits across two organisations (PACT and a training centre for unemployed people) with the remaining two visits being one-off field visits with two separate organisations. I refer to my observations as field visits when I was being shown around and generally oriented within an organisation by those present in the setting. Many of these field visits were characterised by my being invited to "get a feel" for that particular organisation or setting. Visits usually lasted between one to three hours, though on occasion during field visits I would become involved in an additional method such as benefit advice interviews, focus group interviews and/or support groups (as with the case of the training centre for unemployed people). Of the initial visits, two of the four organisations invited me to visit their organisation. I instigated the visits with the other two organisations. The time of my visit was negotiated with each organisation, though their convenience was the central concern. At the time of initial contact I identified myself as a researcher at Stirling University and described the nature of my research project. I would then ask permission to take notes. At the end of each individual field visit, and the final visit of a series of field visits, I would ensure those in the setting had my contact address and assured them that they could contact me anytime in the future if they felt I could support their activities. However, again I offered a date after which this offer would no longer be open, ie. following the end of the research project. I further offered them the opportunity to become involved in the project.

6.5 Making sense of the research material

Through using these various methods I accumulated large amounts of research material. In traditional research practice this is talked of as data, but this sits uncomfortably with how I view what I gained from the field. Data usually refers to the "physical" material we take from the field. By physical I refer to such tangible things as tapes of interviews (and the reams of interview transcript that we can make from them), field notes, and written documentation such as minutes of committee meetings, in-house documents and so on. We often think of this data as static, it sits on our office shelves or in our filing cabinets until we come to analyse it. In traditional ways of thinking about data analysis we view data as the raw matter we collect from the field which we then manipulate to extract some sense of meaning, ie. in quantitative research we manipulate numbers (data) with statistical tests (analysis). Indeed, to a limited extent I would say this may be more characteristic of quantified research material or at least easier to think of such material in this way. Our numbers may not make much sense to us without being processed in this way. Indeed, much of numerical data does not feel as though it has much meaning until we perform our statistical tests upon it. Until that time, this data may feel unprocessed and in stasis (the etymology of the word "statistic" is the science dealing with facts of a state). It is very much more difficult to think of qualitative data in this way. Our "sense making" of our data comes a long time before we archive the interview tapes, transcripts and the documentation we have collected. This sense making happens in the context of our interviews, our observations and our readings. Without such sense making it would be difficult to listen and respond in research interviews, decide which of the myriad of happenings in our observations are the ones we should record or know that what we read has relevance to our research and so merits archiving in our "database". Of course, quantitative data also requires us to make sense of our data before we collect it, ie. we must make a decision about what we wish to measure and why. We also need to have made some sense of our data to know what statistical test we need to perform on it. In qualitative research our sense making is not something that happens once we listen to a tape of one of our research interviews or review our field notes of our participant observation from a field setting. Our sense making is already embedded in this material, indeed it has shaped it. This is not to say we don't reinterpret our data at a later time, but it is never the raw unprocessed material that the term "data" perhaps suggests.

There is another reason, I feel, to avoid thinking of what we collect from the field as data. This way of thinking about our research material tends to limit what we consider to be the stuff of research. We may feel comfort coming out of an interview setting with a tape of the conversation, confident that we have the data in our hand. However, something very important is not captured on that tape. I also come out of research settings with experiential material that is not captured in the "physical" data on the tape. I may capture it more in field notes during my research observations, but even here it is hard to capture fully this element of the research interaction. It is the whole experience of being in a research setting with a participant, a complex blend of intellectual and emotional reacting and interpreting, a sense of knowing and feeling that comes from interacting in research settings. My concerns are captured in the work of Okely: 'interpretations are attained not only through a combination of anthropological knowledge and textual scrutiny, but also through the memory of the field experience, unwritten yet inscribed in the fieldworker's being' (Okely, 1994 cited in Harris, 1997:4). Harris

(1997) further talks of the importance of the researcher treating her/his feelings about doing the research as data, yet comments how little this is done.

The experiential component of the "data" is perhaps most absent from interview transcripts. Though these transcripts would act, for me, as a trigger for this experiential material, my recollection of how it felt to be in that interview or in that meeting would be absent for anyone else who would read these transcripts. For myself, this recollection may fade the longer I wait between recording and listening to the tape. Our qualitative material is not only contained in the texts that we archive in our database but is contained in the feeling and knowing that we gain from being researchers in research contexts. This affects both the research settings we are in at the time and the future research settings we engage with. Having a bad experience in an interview, say I felt clumsy in the way I asked questions, may leave me entering the next setting with my confidence shaken. Having a good experience in a meeting, say feeling my contributions were welcomed by others in the meeting, may fill me with enthusiasm the next time I enter a group setting. These feelings will have an effect on my sense of self as I experience it in that setting and as others experience me in that setting. This is what I make sense of as I analyse the data, as it is part and parcel of that which I have "taken" from the field. It is this that interplays as I analyse the material I have gained from the field and from this I also seek to construct knowledge on the research topic. For this reason, I seek where I can to avoid the concept of "data", and instead talk about the "material" I gained from research settings.

The analysis I performed on my research material was an additional process of sense making. This analysis had two main components. The first involved issues of how I managed the rich variety of research material I gained from the different methods I used. I did this through using a method of triangulation. The second concerned the process through which I would highlight themes contained in the research material. Highlighting themes involved imposing my interpretations on the research material. Through this process of sense making I would construct knowledge on the research topic through making connections between themes and thus linking the material together and finding distinctive patterns in the material. I did this through using computer assisted qualitative data analysis and cognitive mapping.

6.5.1 Triangulating diversity

Triangulation is conventionally used as a way of improving a researcher's confidence in her/his research material. It refers to a process of accumulating material from diverse sources, diverse methods, diverse investigators and/or from diverse theoretical perspectives. These are known as 'data triangulation', 'method triangulation', 'investigator triangulation' and 'theory triangulation' (Denzin, 1970).

Denzin describes triangulation as a tool researchers use to confirm the validity of the propositions they make from their research material. As a tool for confirmation, triangulation is built upon concerns over the fallibility of any single aspect of empirical investigation (Fielding and Fielding, 1986). The researcher feels more confident in her/his material if it is supported by material from other investigators, other populations, other theories or other methods. In this way, triangulation acknowledges the diversity of research contexts in so far as it highlights what is different about how we come to collect the research material, but assumes the source material will be similar in each case. Thus, if we had developed the "correct" way of collecting research materials, the different ways we do so will converge on the same material. If different ways of collecting the research material results in different research material then this, for Denzin, is a sign the investigator has made an error somewhere in her/his work. In this way, Denzin's interpretation of triangulation does not use diversity to generate understanding, a key theme for my own empirical process of inquiry. Instead, conventional triangulation uses diversity to test understanding. This process of testing is typically adversarial. Propositions are in competition, and through the process of triangulation we identify the proposition that has the most weight (the winner) over alternative hypotheses (the losers). If a proposition has support from several divergent "data sources" it would be viewed as more trustworthy than a proposition supported from one type of "data source". A proposition generated by the instance of a single-case loses out to propositions confirmed across multiple cases.

I believe this conventional use of triangulation is misguided. It operates on the premise that greater levels of convergence across divergent sources of research material lead to greater confidence in the assertions made. However, both truths and falsehoods can show convergence across the research material. There is nothing intrinsic to triangulation that makes the distinction between a truth and a falsehood. As Cherniss reminds us, 'shared agreement could be shared delusion' (Cherniss, 1990:136). More worrisome, 'our truth... [may be] the intersection of independent lies' (Levine, 1966:423). For example, in the past, evidence from disparate sources confirmed that ethnicity correlates with intelligence. In particular, members of ethnic minority groups, when tested on IQ, generally showed lower intelligence ratings than members of the ethnic majority group - typically whites. However, the problem with the numerous empirical studies that documented this "fact" was that investigators fell foul of using similarly culturally insensitive intelligence measures (method triangulation). Here confidence in the correlation was founded on a convergence of errors (cultural biased empirical tools), the convergence was not on "truth". This would caution us against using triangulation to confirm truth. We may simply be accumulating common errors in multiple methods, multiple investigators, and multiple theories and populations.

My use of triangulation differs from Denzin's. I use the diversity produced from triangulation to generate and sustain new understanding and highlight ideas that might otherwise go unrecognised. My emphasis is not on confirmation but on exploration. I situate each proposition suggested by the research material within a consensual relation to other propositions. This contrasts with the traditional use of triangulation that treats differences within research materials in an adversarial manner, ie. if there are two different propositions suggested by the research material, then one must be right and one must be wrong. Rather, my use of triangulation would treat neither proposition as wrong, but both would be used to generate greater understanding of the research topic. I thus refer to this form of triangulation as *consensual triangulation*. With this form of triangulation, propositions generated from single-cases in the research material are not lost, indeed, they are gained. Thus, if one proposition is supported by a mass of our research material while another proposition is supported by only one case from our material, we would not dismiss this latter proposition but incorporate it into the body of our understanding on the research topic.

This is closer to Mathison's (1988) view on triangulation. He states that where conventional triangulation is used to support a proposition, it will seek convergence in the research material. Here *divergent* material will be used to produce a proposition upon which the material *converges*. Mathison views a more fortunate use of triangulation may be to use divergent research material to generate divergent propositions. In this way, triangulation is used to harness diverse sources of material and the multiple propositions they generate. This view of triangulation is inherited from Mannheim, whose work influenced Denzin's thoughts on triangulation some four decades later but was arguably misinterpreted by Denzin (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). Denzin did not adopt Mannheim's consensual approach to handling diversity (Walker, 1985). Mannheim used triangulation as a means to 'understand and interpret insights from an ever more inclusive context' (Mannheim, 1936:105). This view holds triangulation should be used to get a fuller picture rather than used to confirm truth assertions. As it rests on the idea of convergent validity, Denzin's articulation of triangulation has more in common with the act of correlation as used on quantitative research material than it has with qualitative inquiry.

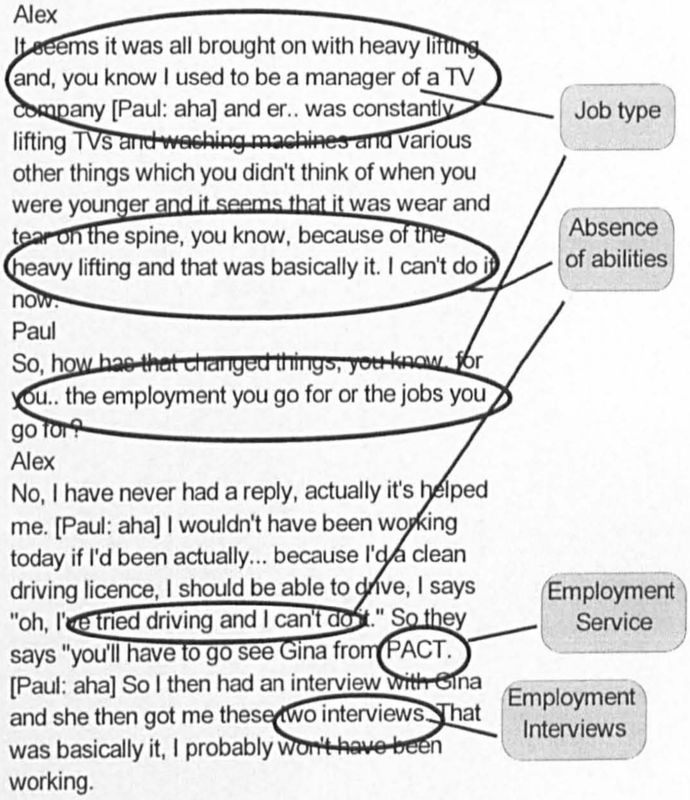
I have therefore used the interviews, discussion groups and observations I engaged with during the research process to explore diversity in the research material. Similarly, my method of recruiting groups of research participants and the context in which each research encounter was set created further diversity within the research material that informed the knowledge I constructed. Single-case instances were held in equal regard to multiple case instances. Therefore, where I could generate a proposition from the material I had, and that material came from only one participant, from only one method (ie. a benefit advice interview) and from only one type of research encounter (ie. at a participant's home), the proposition was not abandoned. Instead, I considered it with equal attention to a proposition I had generated from material I gained from multiple participants and across multiple methods and settings.

6.5.2 Developing themes and using codes

During my analysis, I coded each piece of research material using NUD*IST software. NUD*IST is a computer program that helps a researcher analyse her/his qualitative research material. It does so by allowing the researcher to mark units of material with codes. The material can be both *on-line* documents (computer text files) or *off-line* media (eg. type script, video, audio, photographs etc.). Each piece of material is divided into "chunks of meaning".

For example, a transcript could be numbered by line or by paragraph so that each unit of text can be easily referenced. Video material could be referenced by noting the time into the recording where the segment of interest is located. Material from a tape recording could be referenced by using the tape counter. The researcher analyses each of these units and attaches a code to the units of interest. A code is a signifier that is attached to a unit of text, video, audio etc. The researcher uses a code to capture the meaning s/he attributes to that piece of research material. This is a critical point as it is central to the process of analysis. Here the researcher makes an interpretation as to what s/he feels the material means. In Figure 6c I have given an example of how I have coded a piece of interview transcript. Here I identified themes in the conversation between Alex and me. These are my interpretations of a conversation of which there can be multiple interpretations. My interpretations focused on the themes of job type and employment interview, on identifying the absence or presence of abilities and also connections with the Employment Service. In making sense through applying my interpretations of what was said in the interview, I start the task of constructing my understanding of the research material.

Figure 6c Section of coded transcript



Alex
It seems it was all brought on with heavy lifting and, you know I used to be a manager of a TV company [Paul: aha] and er.. was constantly lifting TVs and washing machines and various other things which you didn't think of when you were younger and it seems that it was wear and tear on the spine, you know, because of the heavy lifting and that was basically it. I can't do it now.
Paul
So, how has that changed things, you know, for you.. the employment you go for or the jobs you go for?
Alex
No, I have never had a reply, actually it's helped me. [Paul: aha] I wouldn't have been working today if I'd been actually... because I'd a clean driving licence, I should be able to drive, I says "oh, I've tried driving and I can't do it." So they says "you'll have to go see Gina from PACT. [Paul: aha] So I then had an interview with Gina and she then got me these two interviews. That was basically it, I probably won't have been working.

In NUD*IST these codes are represented in shorthand as a single word or abbreviation. For example, a paragraph in an interview transcript where a research participant is discussing the procedure they went through when applying for welfare benefits may be coded "giro" or "ben. claim". Codes can be constructed before the researcher analyses the research material or can be constructed during the process of analysis. Codes can be added to and deleted at any point during the process.

Once a number of codes have been generated and attached to the research material, the researcher can then perform a series of Boolean searches across these codes. A typical Boolean search is, for example, 'find all cases of *x* where *x* is accompanied by *y*' or 'find all cases of *x* and *y* when they are not accompanied by *z*'. Such searches enable the researcher to find quite intricate relationships between different codes and gain an understanding of how the themes s/he has identified in the research material are interrelated, helping to generate a more complex understanding of her/his research material. NUD*IST pulls together all the text coded under the search operators (the specific codes of interest) and produces text file reports describing where the research material is located (the data unit) and, with on-line documents, prints out the text. In essence the programme functions as a database but with a sophisticated search and retrieval capacity.

Such searches can be used to test hypotheses. For example, if the themes 'poverty', 'housing' and 'legislation' had been generated by a researcher coding material on a project linking poverty and poor housing, the researcher could hypothesise there is a strong link in her/his coding of the material between legislation, poverty and poor housing. S/he can perform a search that looks for all research material coded with all three of these themes and see what proportion of her/his material supports this proposition. Using NUD*IST in this way would accrue value to a proposition that had plenty of research material to support it. This again is reminiscent of Denzin's approach to triangulation described above. Indeed, NUD*IST tempts the researcher to perform her/his analysis in this way as the programme automatically calculates the percentage of all her/his research material coded under the particular relation of themes s/he is interested in. Therefore, the programme will report search results and indicate this represents, say, 10 per cent of the entire research database. I feel this suggests some quantitative assumptions underlying the NUD*IST software.

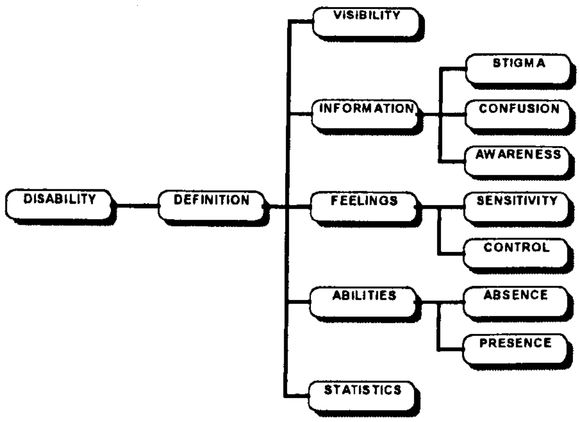
However, such searches can also be performed to generate a more intricate level of understanding through generating a complex set of patterns in the research material. Here, rather than finding how much of our material supports our proposition, we can examine the different propositions generated from our material and focus on those that increase our understanding rather than those that satisfy our concern for confirmation. Thus, we could still search for all those instances where we had coded our material under 'poverty', 'housing' and 'legislation' to explore and generate an understanding of the connections between housing, poverty and legislation. We are not looking at the amount of material we find, we are looking at the substance, quality and meaning of that material.

In this project I generated over two hundred different codes. I think of these as research themes rather than codes. The five central themes were:

- Disability
- Employment
- Organisations
- Researcher
- Methods

The first two themes were directly related to the research topic and were the initial themes I reflected on at the beginning of the project. They concerned disability and employment. The third theme, organisations, arose in response to my involvement with, during the research project, organisations that worked in the field of disability and employment. For example, this theme arose through my participant observations at CEPD meetings and a sub theme under this (legislation) arose through my involvement in the Government consultation exercise on the Disability Discrimination Act. The fourth and fifth themes (Researcher and Methods) developed from my concerns over the research process itself that developed during the project. In each case these themes developed from the material, both through my experience of each research setting and the material I gained from each setting. Each theme contained multiple sub themes. These were all developed during my later analysis of the research material I had obtained and during my review of the literature. For example, a sub theme of 'disability-welfare-benefit' arose through the process of benefit advice interviews and the sub theme of 'triangulation' came from my literature review of qualitative inquiry. Figure 6d is one branch of a sub theme under the general theme of disability. I have included the complete code trees I developed while using the NUD*IST programme in Appendix Two [a].

Figure 6d Code Tree used in NUD*IST



Once I had coded my research material and was satisfied that each of these themes had reached a sufficient level of theoretical saturation (I was happy that my understanding of each was relatively complete), I turned to look at the connections between themes and explored more fully the meanings of each theme as they related to my research topic. I did this through using Venn Diagrams as a means of exploring connectivity between themes and sub themes. Through this process I sought to highlight where themes overlapped. I constructed Venn diagrams for each pattern of connected themes. For example, under the sub theme of Job interviews, I constructed forty-two different Venn diagrams reflecting intersections with between one and six additional themes and sub themes. I offer two examples in Figures 6e and 6f (I have included a fuller example of a Venn Diagram with accompanying research material retrieved from NUD*IST in Appendix Two[b]). Each of the overlaps in these diagrams suggests differing levels of connectivity between the themes. Exploring each of these overlaps helped me to understand the research topic as I returned to my transcripts, field notes and the literature to better understand the material.

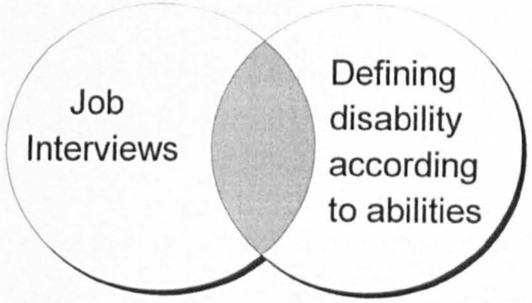


Figure 6e Venn diagram of two codes connecting

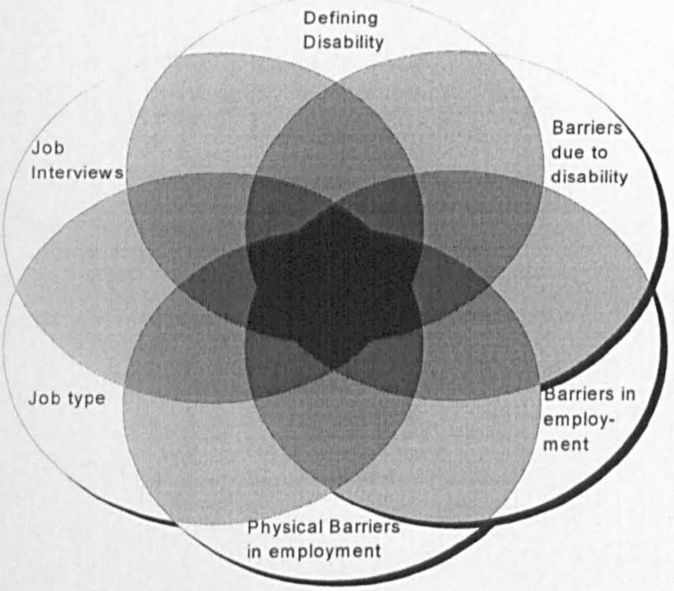


Figure 6f Venn diagram showing six themes connecting

Another means of sense making I made use of was the technique of cognitive mapping. Cognitive mapping is 'a method of modelling persons' beliefs in diagrammatic form ... developed in the context of action research' (Jones, 1985:59). As with the Venn diagrams, I used cognitive maps to link together the different themes I was identifying in my research material. This helped me to develop conceptual patterns in the research material. This was a particularly effective way of feeding back my interpretations of the research material to research participants. I believe this was so as such maps have the potential to make clear the conceptual links the researcher is making between the different concerns voiced by research participants during interviews and group discussions. I give an example of a cognitive map I used during my analysis of the research material in Chapter Eight.

Through this process of analysis I sought to deepen my understanding of the research topic. During this process I also revised codings and developed additional sub themes. For example, it was very soon clear to me that the amount of material I was coding under the theme of 'disability' was so great that I needed to develop additional sub themes to capture the different ways I felt disability was being talked about. Where I felt a theme was under saturated, this directed me towards areas where I needed to continue to engage with research participants. My process of analysis would lead me to return to the field. The process was thus reactive to the quality of material I had obtained and proactive in seeking new lines of inquiry that would help me develop an understanding of the research topic. I used this understanding to inform the research intervention towards the end of the project.

6.6 Returning my analysis to the field

The intervention stage of the project not only offered me new material to engage with, but offered me the opportunity to see the extent to which my analysis would make sense to research participants. I used my interpretations of the research material to inform the early stages of the main research intervention as well as the support groups that participants and I established at the training centre for unemployed people.

I began working with a group of participants who formed the consulting and steering groups (see Chapter Eight). In these groups I feed back my analysis of the research material to members of each group and sought feedback on what group members felt of the sense I had made of the material. This was an integral part of collaborating with participants. In this way, I handed my interpretations of the research material back to research participants so that they could have a say in how I made my interpretations. Between us we worked together to decide the nature of the knowledge we felt it appropriate to construct from the research material and how it was to be articulated during the research intervention. Further, these negotiated interpretations of the research material were presented to employers engaged in the intervention stage, and similarly room was allowed for employers' feedback to affect the final interpretations made. This was another stage of feedback where the jointly agreed interpretations of the research material were reprocessed. This jointly agreed upon and developed knowledge of the research topic informed the main intervention of the research, the *Codes of Practice on the Employment of Disabled People*.

However, the frequency and duration of our meetings and the size of the "databank" of material I had gained from the methods I used meant that this re-analysis was at a more peripheral level than the notion of "reprocessing" the research material might suggest. None of the participants were able to commit the time to analyse all of the material I had collected. Indeed, the process had taken me several months of intense work. In each case, the re-interpretations participants made of my analysis were made in light of their experiences, thoughts and feelings on the research topic and whether the knowledge I constructed on the research topic fitted with these. The time participants and I spent working on the intervention stage was constrained both by the funding I was able to obtain to support the intervention which enabled me to pay each participant a wage for their involvement, and the existing social and employment commitments each of us had. Given these constraints, I feel we reached a satisfactory level at which participants could feed back into the analysis of the research material.

In the case of the support groups which participants and I established at the training centre for unemployed people, I feed back my interpretations of group discussions. I did this through using a combination of report writing and cognitive maps (see section 6.5.2). Whereas with consultancy and steering groups participants were not given access to the entirety of the research material upon which I based my analysis, in support group meetings they were. My analysis was based on the discussion we had in the previous meeting. Therefore, participants in these groups, if they had attended the previous meeting, had access to all the material upon which I had based my analysis, ie. our support group discussion. During support group meetings we would decide whether my analysis was a fair reflection on the discussion we had and decided on any changes that should be made in order for the analysis to capture the meaning that other participants in the group had made of the material.

As well as guiding the content of the Codes of Practice for the intervention stage of the research and guiding my analysis of the support group meetings, collaborating with participants also informed the nature of the material I present in Chapter Eight. This opportunity to take my analysis of the research material back to participants gave me a greater degree of confidence that the sense I was making of the material not only made sense to me, but made sense to those for whom the research topic was a lived experience. This also made the research process more democratic. The participants who were involved in this process had a greater degree of control and hence ownership over the products of the research which I present in Chapter Eight. In particular, the consultancy and steering groups that formed part of the final stage in the research process allowed me to re-introduce a reciprocity between myself and participants. This was at the end of what was, for me and several participants, a long and intimate level of engagement in the field. I describe this briefly in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE METHODS IN USE

The sequence in which I used the research methods developed during the course of research project. It developed retrospectively rather than being systematically planned. In a similar way in which I sought to recruit research participants using theoretical sampling (see Chapter Six), the sequence in which I used the methods could not be systematically pre-planned. It could only happen once I had become involved with the fieldwork. The procedure evolved as I began an intensive period of fieldwork which lasted for two and a half years.

I began the procedure of using research methods late in 1994. I began by adopting the role of a participant observer on the Committee for the Employment of Disabled People (CEPD). After a number of weeks I extended this to field visits with the Employment Service Placement Assessment and Counselling Team (PACT) and Ability Development Centre (ADC). During this time I would attend all committee meetings and make occasional visits to PACT and a visit to the ADC. The purpose of these visits and observations was to familiarise myself with these organisations and their activities and to become involved in a network of people with whom I could begin to recruit further research participants. These organisations also gave me access to literature relevant to the research topic such as Employment Service documents and in-house research. This was the first method I used. I sustained this role for the next twenty-nine months through my continued participation on the CEPD through until early 1997. This participation with the CEPD was intermittent. I would attend each committee meeting and additional working group meetings. Each of these meetings would typically last one and a half to two and a half hours. Following these meetings I would make field notes on what was discussed. The time between each meeting gave me the chance to familiarise myself with the legislative issues discussed at committee meetings through reviewing the relevant literature. This literature, particularly the legislation itself, was often written in a turgid, dense style and I needed considerable time until I felt confident I was well-versed with it. In this way it was a continuous activity with considerable amounts of "homework" keeping me occupied throughout my involvement with the committee.

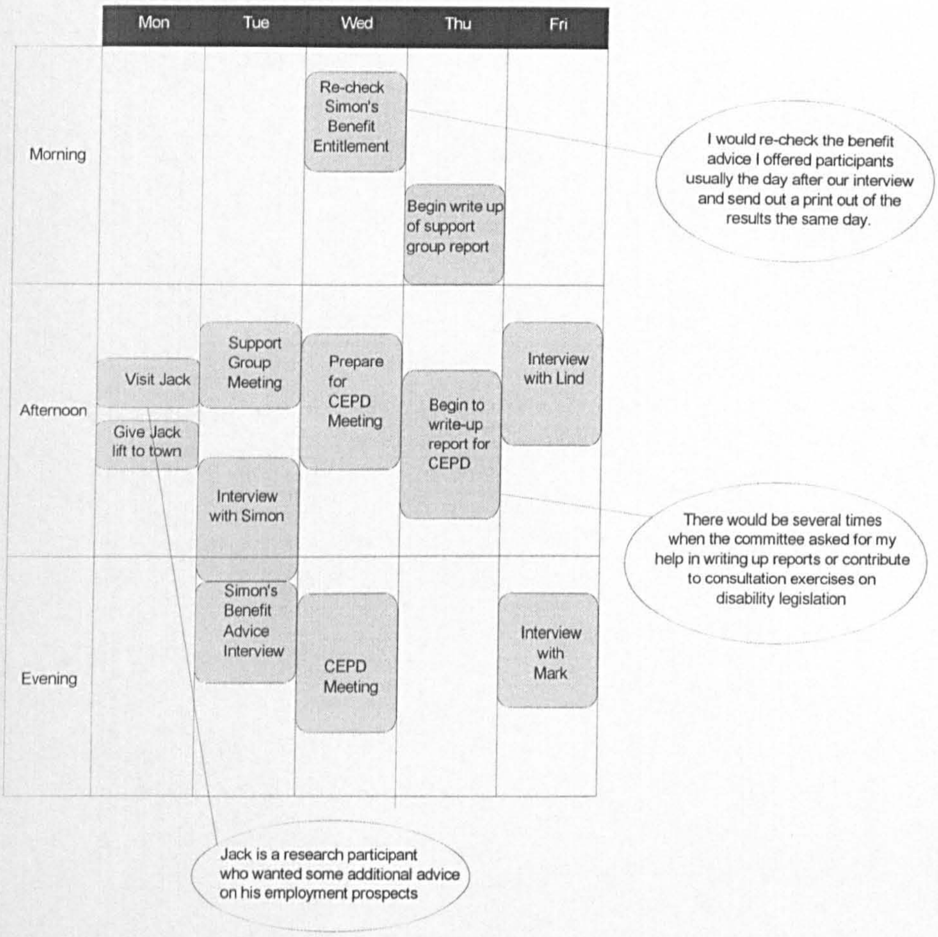
Over this twenty-nine months my participation in the CEPD grew considerably. I became more intimately involved in their activities and this led me fairly early in the research process to engage with research interventions. I describe this more fully in Chapter Eight. Simultaneously with my involvement in the CEPD, committee members and I began generating groups of research participants as I have described in Chapter Six. This was a period that began towards the end of 1994 and the early part of 1995. This process of recruitment involved sending out invitations, establishing contact and organising times to meet participants. This was a time when I began to use additional research methods (individual depth interviews, individual benefit advice interviews, telephone interviews and focus group interviews) to explore the research topic still further.

Soon into 1995, I began my first round of individual interviews, focus group interviews and telephone interviews. I subsequently continued to engage with these types of research methods through until late 1996, though intermittently. These were short periods of intense fieldwork. I conducted most of these interviews in the middle of 1995, middle of 1996 and late 1996. This involved a considerable amount of travelling across Central Region as I interviewed people in their own homes or at their place of work. This was in preference to participants having to travel out to the university where I worked. During this period I also began to offer participants benefit advice. Throughout this period I continued my participant observation of the CEPD. My involvement with the CEPD would also engage me more directly with other research methods. For example, my involvement in a CEPD workshop event late in 1996 led me to organise a series of focus groups with employers during this event (see Appendix 3[d]). Through using multiple methods simultaneously, the intensity of the fieldwork increased considerably. I spent a lot of my time between interviews transcribing and analysing the tapes I had made of during these interviews. The interviews were generating considerable amounts of research material. I began analysing the material at this early stage to inform me as to whether I needed to meet with more participants, and the nature of material that I felt I still needed to cover, or to cover in more detail (theoretical sampling – see Chapter Six). My time was also taken up researching several participants' benefit eligibility. I took on the responsibility of keeping up-to-date with benefit legislation and providing accurate benefit eligibility information to participants. This, as with my growing involvement with the CEPD, was an early form of intervention, where action and research were happening side by side (see Chapter Eight). I also took on the responsibility of maintaining contact with several research participants where participants asked for benefit advice over an extended period of time. This meant that I would maintain contact with several participants through letter writing and telephone calls and occasionally meeting face to face. This involved a greater level of commitment than for times when I met participants only on one occasion. Thus, over this period of time I began to commit time to maintaining contact with several participants. This also involved my becoming involved in participants lives in a wider range of roles. Some of these roles extended beyond the multiple roles I was occupying through the methods I was using such as interviewer, group facilitator, benefit advisor and participant observer. For some participants my sustained contact with them led to my occupying the role of advocate, confidant and, on at least one occasion, to the role of a friend. I describe this in more detail in Chapter Ten.

By 1996 I was involved in generating further groups of research participants and the number of individual depth interviews and benefit interviews increased. In one setting, my contact with a group of participants who worked in a training centre for unemployed people extended my use of methods to developing a series of support groups. I did not, at the time, anticipate this to be a method, rather it was my response to the discontent I found among the unemployed people at the training centre. Originally I had thought to begin a focus group at the centre for all those who wished to participate in the project. After the first meeting it became apparent that the focus group was not an appropriate means for participants to express their views. The discontent of participants towards their unemployed status led me to feel a more action orientated type of group was required. Like benefit advice interviews which I had originally used to return information back to participants but soon became a forum for participants to discuss the research topic with me, so too these support groups became a valuable source of research material. Engaging with participants in a support group also led to my engaging in additional field visits. Participants in these groups asked me to visit other organisations to collect information on their behalf. During this phase of the project I had developed multiple ways of interacting with participants. Further, this was leading me to contact additional people and organisations that I had not originally anticipated. Where I had expected to write to participants and telephone participants, I had not readily anticipated that I would begin writing, telephoning and visiting on behalf of participants. This particularly happened when I took on the role of an advocate.

In figure 7a, I have given an example of a typical diary entry for a week during the middle of 1996. I have used pseudonyms rather than real names to protect participant's anonymity. This diary entry very much typifies the way I would often be involved in several separate methods simultaneously. Through using these methods I become involved in additional activities. This process did not fit with the traditional process of method followed by analysis. For example, my participant observation of the CEPD led me to produce reports for the committee to help them in their consultative role on disability legislation. My involvement in benefit advice interviews led me to research benefit information and meant I had to spend time outside of interviews verifying participants' benefit eligibility. Further, I would organise transportation for some participants. It soon became difficult to map all of these activities and I have not room to describe them all in this thesis, though I describe in Chapter Ten what, for me, were the most important activities. Giving Jack a lift into town following our interview (figure 7a) is an example of an additional way I would become

Figure 7a A typical diary entry during my involvement in fieldwork

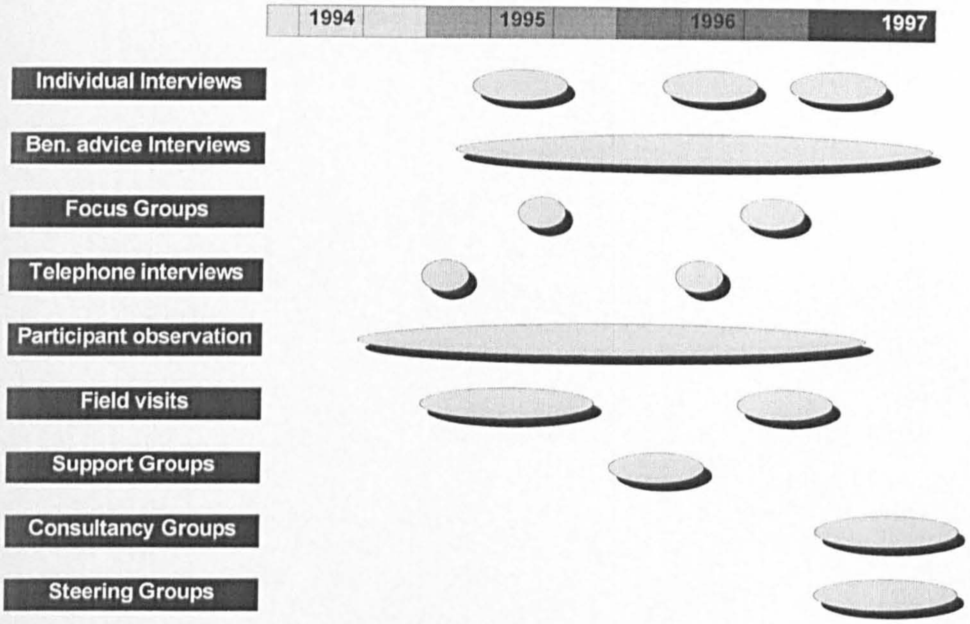


I would re-check the benefit advice I offered participants usually the day after our interview and send out a print out of the results the same day.

There would be several times when the committee asked for my help in writing up reports or contribute to consultation exercises on disability legislation

Jack is a research participant who wanted some additional advice on his employment prospects involved in a participant's life. This became part of the way I sustained contact with participants.

Figure 7b Time scale of using multiple methods in the research project



I have given a general picture of when I became involved in the fieldwork during the period late 1994 to the middle of 1997 and the type of methods I engaged with in Figure 7b. In overview, these included:

- thirty separate participant observations (one and a half to two and a half hours per meeting);
- thirty five individual depth interviews (one to two hours per interview);
- thirty six individual benefit advice interviews (forty minutes to one and a half hours per interview);
- nine focus groups (one to two hours per group meeting);
- seven telephone interviews (fifteen to thirty minutes per interview);
- five support groups (between one and two hours per meeting);
- thirteen consultancy group meetings (one to two hours per meeting); and,
- six steering group meetings (one and a half to two hours per meeting).

It was primarily through these methods that I came to construct my understanding. I describe this understanding through presenting the research material in Chapter Eight. This is, however, not the full story. The process of engaging in the methods, the nature of the research relationships that developed between participants and myself, and the context in which these relationships formed also had an impact on how I constructed this knowledge. I describe this more fully in Chapter Ten.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE RESEARCH PRODUCTS

In this Chapter I describe what I have learnt about disability and employment interviews. This understanding is a product of the research. It has covered the areas of disability and employment legislation, definitions of disability, unemployment, and employment interviews. I describe the understanding I have constructed under each in the first half of this chapter. There was a further type of product - the interventions I became involved in during the research process. This was a type of understanding of the research topic that I constructed through action. This process of understanding is known as *praxis*. I describe this in the second half of this chapter. Throughout this chapter I have used pseudonyms rather than the names of participants to protect their anonymity.

8.1 Understanding the research material

8.1.1 Employment and disability legislation

I gained a considerable amount of material on disability and employment legislation from disabled participants. Often this material was communicated with a great deal of passion. Participants were seeking to secure or retain employment and their experience of disability affected this. I think of these participants as *clients* of legislation as they were individuals whose circumstances were directly affected by legislation. Material also came from participants in employer organisations whose responsibility was the recruitment and retention of disabled and non disabled employees. I also include these participants under clients as their recruitment and retention activities were directly affected by legislation. Further, important material was shared by disabled and non disabled participants who were intricately involved in the formation of legislation. I refer to this material as coming from the *administrators* of legislation. The administrators were those who implemented and instigated legislation, and in this research, they were the representatives of the Employment Service (ES) and members of the Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities (CEPD). Material from these participants was distinct to that from clients.

I include this material, where confidentiality of the material allows me, towards the end of this section. Confidentiality was a particular issue here as these participants occupied roles in statutory organisations which limited the views they could express publicly. However, the categorisation between clients and administrators is blurred in the material below. Often administrators would talk as though in the shoes of clients, either through imagined experiences of the present or real experiences of the past, ie. imagining what it would be like to be disabled or unemployed. Further, clients would speak as though in the shoes of the administrators, ie. reflecting on the perspective of people working in statutory organisations administering on disability and employment issues..

8.1.1.1 Research material from clients of legislation

8.1.1.1.1 Awareness of legislation

In this material there was a distinction between existing legislation which I term *old legislation* and forthcoming legislation which I term *new legislation.* I begin by presenting the material on new legislation.

8.1.1.1.1.1 Awareness of new legislation

Participants who were presently working or had previously worked in the ES or a related area or were active in the disability movement were more likely to be aware of new disability legislation, namely the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Of the participants who were particularly aware of the new legislation, two figure prominently. They were Erica and Sandy, both of whom became involved in the intervention stage of the project. Sandy was active in local disability rights groups. Erica was studying at university where she was considering pursuing a career in disability research. She was also a university Student Disability Advisor. Sandy had kept informed over changes in legislation through his membership of disability rights groups, while Erica kept informed over new legislation through her university studies. Both had a quite detailed understanding of this legislation. As such, their views were particularly well informed. They therefore made many contributions to the research material on disability legislation and employment which I cover later in this section.

This awareness came across when I asked participants if they knew of the DDA. Equally, when I asked participants if they knew about the DDA, some participants showed no awareness or a confused awareness. This happened in the material that came from both employers and prospective or actual employees. Indeed, I found few research participants who were aware of the DDA both during and after the time of its passage onto the statute books. Throughout 1995 and 1996, when our discussions in individual and group interviews turned to the Quota Scheme and the Register of Disabled People (see Chapter Two), I would often share my knowledge of forthcoming legislative changes. Very rarely would research participants be aware such changes were underway and participants would be unsure of what was happening with legislation.

Some of this research material that described lack of awareness and resulting confusion figured particularly prominent in my analysis. As mentioned above, generally those who were aware of the incoming legislative changes were likely to have previously worked in either the ES or related area or were active in the disability movement. I did find exceptions to this. In an interview with Carla she told me she had no awareness of moves to put anti discrimination legislation on the statute books. She felt the Quota System and the Disability Register would be permanent legislative features in the field of disability and employment. She talked as though these were and would continue to be stable statutes in respect to disabled peoples' employment rights. She talked with surprise when I told her this legislation was to be replaced by the DDA. Her comments stand out to me as she was an employee in the ES (she was an Adjudication Officer), though she was not employed in the Disability Services division of the ES. Despite the Department of Employment taking an integral role in the development of the DDA, awareness of the legislation was not communicated through to Carla in her role in the Employment Service.

As with Carla, I was surprised at the material I gained from my interview with Frank. Frank was an employer representative who participated in an individual interview. Part of Frank's job was to interview people for car park attendant jobs in a Local Authority organisation. As such he was responsible for "designated employment" (see Chapter Two) appointments in that organisation. I asked him about his thoughts concerning legislative changes that were taking place. I felt it important to ask him about this as during our conversation he had not mentioned the new legislation and I was feeling increasingly concerned to check he was fully aware of the forthcoming changes. These changes would, after all, fundamentally alter the nature of his job - the repeal of the designated employment provisions. Like Carla, he looked at me with considerable surprise and told me he was unaware a change in legislation was to happen. Our conversation took place two and a half months before the DDA gained Royal Assent, ie. became law. I found it worrisome that in the material I gained from Frank's interview it was apparent he was unaware of new legislation in the field of disability and employment.

The surprise I felt from realising that people whose job was directly affected by changes in the legislation were not always aware of changes in that legislation directed my attention to others who were slipping, so to speak, through the net of awareness surrounding the new legislation. The size of gaps in this net appeared large from my conversations with disabled participants in particular. In much of the material disabled participants shared with me, awareness was absent. This was despite such participants being those who had much at stake in this legislation. This paucity of awareness particularly focused my attention on the lack of information disabled participants had concerning their new employment rights at that time. From this material, my understanding was that there was generally poor awareness of incoming disability and employment legislation and I felt it particularly worrisome that those directly affected by such legislation were unaware changes in the law were taking place.

8.1.1.1.2 Awareness of old legislation

In contrast to the generally poor level of awareness concerning the DDA, the material participants shared with me on past disability legislation was often quite clear and coherent. Alex was a participant who was disabled and who had recently secured employment, though he considered it to be unsatisfactory employment. Alex was able to tell me with a sense of precision and confidence that in an organisation he knew of, who employed five hundred people, they were required by law to employ at least fifteen disabled people (calculated under the 3 per cent Quota ruling). He cited this example as he found it shocking that the organisation only employed two disabled people. Here Alex was both confident and competent in offering detail on existing legislation at that time. He had a detailed level of awareness of past legislation. Overall, there was a similarly good level of awareness of past legislation across many disabled research participants. I created less confusion when I talked of past legislation with participants than I did when I talked of the forthcoming legislation.

PACT was an organisation that was often mentioned when participants talked about disability legislation. Participants experienced the Green Card scheme (the Disability

Register) through their contact with PACT. 'I'd never heard of the Green Card til I was told to go into PACT. The folk there told me how to register and that was that' (Ewen, focus group interview, April 1995). Ewen was a disabled person who was in employment. For Ewen, PACT had played a significant part in helping him into work after he was made redundant from his previous job. PACT also made him aware of disability legislation. Ewen told me that were it not for PACT he doubted he would have been aware of the Disability Register. The act of registering as disabled opened up greater levels of awareness of disability legislation for several participants. Participants would tell me of how the first time they were asked to register or the first time they entered a PACT office was the moment when they discovered their employment rights were protected under law. For Susan, for example, it was through PACT she found out about the Quota Scheme and the Disability Register. Susan had been fired from her previous employment after her employer found out she was disabled. At the time I met with Susan, she was in employment though she did not consider it satisfactory employment. Having discovered her employment rights she had more confidence that being fired because she was disabled would not happen again.

> Mary [from PACT] told me about registering. You know, it's this Quota thing ... it means.. well if you are disabled and you go for a job and the boss person says "no, we don't want you, you're disabled" well they can't do that. It's against the law. You could be the best worker in the world but no one wants to give you a start. Well, if they [employer] have no disabled folk there, they can't do that to you.
> (Susan, individual interview, September 1996).

What I learned from this material was that while disabled participants could find out about their employment rights after they felt they had been discriminated against, this would not always be the case. It could occur before any case of discrimination in employment was experienced. Though for Susan the problem (discrimination in employment) came before the solution (legislation on disabled people's employment rights), the solution could equally be identified before the problem. I learnt from this that participants could become proactively rather than reactively aware of legislation.

The research material on employment and disability legislation was further framed by a number of additional concerns. This material depicted legislation as either malign or benign. The way people felt about legislation became central in several pieces of research material.

8.1.1.1.2 Legislation as malign

When I informed participants of forthcoming changes in legislation of which they were previously unaware, some participants' reactions to hearing of such changes were quite negative. These discussions took place in the early half of 1995, a time when there was a great deal of uncertainty concerning the exact nature of what these changes would be. In this material legislation was described as malign. Even when I had a greater level of detail to offer on these changes and there was less uncertainty in our discussion of legislation (ie. when the DDA was becoming finalised), participants' reactions remained negative. These negative feelings would include those of suspicion and cynicism. For example, Sandy described the forthcoming legislative changes as 'a joke'. As I described earlier, he was particularly well informed on legislation as he was active in the disability movement. His views were to become more impassioned as we worked together in both consulting and steering groups during the intervention stage of the project. This material would become particularly emotive for Sandy and this became very apparent when we spoke together. He spoke to me of getting quite agitated when he talked to people about disabled peoples' rights. In Sandy's view, disabled peoples' rights were unprotected and he felt the situation was unlikely to change irrespective of the legislative activities on going at that time. These were quite similar to views expressed by Erica. She too was well informed on the legislation and she did not feel positively about the progress forthcoming legislation would make in securing civil rights for disabled people. Diane explained her reasons for holding such negative feelings towards this legislation. Diane was a disabled participant who had experience of being discriminated against when seeking employment. At the time of our interview she was in employment but seeking alternative employment. Diane felt anti discrimination legislation would only mean employers would become more skilful in disguising their discriminatory practices. Diane's negativity was towards employers. She felt they would always find a way around employment legislation. She talked of such legislation negatively as it would still allow employers to discriminate. She anticipated such legislation would always be malign as rather than discouraging discrimination against disabled people it would just force the hand of employers to be more divisive - cleverer in the way they discriminated. It would not make discrimination less widespread, but harder to prove. She felt that ironically it may help employers to discriminate by making them use ever more clever ways of creating barriers against disabled people securing employment.

> They can just say that they failed the interview. They'll cover themselves, because look at.. they interview probably about thirty people for one position. So the other twenty-nine able-bodied people aren't complaining that they've not got the job. So they're not going to listen to one disabled person, the company will just say that twenty-eight other able-bodied people haven't got the job.
> (Diane, individual interview, April 1995)

Here participants described legislation as tokenistic, as little more than a rhetoric or "hot air". In a focus group, Marion referred to the existence of an Equal Opportunities policy of a local employer organisation. She described how, after putting in thirty job applications for different jobs within the organisation, she only received one job interview. She felt her applications were being turned down because she described herself as disabled on the application form. She had included this information on the form because she felt she would stand an equal chance to other applicants, given the organisation's Equal Opportunities policy. However, after so many unsuccessful applications she was beginning to question their policy, she did not feel it was offering her equal opportunities in that organisation. She felt the organisation was benefiting from the image of being an equal opportunity employer which may have disguised their discriminatory and inequitable practices. Carla told a similar story of her perception of an employer organisation being two-faced. She felt they discriminated in practice while holding to Equal Opportunities in theory. Carla further indicated her negative feelings towards legislative changes on going at that time by telling me that it would not change the employment prospects of disabled people. In this material there was a counter intuitive link between the Equal Opportunities policy of employer organisations and the existence of barriers to employment for disabled people. This appeared to be at the heart of these negative feelings.

Turning to negative experiences of retaining employment, Diane told me her story of being threatened with dismissal. She was working in an organisation where she was the only disabled person, and where the quota for the firm was one. Despite this her employer was prepared to dismiss her, even though this was, she believed, against the law. Again, she felt that legislation was ineffectual and 'not worth the paper it was written on' (Diane, individual interview, April 1995). Ambivalence towards the efficacy of legislation was not bereft of emotion. Sandy, a participant who was well informed on legislative issues, talked with anger about the way employment legislation had been moved onto the statute books at the expense of more powerful civil rights legislation. This was material I later covered in my literature review (Chapter Two).

> ...the Bill was defeated by the Minister of that er, Nicholas Scott. That Bill was deliberately talked out. That Bill gave the same rights as coloured people or women, the Sex Discrimination Act and the Race Act. That was going to put it in statute for the same protection but, at the same time the Government didn't want it, or the employers didn't want it. So the employers pressurised, [saying] the policy would actually cost too much money. Which is no way, there's no evidence to prove that whatsoever, but it was defeated. But what the Government is doing now it sounds good on paper, but there's nothing legal behind it. It's all choices and options, so you can do it if you want, if you don't, don't bother. There's no legal muscle behind it.
>
> (Sandy, individual interview, April 1995)

For Sandy, the new legislation lacked, as he described it, any 'legal teeth'. He felt legislation required such teeth as without it no one would comply with it. He perceived legislation to be ineffectual. From this material I gained an understanding of why people viewed legislation as ineffectual. In material such as this, participants pointed to the impotence of legislation to redress discrimination. This material thought of legislation as rhetoric, useful for employers but useless for disabled employees. In this material legislation was felt to be hollow and without substance for disabled people.

In other material there was a strong link to how health and safety legislation at work could be used as a way of creating barriers to employment for disabled people.

> Now by law you have, you are required to tell people who are in charge that you are epileptic in case anything happens [Paul: aha] you know you have to tell them that, err very.. more often than not nothing happens but by law you are required to do it. [Paul: right] Yes, and on application forms, you know you put down your medical history and that and everything... "oh well, we see that you are epileptic here and well we'll be in touch" and that's it, end of story.
>
> (Lorna, focus group, April 1995)

In this way, Lorna made the connection between health and safety and disability legislation, pointing to this impeding disabled peoples' employment prospects. Disabled people would be forced into disclosing their disability that would itself become a barrier to their obtaining employment. Lorna took part in the focus group as a disabled person who was in employment but who had a lot of experience of being discriminated against by employers because she was disabled. Marion, a fellow member of the focus group reaffirmed this connection between legislation and disclosing disability. She looked at the issue from the perspective of the employer, stating that an employer must know about her/his workforce, that s/he must be informed about peoples' disabilities so that they can cover themselves in the case of an accident in the workplace. She talked of how non disclosure could result in insurance problems for employers. She held these negative views despite saying that she had not been discriminated against in employment due to being disabled.

When Lorna continued to explain why she felt so negatively towards disability and employment legislation she made the link between legislation and employment in a very concrete manner by discussing the role of employment application forms in the way discrimination would take place. She was not the only participant to make this link. Lorna cited the section on the application form asking about disability as requiring under law the applicant declare their disability to the employer. If you didn't tell your employer that you were disabled and your employer subsequently found out they would have grounds to dismiss you. Diane also related to me her concern over not declaring her disability to an employer. She believed if she did not disclose her disability to her employer, she would be liable for any accidents she was involved in at work, irrespective of the circumstances. If she were involved in an accident and her employer then found out she was disabled, this would mean she would be responsible for the accident and the employer would be within their rights to dismiss her. In such a situation, Diane believed the law dictated she would be the person in the wrong, and the employer would be the person in the right. The connection between not declaring a disability on an application form and the employer's right under health and safety laws to dismiss negligent employees was made strongly in this material and it led me to understand the ways that legislation could be used to further discriminatory practices. Legislation was being described less as a panacea for anti discrimination but more as a way employers could reinforce their discriminatory practices. In this type of material I began to understand how employment law could be protecting the employment interests of the employer more than the disabled employee.

The reasons for participants holding negative views towards disability legislation became increasingly sophisticated and increasingly layered with additional concerns.

> I wouldn't like to get a job just cos I'm disabled, just to fill a quota or something. I would rather do it through my own steam. If it had been supported [employment] I would have went along with it just to get my foot in the door but I wanted open employment just so I could prove to myself that I could actually do something by myself. I don't need, well I do need help once I'm in but at least I can go for the interview myself. I don't just get it without an interview, I have to be treated like everyone else.
>
> (Sandy, individual interview, April 1995)

Here Sandy describes legislation as intimately connected with perceptions of the presence or absence of abilities. Sandy's negative feelings towards legislation are situated in what he saw as the link between legislation and the absence of abilities of disabled people. Carla was negative towards legislation in a similar vein. Focusing on the Quota Scheme, she talked of her loss of confidence in her own skills and abilities resulting from how legislation had affected her. She wished to get a job on merit and felt the scheme impeded her from doing this. She felt an employer would just take on a disabled applicant to meet a quota rather than out of any real desire to hire on the basis of an individual's merit.

> There is a bit, I mean, erm, that is the bit, where I think that maybe I got it because I have got a disability. [Paul: aha] I didnae get it myself, er, I think that what I'm proving now that I am a good enough worker [Paul: aha] but at the time I wondered if I got it because they were needing a quota of.. [Paul: right] so that is probably where my confidence.. did not come up to the fore.
>
> (Carla, individual interview, June 1995)

In a later benefit advice interview she continued to develop this material:

> ...so one part of you thinks, that well, you did get it on your merits, because you performed in the interview, and you were a capable worker, which you demonstrated to them. But there is also a niggling part which thinks, well, they have got to get 'x' amount of disabled people.
>
> (Carla, benefit advice interview, July 1995)

In this sense, legislation was felt to be damaging to the self-esteem and self perception of disabled employees through the link made between the legislation and an absence of abilities. Another example is of Diane who spoke of her suspicion of getting a job after getting a guaranteed interview due to her disability. Her suspicion was that she had been taken on to keep the employer's Quota targets up. For her, this removed any sense she obtained the job on merit and left her feeling dissatisfied. She viewed existing legislation, at that time, cynically. She felt that registering as disabled was more in the interests of an employer than in the interests of the disabled employee. Through registering as disabled she saw herself as helping an employer out who was not up to Quota. She saw little benefit for herself. This material was framed in her experience of registering as disabled to retain rather than attain work. Her employer asked her to register as a disabled employee so he could meet his Quota, rather than seek to employ another disabled employee. As with the material connecting job application forms with the law, legislation was felt to protect employers rather than disabled employees. Further, disabled participants felt it removed meritocratic processes in the employer's hiring practices ie. decisions were based on something other than the merit of the applicant.

The power of the material that linked negative feelings to legislation was made in a particularly direct way by Diane and John. This moved beyond employment issues but highlighted how legislation that was meant to protect the rights of disabled people would be used to discriminate against them. Here, the negative feelings arose through discussing the cost of living. Diane talked of how registering as disabled had affected her insurance premium for her car. Her premium had been raised once she had told the insurance company she was registered as disabled. In the case of John, he too found that after registering disabled the insurance premium on his car was increased. These insurance companies were making blanket increases on the insurance premiums of their disabled clients. Presumably these companies believed having a disability increased risk. Legislation intended to protect employment rights of disabled people was causing a direct loss in income in some disabled peoples' lives and thus became a focus of discontentment.

8.1.1.1.3 Legislation as benign

There was recognition on the part of some disabled participants of the need for legislation to counter the discrimination they experienced in employment. Legislation was seen as something that would protect the interests of disabled people in the face of such discrimination. Here participants felt more positively towards legislation. Erica and Sandy, though having negative views on past and present legislation, saw the existence of laws against discrimination, however ineffectual, as valuable. Both were waiting, following the DDA gaining Royal Assent, for the first cases to be made against discriminating employers. This material took a forward looking perspective on legislation - legislation was seen as proactive. However, the material also contained a backward perspective - ie. penalising employers for past acts of discrimination. Indeed, there was a sense of eager anticipation after the enactment of the DDA to see some employer organisations 'come a cropper' under the new law. In this sense, legislation was referred to as a tool of retribution. Some participants hoped employer organisations would be taken to court under the new law so that the DDA would become a deterrent to discrimination. It was seen as a vehicle for making employers fearful of discriminating. Legislation was being described as a 'big stick' with which to get employers to open employment opportunities to disabled people.

> You need something to get them to stop [discriminating].. you know. There just has to be something like laws and that to stop employers discriminating against us. At the minute they can get away with it, it doesn't matter to them. What we need is to get them worried, get them scared.. take them to court and sue the pants off them.
> (John, individual interview, August 1996)

Getting the Green Card was seen by some disabled participants as a boost to their job prospects. It was most often the pivotal focus of our conversations on legislation. As with material that related to awareness of legislation, PACT became an important theme. Here it was associated with removing barriers to employment for disabled people.

In material that linked legislation with positive feelings, the labour market was often discussed. In particular, issues concerning work colleagues, working conditions and job type became central. For example, Lorna described to me her experiences of working in a factory. She described how the working conditions were far from ideal and that she finally fell into desperation when she became marginalised from her fellow workers after they had found out she had epilepsy. She reflected with considerable warmth on the 'kindness' of a mechanic in the factory. One day, as on most days, she was sitting on her own in the canteen. Her work colleagues were shunning her. A mechanic was on duty and noticed her sitting alone. He recognised her and went over to ask what was wrong.

> I said "I know you," and he says, "I know you too." He says "what are you doing working in a place like this.. and why are you sitting there by yourself?" And I says to him. He says, "get out of here and get on the phone to the Disablement Officer [PACT]," he says, "at the buru" [ES]. He says "you have epilepsy don't you," and I says "aye." He says "are you registered disabled?" I says "no." "Get on the phone," he says, "I'll do it for you," and it was through that mechanic and within two weeks I was working in Parkers [sheltered employment].
> (Lorna, individual interview, May 1995)

In this way legislation (the Disability Register) was seen by Lorna and others as a passport to employment, in this case sheltered employment (see Chapter Two) through the help of PACT. In a similar vein, Alex referred to some jobs as 'Green Card' jobs. He was referring to the designated employment provision such as car park attendant jobs. While this could be taken as a derogatory term for many of the low-skilled, low-paid jobs available, Alex framed the term as referring to the fact that there were jobs guaranteed for disabled people. He felt this was valuable in what he felt to be an extremely hostile labour market. Further, the Guarantee Interview Scheme (GIS) was seen as helpful by Carla as she recognised the fierce competition for jobs in the labour market. For her it was the only means by which she could be sure of actually meeting an employer and have the opportunity to 'sell herself'.

In this harsh labour market legislation was viewed positively. It was seen by some as the only way a disabled person would have the prospect of getting a job. This led me to understand how the hostility of the labour market was a factor that led to disability and employment legislation being viewed positively by disabled people.

The labour market became an important theme throughout the research material. This particularly became clear to me when, on leaving the field at the end of the research project, I was jokingly asked by one participant if I wanted to borrow his Green Card. He said it might help me find a job when the research came to an end. Though said with humour, it gave lie to a perception of the significance of the card (ie. of being registered as disabled) and the value placed on it by some disabled participants in this project. Thus, some participants saw the Green Card as important to their finding work in the future. Carla commented 'it seems a bit silly that a green bit of paper can get you a job but it does' (Carla, individual interview, May 1995). It was discussed in a way that framed it as compensation for disabled peoples' marginalisation from an increasingly hostile labour market.

> No one stands a chance out there, ken. [Paul: aha] There's so many folk chasing the same jobs, you wouldn't stand a chance if you're able bodied.. if you've disabled you stand even less of a chance. See with the Green Card, at least your chances get improved a bit, like things aren't quite so grim as what they are.
>
> (Stuart, focus group, March 1996)

8.1.1.2 Research material from administrators

8.1.1.2.1 Legislation as malign

The material provided by these administrators often regarded disability legislation and employer organisations negatively. For example, I was reminded by the CEPD of the fact the employer in Central Region who had the best record for employing disabled people only had attained 1 per cent quota. In discussions at CEPD committee meetings, dialogue was often thick with concerns for more effective employment rights legislation for disabled people. Through my interaction with the CEPD and ES staff, the material I gathered often focused on the inefficacy of the existing legislation. There was a sharp awareness that existing legislation was not protecting the employment rights of disabled people. These themes were evident throughout the field notes I made during committee meetings.

> Betty said that things were most effective when employers *wanted* to employ disabled people and Quota has done nothing to change that. She said that even if employers *have* to employ disabled people, they won't unless they *want* to. She said Quota did not lead employers to want to employ disabled people. ...Both Betty and Ray stated quite strongly that the Quota Scheme was useless and that it did nothing to change the employment prospects for disabled people.
> (CEPD, participant observation, February 1995)

Betty was a non disabled employer representative and Ray was a disabled employee representative on the committee. There were parallels here with the material I gained from my discussions with Sandy, which I mentioned in the previous section on negativity towards legislation.

Negative feelings were less widespread concerning new legislation but still apparent. As members of the CEPD and civil servants working in the ES were part of statutory organisations, criticism against government legislation was more muted than for participants who did not occupy these statutory roles. Indeed, both organisations were required to be supportive of the new legislation. These participants' statutory roles precluded their making any public criticism of Government policy. However, there were areas of concern addressed by both organisations. I gained this material during the consultation period on the DDA. This period encouraged both organisations to critically reflect on the DDA and as such was an extremely fortunate time to gather research material on disability legislation.

Specifically, there was concern over a provision in the DDA that effectively meant employer organisations of fewer than twenty employees were exempt from the Act. As well as reducing the impact of legislation, it was seen as an unnecessary restriction to the legislation. It was felt that the 'reasonable adjustment' provision of the Act would be used pragmatically to free smaller employer organisations from having to make the type of accommodation that would be expected of larger organisations. A concern was aired that fewer employer organisations would be made aware of the "spirit of the law" with this provision in place. For employers with fewer than twenty employees there would be little reason to familiarise themselves with the employment provisions of the legislation as it would not apply to their organisation. This was felt to severely curtail any benefit disability anti discrimination legislation would have in raising public awareness over the employment rights of disabled people. This concern was heightened as legislation was felt to have a critical role in raising awareness.

> Peter felt employers were too scared to ask questions about disability and that this was a big problem in the field as employer organisations considerably lacked information on and awareness of disability issues. Ray added that legislation should be filling in the gap, it should be informing employer organisations but what it might end up doing is make employers even more frightened to ask questions about disability. He felt smaller employers would just be relieved that they didn't have to think of these issues and this was a retrogressive step. He said that if the UK was a 'nation of small shopkeepers', then these shops would be keeping disabled people out of employment.
>
> (CEPD, participant observation, May 1995)

Peter was a non disabled employer representative on the committee. As with previous material from clients of legislation, awareness was a central issue.

During the consultation period on the DDA, discussion among CEPD members centred around concerns over the lack of substance to the Act and to the Guidance documents and Code of Practice that accompanied the Act. There was much talk and an increasing sense of uncertainty over the meaning and efficacy of the new legislation.

> Moira told me of how she felt in a dilemma, having to market material [the Government's Code of Practice] which she felt to be substandard and lacking in the basic type of information employers would need if they were to avoid discriminating against disabled people. She said she found the information and general messages being sent out to employers asked more questions than it answered. She commented on how 'guidance documents' being issued by the Government were not living up to their name.
>
> (PACT, field visit, January 1996)

Moira was Disability Employment Advisor in PACT. Participants situated either in PACT or the CEPD had access to rich, personal sources of information on disability and employment issues from clients with whom the former worked and the latter "represented". The material they shared with me pointed to the paucity of information provided under the new legislation and a failure to use pre-existing sources of information. For example, inadequate practical advice in the Government's Code of Practice and poorly articulated definitions of disability offered to employers was of considerable concern to CEPD members.

8.1.1.2.2 Legislation as benign

There was material from these participants where legislation was viewed more positively. This material centred on the greater awareness that legislation was creating among some quarters of the labour market in respect to disability discrimination. Both the CEPD and PACT were enjoying a higher level of interest from external organisations, mainly the larger employer organisations in the region. This was discussed in connection to the paucity of information surrounding the legislation. Thus, the effect of this lack of information was being felt positively by these organisation. Both found their level of contact with some employers increased, as these employers would turn to them for more information concerning the forthcoming legislative changes. This helped the CEPD's recruitment of employer representatives to attend their events and facilitated PACT's access to employer organisations. In effect this linked failings in the legislative process with positive effects for PACT and the CEPD. The lack of information circulating in the field was creating a need for these two organisations in the "disability marketplace".

8.1.1.3 Summary

To summarise some of the key features of material on legislation, the theme that dominated throughout was that of awareness. Awareness was a conspicuous theme through its absence. There was generally a poor awareness of the DDA. Further, health and safety legislation was of particular concern to disabled participants. This legislation was viewed as constructed to protect the interests of employers and parallels were made with disability legislation. Material that described legislation more positively often occurred when participants reflected on the labour market in general. Legislation was seen as important in the context of a harsh and highly competitive labour market. Finally, the perceived faults in legislation were seen as increasing the profile and the market demand for the services of the administrator's own organisations (PACT and CEPD).

8.1.2 Definitions of disability

Material containing the theme of defining disability was central to the whole research process. Such material dominated discussions with participants and I was rarely in a research setting where such material was not explored. This material was to provide a dramatic turn in both the content and the direction of the research project as a whole, and would take a key role in the intervention stage of the project in particular. Towards the end of this section, I frame this material in the context of the Social and Medical Models of disability which I have described in Chapter Two. Issues concerning the visibility of, information on, and feelings towards disability were all tied to how disability was defined. Also *ability* was central to discussing *dis-ability*. I will explain each through contextualising them back into the research material.

8.1.2.1 Disclosing disability

Both disabled and non disabled participants talked of the issue of disclosing a disability. This was an issue when an impairment was hidden, or when a disabled person engaged in a non face-to-face interaction. An example of a non visible impairment would be epilepsy and a non face-to-face interaction would be a telephone call. When an impairment was non visible, a dilemma was often faced by disabled participants whether to disclose their disability. Disclosure was felt to be problematic for several disabled people who participated in this research. This concern with disclosure would occur in material from many differing contexts such as during the process of claiming for welfare benefits, during the employment selection process (job application forms and job interviews), during general day-to-day social interactions, and further during involvement in this research project itself. I explore material concerning issues of disclosure in the employment interview later in this chapter. Here I wish to deal with material on participants' disclosure of their disability in some of these other settings.

Disabled participants discussed the level at which they were prepared to disclose the nature of their disability during claims for welfare benefits, in particular disability benefits. The issue was not whether to disclose the status of being disabled but whether to disclose the extent this disability affected their day-to-day activities. Applying for disability benefits entailed some research participants seeking advice and support from their doctor. Disabled participants talked of how during these medical interviews they typically would describe themselves as coping rather well even if they were actually experiencing particular difficulties. Some research participants described their doctor as being ignorant about the level of difficulty they were experiencing because of this. For example, when asked if a participant had difficulty walking, a participant might reply they were able to get around reasonably well, even if this was not the case. I found this not only in my discussions with disabled participants, but also from my discussion with people working in the field of disability welfare benefits. The central concern was over how visible a disabled person would make their disability through the level of information they would disclose.

The advisors I spoke with about disability benefits described how considerable numbers of people who were eligible for disability benefits were not receiving the money they were entitled to because they were making light of the difficulties they were experiencing. They would make light of such difficulties when discussing their disability both with their doctors and with Benefit Agency staff. The advisors talked of how a claimant was more likely to fill in a benefit claim form by referring to the level of difficulty they experienced on a 'good day' rather than on a 'bad day'. This was felt to be one of the main barriers they faced as advisors in supporting disabled peoples' claims for benefits. Part of their work, as they described it, was to sit with disabled clients and help them fill in disability benefits claim forms, correcting the client each time s/he appeared to belittle the true extent of the difficulty they were experiencing due to their disability. The information disabled people presented would create difficulties for advisors who needed to identify the absence of ability and it was upon this that disability welfare benefits pivoted.

The issue of disclosure was to become a strong theme throughout much of the material I gained during the research process as I was also advising disabled participants on their benefit eligibility. For example, when confronted with the following question (Figure 8a) in a benefit advice interview with Alex, he told me he did not consider he had too much difficulty in walking. He answered the questions with a firm 'NO', without really having to think about it. Though he added that sometimes he needed to use a stick, he qualified this by saying he usually got by okay. Later in the interview the benefit programme asked for details of his Council Tax bill. He had the details upstairs so he got up to fetch them. It took him almost ten minutes to get up and down the single flight of stairs in his house. I commented the stairs appeared to cause him more difficulty than I would have expected by the way he had answered the question

Do any of the following apply to you:-

- you are unable to walk;
- you are virtually unable to walk without severe discomfort;
- the exertion required to walk could result in a serious deterioration; in your health, or be a danger to your life.

Only answer yes if one of the above has applied for the past three months and is likely to apply for the next six.

Figure 8a Benefit Advice question

related to difficulties he had walking. He then told me he was just having 'a bad day' and it was probably because he had been sitting for a little too long. As we began to explore this issue in more depth, he told me that talking about the level of difficulty he was experiencing on a bad day as opposed to on a good day was 'looking on the negative side of things'. He felt he should 'make the best of things' and concentrate on difficulties he experienced on a good day when answering such questions. He presented information that would highlight the presence rather than the absence of ability and in terms of disability benefit entitlement would make his disability less visible.

Similarly during a benefit advice interview when Mary was posed with the following question (Figure 8b) on the benefit programme, she confidently answered 'no'. After I questioned her more on this to check her answer (the answer to the question was pivotal in deciding whether she was eligible for the care component of Disability Living Allowance that she was seeking to claim) she replied that she relied on her son to get her up during the night when she needed to go to the bathroom and also to get her up in the mornings. Without his help she said that she would effectively have been confined to her bed. These were very real difficulties she was experiencing, but the way she discussed this passed over the level of difficulty she was experiencing and the level of support she relied on from her family. When I asked if that was how she would have answered Benefit Agency staff or her doctor, she said that she felt likely to describe her disability as having less of an impact on her daily living than it actually was, even though in this case her doctor had told her 'you should never say that you're okay some days' (Mary, benefit advice interview, April 1995). As with Alex, she expressed her concern of not dwelling on her "problems". This was despite the fact she was seeking a claim that focused on compensating her for these "problems".

During the night in the last three months have you required and still require:-

- Help from another person in connection with your bodily functions; or
- The presence of another person (awake for a prolonged period or at frequent intervals) to watch over you in order to avoid danger to yourself or others.

Figure 8b Benefit Advice question

Harry also felt he did not want to make his difficulties sound 'worse than they really were'. He described to me how he didn't wish to be seen as a 'malingerer'. He talked about how he would always make light of the difficulties his disability created for him in his day-to-day activities. As with many disabled participants, the level of difficulty he experienced fluctuated from day to day. Here he related how disclosing that he was disabled was problematic. Some days he could walk unaided, but on others he needed to use a stick. He felt the stick made him look a malingerer as he was also seen without the stick. He therefore tried to walk without his stick, even when it was painful for him to do so. As the level of difficulty he experienced fluctuated, on some days he was non disabled and on others he was disabled. By walking aided by a stick on some days and walking unaided on others he felt he would be perceived by others as making his inabilities more visible than they actually were. Rather than suffer this contradiction, Harry chose to endure the physical pain himself rather than the social derision he anticipated from others. The definition of being disabled, as felt by Harry and his perception of how it was felt by others, was that you could only be disabled full-time, not part time. Harry couldn't use his aid (his walking stick) because this would have identified him as disabled, when he was only 'part time disabled'. He felt people would see him as pretending to be disabled when in fact he was not.

More generally, participants talked of the different situations they faced that either led them to disclose their disability or to seek to hide their disability. This was contained in material provided both by participants whose impairments were non visible and participants whose impairments were more visible. The perceptions of others towards a person's disability were a central issue in the material Harry shared with me. This issue joined with similar issues in other participants' material and informed my understanding of stigma.

8.1.2.2 Stigma

Stigma would make it problematic for some disabled participants, particularly those whose impairment was related to mental health, to disclose their disability both to myself in individual interviews and to others in group interviews. For example, Jack who was to become a valuable member of the steering group, did not wish to disclose his impairment to fellow steering group members (and he was never asked to do so). 'People might get the wrong idea about me, you know.. [Paul: aha] people tend to keep their distance, they don't know how to take you. It's better all round not to tell folk... it's easier all round' (Jack, pre steering group meeting, February 1997).

The theme of stigma became an integral part of the informational issues surrounding disability, being a foundation to other people's knowledge of disability and how disability was often thus defined. The concern not to disclose a disability and/or to make light of the difficulties research participants were experiencing often connected to the negative stereotyping or stigma surrounding disability.

In a focus group, Lorna referred to the negative attitudes of others towards her epilepsy as due to 'sheer ignorance'. She experienced these attitudes when she was working in a health care setting. This was a setting where informational issues of disability were critical to the support service offered to disabled "clients". Her work and the work of her colleagues were informed by intricate medical knowledge of impairments.

> These are people who should have known better... I mean you'd have thought they of all people would have been understanding, but oh no. You could even see it in the faces of the doctors.. DOCTORS for Christ sake! They would treat you like a leper. They just didn't want to know you, they would keep their distance. They were a bunch of bigots if you think about it.
>
> (Lorna, individual interview, May 1995)

Stigma was strongly linked to how others defined a disability, this definition being informed by negative social perceptions and stereotypes. The poignancy for Lorna was that this link between stigma and defining disability held even for those she thought should have been more informed on the nature of disability.

This poignancy was also characteristic to how participants described the way *insiders* rather than *outsiders* viewed disability. By insiders I refer to either disabled people themselves or those working in the disability field. By outsiders I refer to non disabled people and/or people with little direct experience of disability. Participants would describe how some disabled people often held stigmatising attitudes towards fellow disabled people. Rachel talked of a work colleague in a sheltered workshop as not classing herself disabled, despite having a Green Card, because she did not want to associate herself with the *other* disabled people in the workshop. She dissociated herself from others in the workshop because she felt they were *really* disabled whereas she was not - they were less able and had 'more things wrong with them'. Having identified other employees in the workshop as less able and more disabled, Rachel's work colleague then distanced herself from them and associated negativity with their identity. Though everyone in the sheltered workshop was there because they were classed as disabled, Rachel's work colleague used distinctions between levels of ability to class herself apart from her disabled colleagues, perhaps understandably pushing herself away from a stigmatised label. Similarly, Jack was ostracised by his fellow work colleagues due to the nature of his disability, despite the workplace being a "disabled factory" - a work environment where all those on the shop floor were disabled.

This was also evident in Diane's material. Diane commented that people with Down's syndrome were 'really disabled', presumably meaning that some disabled people were not 'really disabled'. Here was a strong distinction being made between different types of disabled people. The distinction was drawn according to the level of an individual's ability or functioning. In this sense it was a type of relative disability, a participant might identify themselves as less disabled or non disabled if they could view others as more disabled. It seemed that in much of this material participants were seeking to avoid a stigmatised label. By dissociating oneself from disability one dissociates oneself from the stigma.

Material I gained from input by Lois to a focus group brought these issues into the open. Lois was a Disability Employment Advisor in PACT and the focus group was one held at a CEPD employer workshop. I cite her input to the focus group at length as she began to disclose quite a personal account of why she held the view she expressed.

> I think that it is unfortunately often looked on that when you are talking about disabilities, this age-old thing that we are talking about people in wheelchairs, or blind or mental health, it is not the case. You may have somebody, as I have said, who is diabetic, there may be nothing stopping them working in any industry, but they are still being given prejudice. Nocturnal epilepsy where they never take a fit apart from when they are asleep is different from somebody who is taking a lot of Grand Mal seizures during the day, and that we have all different types of people. And I do feel that they emphasise the more severe disabilities, because it is more what employers are concerned about. We could be sending someone along to you who, as I have said, with varicose veins, or someone who has got a skin infection. ...leave your mind open to the fact that we have all different types of people, all different types of health problems. I am registered disabled. I am not.. I would... obviously not got a label in my head saying I am registered disabled, right. But people presume that if you are registered disabled, then that means that I should be in a wheelchair, or whatever else, I am not. And, it is that kind of prejudice that I feel we need to get over to, and I do sometimes feel that there is too much emphasis on the wheelchairs and people who are totally blind.
>
> (Lois, focus group, October 1996)

Lois seeks to show that not all disabilities mean unemployability. However, through focusing on different types of disability in order to attack the myth of disability, Lois adopts a perspective that sees some disabled people as more disabled than others and establishes a hierarchy between different people with different types of disability. It attacks prejudice, but only against those who are identified as disabled but whom she feels are really non disabled. It does not attack prejudice against wheelchair users, but attacks that same prejudice being attached to people with 'lesser disabilities'. I understood this material as moving the focus of the stigma within the disabled population rather than removing it. Such material feels poignant to me as it links to how stigma was directed against disabled people by insiders rather than outsiders - disabled people stigmatising fellow disabled people.

8.1.2.3 Disability and health

Focusing on abilities became important in material that focused on the relationship between disability and health. Ewen commented that he was disabled but he was also one of the healthiest people that you could know. 'I may have a Green Card, but I've still got my health. I've never had a day off sick in my life' (Ewen, focus group, April 1995). Diane also was keen that I knew of her excellent work record, where she had hardly taken a day off sick in her working life since she left school at fifteen. This was some twenty years of continuous employment, all of which time she had been disabled. Further, Lorna made it clear to me during a focus group discussion that even though she was disabled, she was required to take a medical test to check if she was fit to work in a sheltered workshop. My understanding was that participants were keen to show that disability did not equate with poor health. The perception by employers that it did was a particular bone of contention for some participants. An example of this was the feelings expressed by Diane. She was upset at having to be on a year's health probation at her place of work. She was placed on a year's health probation when she first started work with her new employer. She pointed out to me that: '...they are not doing a health check on someone who's not disabled, they're not looking at how many sickies they're taking unless it causes a problem' (Diane, individual interview, April 1995). Her probationary year meant she would not be allowed to take more than six days sick leave in six months. If she took more than this she would either be put on another year's probation or she would be fired. She saw this as conflicting with her employer's Equal Opportunities policy. Her reaction to this was to 'not take a day sick because I'm proving a point' (Diane, individual interview, April 1995). This was a common reaction among participants. There was a continuous emphasis in such material on having to prove yourself - to prove that despite being disabled, you were not "sick".

8.1.2.4 The fluctuation of disability

Defining disability was more complex when there was a transitory nature to the disability. Here disabled participants talked of living in a state of flux, swinging from a state of being able to being disabled. This would often sit uneasily against a definition of disability which disabled participants would describe as perceived by others to be static and stable. This issue was heightened when the focus was on psychiatric disabilities. For example, during a CEPD meeting the definition of mental illness was couched in a considerable amount of uncertainty. Members were cautious over how it should be defined. There was recognition that such disabilities were not easy to "pin down" and that there was more that was different than common among people with disabilities, even among those with the same "diagnosis". As with all disabilities, though highlighted with psychiatric disabilities, the material Jack shared with me on his disability heightened my understanding of the complexity of defining someone as disabled.

> When it's bad it's like.. I can't even go out of the house. I couldn't walk down the street even. [Paul: aha] It's like everything is about me. Like an advert on the side of a lorry or a building.. I'd think it had a message for me [Paul: right].. the paranoia, you ken? But that doesn't happen very often.. it's been months since the last time. I'm doing pretty okay at the minute.
>
> (Jack, individual interview, June 1996)

These issues were similarly reflected in Marion's material. Marion, participating in a focus group, also talked of the transitory nature of her disability. In particular, she focused on the lack of predictability over her epilepsy. She saw medication as a controlling agent, but even that could not fully guarantee that she would not have a Grand Mal seizure at any moment. Disability was much more complex than having a particular impairment. From this material I understood disability as a far more fluid, transitory experience and this did not sit comfortably with the more common understanding of disability as a permanent and static phenomenon.

8.1.2.5 Linking definitions of disability and disability legislation

In this section I explore material that linked defining disability with disability legislation. This link was strong when participant discussed disability benefits legislation. Through drawing upon how disability is defined in relation to legislation, there was an intricate relationship between how participants defined themselves as disabled and their perception of legislation.

In a focus group conversation Lorna remarked at how people in the Benefits Agency were telling her she was fit to work, while employers were giving her the message she was not fit to work. She was left feeling somewhere in between.

> You don't know where you stand. They [employer] told me to sign off sick. My boss says there's no way I could work but when I tried to sign on the sick they says "Oh no, there's nothing wrong with you, you should be out there working". It is a bit difficult to get your head round that ain't it?
>
> (Lorna, benefit advice interview, May 1995)

Similarly, issues concerning disability benefits legislation, defining disability and inability to work were made by Sandy. During an individual interview Sandy told me that he had the option to claim Severe Disablement Allowance, but turned it down:

> **Sandy**
> ...I could just have done nothing and claimed Severe Disablement Allowance. But my brain was kept active by going out looking rather than giving up.
> **Paul**
> So you claimed Severe Disability Allowance?
> **Sandy**
> I could have but if I'd done that then I couldn't work. If you claim that you're declaring yourself unfit for work. I'm not unfit for work so I didn't think it was right that I claimed for something that I didn't think I needed.
>
> (Sandy, individual interview, April 1995)

Sandy rejected this benefit as he talked of how it would have effectively defined him as unemployable. This all or nothing definition of disability operationalised by benefits legislation (if you are eligible for benefits you are incapable of work and if you are capable of work you are ineligible for benefits) was further made by other participants. Carla, however, connected to this slightly differently. During an individual interview she told me her belief that employment was something to keep disabled people off welfare benefits and that Government preferred disabled people to work rather than claim disability benefits. Here the definition of disability linked to benefits legislation and the more general Government's "definition" of disability conflicted. The former equated with unemployability as claimants would not be working. However, she talked of the Government wanting to get disabled people into work. Here disability was equated with employability. Carla went on to explore the distinction between employable disabled people and unemployable disabled people. She described people who were eligible for disability benefits as people who were severely disabled. However, she also felt there was an element of luck in being defined as disabled so as to get onto these benefits.

> ...you are going to have to have legs off and everything now, it is going to be really, really hard to keep it... I mean people get it for their nerves, I know of somebody who has been on it for years because she's got, well for her nerves [Paul: aha] but most people you have got to have something really drastically wrong with you [Paul: right] or heart trouble or whatever. [Paul: aha] I think you are just lucky or you are just no lucky whether you manage to get it or not. [Paul: aha]
> (Carla, individual interview, May 1995)

Carla conceded her impressions were based on conjecture, and that she had not experienced claiming disability benefits herself. However, she did recount the advice offered to her by her doctor when she mentioned to him that she was considering applying for disability benefit. His reply was that she would not qualify as you would have to have 'legs off and things to get a disability'. She would use the phrase 'arms and legs off' several times to denote what she felt legislation meant by disability. This material was set in the context of Carla's concerns over tighter regulations coming into disability benefits regulations, namely the Incapacity Benefit (ICB). As I mentioned in the section on awareness of disability legislation, Carla worked for the ES. Though she was not well informed on civil rights legislation, she was well informed on new disability benefits legislation. She expected many disabled people to be taken off disability benefits as a result of ICB and to be made to look for work. She anticipated she would be involved in many such cases in her duties working for the ES as an Adjudication Officer.

Carla was not alone in her concerns over the new ICB and its new tighter definition of disability. 'I know loads of people in Hometown who go on Invalidity Benefit just so they get money. But I think now it's going to be punishing people that are really needing the money, that are sick' (Diane, individual interview, April 1995). During a CEPD meeting Anne voiced her concern over the definition of disability that was to be used in the forthcoming ICB. Anne was the manager at PACT.

> Anne then began to talk about the forthcoming ICB that was due to come in on April 1st as a replacement for IVB [Invalidity Benefit]. She was concerned about the definition of incapacity that was going to be adopted, particularly in relation to

> the implications for PACT. She felt if the definition was to only include people who were unable to perform *any* type of work, and that people who were fit for *some* type of work, whatever that might be, were to be excluded, there would be a considerable number of disabled people who would be required to look for work and may well end up wanting to use PACT's services. She expressed concern that PACT in their region would not be resourced to cope with a large increase in their caseload.
>
> (CEPD, participant observation, February, 1995)

This gave rise to additional concerns voiced by various members of the committee over what would happen to all these people who were being told that after April (the introduction of ICB) they would have to look for work in order to receive benefit. There were concerns over how these people were to be made to look for work, particularly in relation to people with a psychiatric disability. There was considerable concern over the changes to the benefit system. In respect to psychiatric disabilities, a committee member voiced her concern that such people could be very negatively impacted by the introduction of the Jobseeker's Allowance (see Chapter Three). As mentioned earlier, psychiatric disabilities often focused particular attention on the problematic nature of defining disability.

The definition relating to psychiatric disabilities is highly problematic containing considerable confusion when discussed in relation to legislation. This was particularly so in the material I gained from internal documents shared with me by PACT. In a training document circulated to PACT managers in August 1995, highly detailed guidance was given on what constituted substantial and functional effects of impairment. The document described what constituted and did not constitute a substantial disability under each aspect of day-to-day living identified under the proposed legislation (DDA). The document used case studies of hypothetical individuals who would fit into each category. Towards the end of this document there was a stand alone section on "mental illness". This section described overall problems that may be encountered, some examples of general accommodations that should be considered and a paragraph highlighting the fact that a broad programme of education is needed to address the negative publicity that mental health issues have been given in the past. This part of the document was distinctly woolly in comparison with the richness of detail provided through the case studies on the other disabilities that preceded it. Further, it held a distinctly cautionary note that knowledge was limited as to how mental health would be defined under the new legislation.

Further, in briefings given to civil servants working in the field of employment and disability during the early days of the legislative process, the shortest advised answer, one word in fact, to questions expected from the press was the one attached to a hypothesised question related to psychiatric disabilities. The other replies to hypothesised questions were considerably longer. To me, this is indicative of the lack of deeper reflection on the definition of psychiatric disabilities contained in disability legislation. In the CEPD meetings I attended I became aware that during the early days of the consultation process the Government were cautious over including people who had a history of or a reputation of being disabled without "hard evidence" that there was an underlying impairment. During the early stages of legislative reform, Government was relying on what they called a "common-sense" definition of disability. To this day, I am not sure such a definition exists. If it does, it perhaps has more in common with discriminatory and prejudiced attitudes towards disability than any authentic representation of who a disabled person is.

The transitory nature of disability was an issue addressed in material linking definitions with legislation. Difficulties over supposedly *definitive* categories of disability in the legislation were addressed by some participants. For example, while working through benefit interviews with participants, uncertainty over the definition of disability was widespread. In the benefit interview with Carla we encountered the following uncertainty:

> **Paul**
> Are you, or is any member of your household, sick, blind or disabled? ...the fact that you are registered disabled, you could answer yes... or are you unsure?
> **Carla**
> Very unsure of that there.
> **Paul**
> Right, I'll tell you what they would base that on.. erm, right they don't refer to the definitions used for incapacity or anything, so it's not based on that, you should say yes even when you are not registered, so the fact that you are registered... would mean that you could say yes to that one.
> **Carla**
> Okay, say yes then.
> **Paul**
> Okay, are you sick or disabled?
> **Carla**
> I'm not sick. [laughs]
> **Paul**
> You're not sick. Would you say that you are disabled?
> **Carla**
> No, I wouldn't.
> (Carla, benefit advice interview, May 1995)

Perhaps Carla was reacting to the link between "sick" and "disability" in the way eligibility for disability benefit was determined. I have discussed earlier how disabled participants sought to undo this link. However, even when I separated the concept sick from disabled, Carla was still reticent to describe herself as disabled.

Alex found the definition that regulated his entitlement to benefit as missing important experiential aspects of his impairment.

> Aye, this is the only one that comes close [pointing to the question on the computer screen], you know, pain in walking and ability to walk, it's only, you know, I can walk the one hundred metres obviously but it is the pain and the longer I walk.
> (Alex, benefit advice interview, April 1995)

His experience was of being disabled, but he found difficulty in fitting his experiences into the qualifying definition of disability. This definition was that used for Mobility Allowance and is given earlier in figure 8a.

The Disability Register was also linked to how disability was defined. The Green Card was described by disabled participants as a blanket way of defining disability covering a wide variety of disability types. Further, the nature of this blanket coverage was described by disabled participants as imposing a universal rather than an individual definition on disabled people. In particular, the symbol of the wheelchair user was one that was often seen as synonymous with the Green Card. When participants who were non wheelchair users told others they were registered as disabled, they often encountered suspicion and surprise. 'It's like people say to me "Oh, come on, you're not disabled", or "You don't look disabled to me". I say "What do you want me to do, wear a badge on my head?" ' (Sarah, individual interview, May 1996). For some participants this was a source of considerable annoyance and for others a source of considerable anxiety. For example, Ewen had lower back pain that affected the type of work he could do. He said it was unlikely that an employer would believe he was disabled from looking at him. To be registered as disabled meant you were in a wheelchair.

For others, the homogenising nature of the Green Card allowed participants to keep the nature of their impairment undisclosed. Rachel recounted her experience of starting work in a sheltered workshop. 'The girl asked me, she said "have you got a card?", that was it and I said yes. Nobody needs to know what's wrong with you, it's personal. They said to me nobody needs to know' (Rachel, individual interview, May 1996). Here the Green Card helped identify her as disabled but gave her sufficient anonymity of the nature of her impairment, in this case epilepsy. Rachel linked this way of defining disability in positive terms. For her to be identified as disabled was preferable to her being identified according to the specific nature of her disability. For Rachel, being perceived as disabled was less stigmatising than being perceived as having epilepsy. With the connotation of the Green Card being physical impairment rather than mental impairment and the greater stigma against mental impairment, this meant that being associated with the former through the Green Card was preferable to being associated with the latter.

To continue with Rachel's material, she further told me of how working in a sheltered workshop classed her as disabled. She said that having that employment status meant she had to have a Green Card. Rachel had originally not identified herself as disabled as she did not initially feel she was the sort of person who would have worked in a sheltered workshop. (Indeed, she would find this viewpoint in a work colleague soon after she began working there, as referred to earlier in section 8.1.2.2). However, once she had registered, following the encouragement of PACT, and had entered the sheltered workshop setting, she rethought her identity as a disabled person. This was also the case for Alex. Alex did not consider himself disabled before he went to the Jobcentre where he was advised to register as disabled. As he put it, he knew that he had a "problem", but he did not realise it made him disabled. Diane describes how she was unaware that she was disabled because she was unaware of the Green Card scheme and of disability benefits. For Carla, she had not considered herself disabled until she was prompted by PACT to register as disabled to get her Green Card. Carla had a hearing impairment. The issue of her and importantly others defining her as disabled came to the fore when she was ignored concerning promotion at her place of work. She found herself another job, but over the ensuing years her hearing was deteriorating. A Green Card was offered to her as a means of securing future employment and for that reason she chose to register herself as disabled, though she had a great deal of ambiguity about perceiving herself as disabled. I described this earlier when Diane and I worked through her disability benefit entitlement. Diane was persuaded to register as disabled by her employer, both to help her employer out, but also because it was in her own interest as this would make her harder to dismiss from the job.

However, this link between defining disability and legislation also led some participants to reject their status as disabled. Sandy was one participant who had rejected being registered as disabled. He held a great deal of doubt over the efficacy of past and present disability legislation. He saw the Green Card as something for the benefit of employers, in that they could 'go around their shop floor asking if people had problems. If they did, they could slap a Green Card on them and that way ensure that they would approach quota' (Sandy, individual interview, April 1995). Thus, it was seen as a definitional tool for the purposes of employers rather than employees. For that reason Sandy had decided not to register as disabled. Commenting jokingly with me, he said: 'I find it quite funny, me having to get a Green Card, because a Green Card in America, you've got to have one or you're illegal. So I says now I'm illegal and disabled, I haven't got a Green Card' (Sandy, individual interview, April 1995).

8.1.2.6 Summarising and connecting to the Medical and Social Models of disability

I have described the Medical and Social Models of disability in Chapter Two. In this section I return to briefly reflect on these models as they are suggested in the research material to summarise and close this section.

The material I gained from the research process was dominated by themes relating to the Medical Model. Here this material was structured around the functional capabilities or limitations of the disabled individual. The material also focused on the physical markers that make a disability visible, such as the wheelchair. This was particularly so in material that connected to legislation. Initially, this material came from benefit advice interviews, but expanded to include more general discussion on the definition of disability implicit in legislative issues. This slant towards the Medical Model is perhaps understandable during benefit entitlement discussions as the focus of benefit entitlement inquiries pivot on a medicalised understanding of disability. The disability benefits system is constructed on identifying physical and mental deficits of claimants. The Medical Model also dominated discussions of definitional issues during CEPD meetings. Material from these settings was often heavily weighted in the Medical Model, focusing on incapacities of disabled people.

The individualising nature of the Medical Model often made it problematic for some participants to disclose the level of difficulty they were experiencing in their lives. These research participants sought to dissociate themselves from such difficulties, even when putting in claims for disability benefits. Often, here was a struggle in defining a disability. The material often reflected participants' wishes to identify their abilities rather than focus on any absence of ability. Aligning their identity to being disabled was often associated with the latter and this cautioned participants in how they applied the label "disability" onto themselves. The issue of whether a participant chose to disclose their disability was often fraught with difficulty. The themes that were tied closely to the Medical Model (eg. individual functioning) resulted in material I found personally difficult to deal with, material that would describe how certain classes of disabled people would be excluded and stigmatised due to the "severity" of their disability. For me, this was difficult material as it described how disabled participants would hold similarly stigmatising attitudes towards other disabled people as non disabled people held towards them. This material centred on defining a disability according to an individual's impairment.

Also in this material, defining disability was often discussed as problematic. It was described as unsatisfactorily providing an account of both non visible impairments and impairments that would fluctuate in the effect they had on a person's day-to-day experiences. This material further pointed implicitly to the Social Model of disability. Many of the dilemmas faced by disabled people concerning issues of defining disability were deeply embedded in social rather than medical processes. Thus, the way others perceived disability was often crucial to both how disabled participants experienced and reflected upon disability. Social perceptions became critical to this topic and the themes of stigma and social awareness were intricately connected to the theme of defining disability in this material. Moreover, when linked to legislative issues, the involvedness of social economic and political influences in how disability was defined would become more salient. Impairment moved to the background as the way the definition was constructed socially, economically and politically came to the foreground. For much of this material the importance of legislative factors was heightened and often critical to how disability was defined.

8.1.3 Unemployment

The theme of unemployment was central to much of the research material I gathered during my time at a training centre for unemployed people. There were both disabled and non disabled trainees at the centre. I first held a focus group at the centre followed by a series of support groups. Following each of the group meetings, I generated a set of cognitive maps (see Chapter Six). In these maps I sought to model the issues raised during the group session in diagrammatic form (see Appendix Two[c]). I sent these maps out to group participants and sought feedback on them. I have used one of these maps to provide a focus for the material later in this section. This map focused on themes pertinent to the experience of being unemployed. The material I present first focuses on participants feelings and perceptions towards the training scheme they were on.

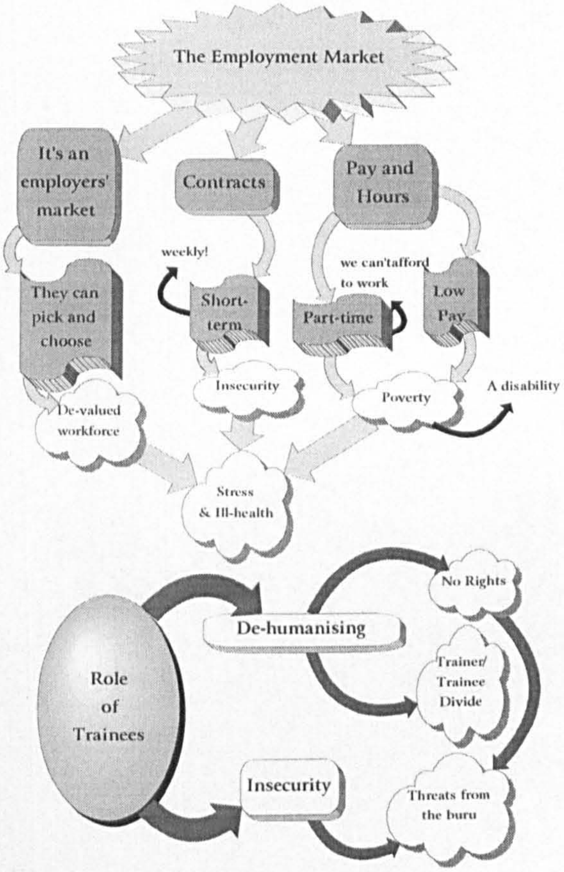
Group discussants were particularly concerned over their disempowered role on the training scheme. Discussants described this as 'keeping our mouths shut'. This disempowerment was felt through trainees not being able to articulate their concerns over the training they received and their experience of being unemployed. There was considerable disquiet about the quality of the training they were being provided. For some discussants they talked of their time spent at the centre as characterised by feelings of boredom and demotivation. There was a perception of training schemes as nothing more than a tool used by Government to, as one discussant put it, 'massage the unemployment figures'. Being on a training scheme effectively took discussants off the unemployment register. Getting more people onto training schemes artificially lowered the unemployment count. This was felt by discussants as a key reason for the existence of such schemes, ie. rather than a means to equip people with skills to compete effectively in the labour market. Further, discussants wished to let others know their views on these schemes. There was a feeling of trainees being in an untenable situation and discussants wanted to speak out on this. Particularly contentious for group discussants was the wage they were paid for their attendance - £10 per week. Some felt they were, as one discussant put it, 'already taking the crap' through being on a scheme they perceived was offering them low quality training. The low pay they were being offered for attending the scheme was felt to exacerbate their dissatisfaction. Pivotal to this material was the connection between the interests of unemployed people with the interests of the Employment Service (ES). The interests of unemployed people were perceived as securing employment. However, the interests of the ES were perceived as reducing the numbers on the unemployment register, irrespective of unemployed people securing employment. There was further awareness among participants that prospects of getting a job were marginal and that they were likely to leave the training scheme to either return to unemployment or move to underemployment (poorly waged, part time, insecure employment). As one discussant put it, it was the choice between 'no jobs and crap jobs'. The concept of underemployment was captured in discussants describing what they perceived as 'slave labour' in the labour market at that time. The status of being unemployed was talked about in a way that did not stand it apart as less preferable to actively participating in the job market, ie. in poor quality jobs.

Compromising discussants' needs to speak out on these issues were concerns over becoming labelled as 'trouble makers' by the ES. There was a very real fear felt by participants that if they expressed their concerns over their unemployed status on the training scheme, action would be taken against them by the ES. The ES stance was that people should prefer to be in employment than be unemployed. For support group discussants, the reverse was often felt to be the case. Discussants felt that making their concerns known would entail 'treading on toes'. This held particularly tangible consequences for discussants. To be seen as a troublemaker by the ES could have a harmful effect on their entitlement to benefit. This feeling of being policed by the ES and the fear of recrimination, through cessation of benefits, was pronounced.

At the time I was meeting these unemployed participants, the Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) was soon to arrive and discussants in these groups were generally aware the ES would be enforcing stricter criteria on benefit eligibility. Displaying the 'wrong attitude' was anticipated to be a criterion that could legitimate the ES withdrawing benefit from a claimant. However, voicing their concerns over training schemes was further felt to be problematic for discussants. In the hostile labour market of that time, discussants were aware they needed to find ways of improving their prospects of employment. There was a fear that highlighting what they felt as deficiencies in the training they were being provided with as unemployed people may put employers off recruiting them after they had undergone this training programme. Further, highlighting the inefficiency of training provision was felt to have a negative consequence for the self-confidence and self-esteem of people attending the scheme. It was one thing to be concerned over the poor quality of their training provision, it was another to have this outwardly acknowledged. Discussants were fearful of the effect of their disquiet about the scheme on others at the centre and future trainees who would be entering the centre. As well as having to tolerate extremely low wages, to know that they were attending a scheme of low quality was felt to be harmful to their self-esteem. The argument that future trainees could be warned against enrolling in the scheme was complicated by the perception of trainees that attendance on the scheme was compulsory. With there being no choice, a focus on the quality of the training being provided appeared erroneous to participants. Even if a training course was of poor quality, you still had to attend it, and it would still go on your CV. It made little sense for participants to publicise their negative perceptions of the training, if this training was to contribute to their CV, and supposedly to their chances of securing future employment.

During the course of the support group meetings, discussion focused on the general experience of unemployment and the labour market. For me, the cognitive map in Figure 8c captures this. The discussion that informed this cognitive map was enveloped in a great degree of negativity. Often this discussion felt draining to be in, but I feel the material that came from it was extremely important. Discussants broke their concerns about the labour market down into three prongs. The first concerns the direction of drive in the labour market. This was felt to be employer driven. Employers were felt to be able to pick and choose employees at will. There was no sense that employees could likewise pick and choose employers. Discussants described this as creating a devalued workforce. Almost understood as a form of product and purchaser, discussants would describe potential employees as 'ten to a penny'. As one discussant put it, 'if you gave one person a job and they turned out to be no good, you simply chuck them out, because there are plenty of other employees to choose from'.

Figure 8c



The second prong of discussants' concerns over the labour market concerned the types of jobs available. In particular, this material concerned the type of employment contract circulating in the market at that time. Discussion spiralled down from one discussant citing yearly contracts, to another discussant citing monthly contracts, to another discussant citing fortnightly contracts. It was as though we were trying to come to grips with the awfulness of the insecurity people faced in the labour market and we rapidly moved from concern to horror. We ended this spiral with one discussant telling us of how domestic employees working in the National Health Service had their employment contracts reviewed each week. We began to air our concerns over the level of financial insecurity this brought into the labour market. Some of us were finding it a difficult material to come to grips with. It was particularly difficult and draining material for discussants as this was the labour market in which they were competing with others to re-enter. The negativity of these stories was difficult both to articulate and comprehend - the difficulty of understanding the experiences of someone who was living from week to week without knowing if their employment was secure. Indeed, discussants were all effectively on a fortnightly contract through the fact that they were signing on for benefit, ie. their eligibility for benefit was being reviewed every two weeks. This was to come out in the bottom section of the cognitive map in figure 8c, relating this material to the role of the trainee at the centre. Here the insecurity of the trainee's role was highlighted. As it would happen, this part of the cognitive map covers the material that was ultimately to prove to be a threat to the centre in which we organised the meetings and subsequently led to the end of the support group we initiated. I discuss this in Chapter Ten.

The third prong of the material on the employment market also concerned employment conditions, through addressing concerns of pay and hours. This material explored the part time nature of employment contracts and the low rates of pay being offered in the labour market. Both low pay and shortened hours were factors that made it increasingly difficult for discussants to re-enter the labour market. The pay offered was often little more than that they were receiving from welfare benefits. Indeed, some calculated that they would be financially worse off if they were to try and re-enter the labour market. The type of employment they were likely to secure would typically be part time and low paid. The link between employment and financial reward and security was fractured in this material. Indeed, the link to financial security was sometimes felt more strongly with unemployment than employment. Additional to the financial penalty of returning to the labour market, material also highlighted the dehumanising and degrading feelings of working in employment that was so poorly paid. Again, discussants felt they would be entering what they felt to be 'slave labour'. For some participants this was felt to be as degrading as being unemployed. This material came from the context of a group of unemployed people who were voicing an incredible amount of frustration. Discussants wanted to return to the labour market, but felt the only opportunities for them to do so would mean they would suffer financial disadvantage and find themselves feeling degraded by their employment status. These concerns focused on the prospect of living in a state of poverty, and the frustration concerned employment not being an escape from poverty, but being an entrapment into poverty.

These three prongs of discussants' concerns over the labour market gave rise to feelings concerning a devalued workforce, feelings of insecurity in the labour market and poverty as aspects of working life at that time. The material participants shared with me described their present circumstances as stressful, but their description of the labour market conditions into which they were seeking to gain entry gave no immediate hope that such stress would be alleviated. The negativity of the situation for discussants was such that we moved to form a support group where we could involve others in our discussion and seek ways to express these views to external organisations and to explore and share ways of coping.

This material that connected the labour market directly to the experience of unemployment was continued and enriched through my discussions with participants throughout this project and not only through support group meetings. The material from two participants, Jack and Alex, contributed much to my understanding of this area of the research topic. Jack went through a transition from unemployment to employment and back to unemployment during the course of the research project. Through various research roles I was to occupy with him, Jack offered me considerable detail on his experiences of this state of transition. Jack was focused on getting back to work. He told me he was the kind of person who liked to be kept busy. He had worked all his life until the time of the onset of his disability. At the time we met, Jack was unemployed. During our initial individual interview and a later benefit advice interview he talked to me about his wish to get back into employment. He was finding it hard sitting at home. He was becoming isolated. Employment was particularly important to him. He talked with considerable pride of his previous job working in a factory. He was a skilled fitter by trade and would talk to me of the skills he had acquired throughout his working life and the type of work he did and the responsibilities he had. After the onset of his disability he increasingly felt unable to cope with employment. In particular, the high levels of stress and demanding work hours were having an extremely negative impact on him such that he felt forced to leave when the pressure and stress at work all came to much for him to bear. A couple of months after a benefit interview with Jack, he was back in touch to tell me that he had found a job. He had secured a place in a supported employment factory. Though the wages were very low, he was glad to be back in the labour force and glad of the opportunity to stay active and get out of the house. However, Jack's return to the labour market was not to be a successful one. Though he was working in a sheltered employment environment, once he disclosed the nature of his disability to his work colleagues he became shunned and socially isolated from them. The factory setting was extremely competitive with tight, monthly targets to reach. The stresses of the working environment plus the negative perceptions his colleagues held towards Jack were to have a negative impact on him. Eventually he was forced to leave the factory and return to the dole (unemployment benefit). Jack directly experienced the hostility of the labour market, both in the low pay, long hours and the increased competitiveness of the working environment.

These connections between labour market conditions, in particular job type, and unemployment and disability were further present in material shared by Alex. He compared his present working conditions with his previous experience of unemployment. During our interview he began by describing his type of employment. He worked by contract, describing it as a complicated set up where he would work for one employer, though was contracted out to that employer by a second employer. Alex viewed the nature of this contract very negatively, and he felt empathy with other employees who were working under similar contracts.

> I was listening to the... radio, I listen to the radio quite a lot and er... seems that there's about two and a half million of us on the same contract, you know, [Paul: right] which is you don't get paid for days off of any sort whether you are ill, a public holiday, say like Easter, [Paul: aha] if I have that off I wouldn't get paid.

He then described how the nature of his employment was having a detrimental affect on his disability.

> Xmas, New Year, or Easter anything like that if I have a day off or if I'm sick I don't get paid for that either [Paul: right] so I end up with no money.. I've never been off, and actually CT came and insisted that I'd actually take one day off because I had been there nine month and hadn't had a day off and actually, I was that crippled with my back, well a fortnight ago I was forced to take one day off.

> ...I'm in a position now that they are moving the job, finding the job with CT chemicals, [Paul: right] and I am not sure whether I am going to be in a job or not and I thought the job was going to last a while so I took on some high-street credit. I'm struggling now to pay that off, if I don't have a job by June [Paul: right] so this is why I was wanting to work all the hours I could... it's crazy. I didn't realise it was such a bad contract, I probably wouldn't have taken it. It is something that irks me that you don't get, you know you are registered as disabled and you don't get, you are thrown into a contract where if you go ill or if you have a public holiday [Paul: aha] that you don't actually get paid for it. I think it has just made my condition worse, you know, I do get tired after a while I need a week off.
>
> (Alex, individual interview, April 1995)

Here, Alex described his employment status as hostile, insecure and having a detrimental impact on his back complaint. Having to work long hours, with few if any days off, was having a negative impact on him. He talked of wishing he had not taken up the contract, wishing to get out of his employment circumstances. But, he had found himself in financial circumstances that entrapped him in his contract, and this was actually driving him to work longer hours than his back complaint permitted. Having falsely believed his financial circumstances would be more secure than they had been on unemployment benefit, he had taken out credit and bought himself a new cooker and washing machine. Now he realised his employment contract was insecure, and he was desperately working long hours to try to pay off his debts. He had expected his transition from unemployment to employment would be linked with security, but he found himself moving from an insecure financial situation into an even more insecure financial situation.

8.1.3.1 Summary

Unemployment was a theme that connected strongly to labour market issues. While the experience of being unemployed was described in negative terms, active entry into the labour market was also described in negative terms. Though there were financial and psychosocial costs of being unemployed, many research participants saw conditions in the labour market as equally threatening to their financial and psychosocial well-being. In this way, unemployment and employment were closely linked but not in a way that appears at all intuitive. Where one may suspect employment to be desirable, here the material focused on the many detrimental aspects of becoming employed. This was not to say participants did not wish to actively enter or re-enter the labour market, but they realised that to do so may not be to their advantage, and may result in a worsening of their circumstances. This is particularly drawn out in the brief description of some episodes experienced by Jack during his involvement in this research, and by the material Alex shared with me.

8.1.4 Employment interviews

In this section I concentrate on the material on employment interviews shared by participants who were interviewees. The perspective of employers became important to redrafting the Codes of Practice in the intervention stage of the research and I detail this process in the later half of this chapter. Here I wish to concentrate on the perspectives of the agent in the interview who seeks work rather than seeks to "offer" work. I used the following material to inform the drafting of the employer Codes of Practice on disability. Both disabled and non disabled participants contributed to my understanding of employment interviews. Later I concentrate on the views of disabled participants when disability is introduced as a factor in employment interviews. First I concentrate on the general experience of employment interviews.

8.1.4.1 Employment interview experiences

8.1.4.1.1 From welfare to warfare

Material was often framed with metaphors signifying a struggle or battle ongoing in employment interviews. This was particularly so in material shared by participants seeking to move from unemployment into employment. This is what I refer to as "from welfare to warfare" as this material often depicted research participants trying to get off the dependency and insecurity of welfare benefits through struggling to compete for a place as a participant in the labour force. This material developed from exploring participants' experiences of employment interviews. The interviewer's role was often described as 'interrogator'. Alex referred to interview panels as 'employers hunting in packs' with interviewers 'ganging up on you' (Alex, individual interview, April 1995). Sue talked of 'two people sitting across from me and firing questions' (Sue, individual interview, April 1995). Jack described how interviewers were trying to trick him and intimidate him, bombarding him with questions. Alex, Jack and Sue all had recent experiences of employment interviews and all were unemployed at the time. In this way, interviewers and interviewees were often described as in sharp opposition to one another. Throughout such material there was very little sense of any mutuality of interest between the two parties during the employment selection process. This opened an interaction characterised by calculative, defensive actions on the part of interviewees.

Diane felt the employment interview was a place where you had to both explicitly lie about and implicitly cover up details that were incongruent with getting the job. The main aim was to get the job no matter by what means. She described the need to tell the interviewer/employer what they wanted to hear, irrespective of whether that was the "truth". Hers was perhaps one of the extreme views, but it was familiar to material from other participants that described the need for interviewees to be economical with the truth and generous with bending the truth. Interviewees sought to manipulate the personal information they disclosed during the employment interview. Participants justified such tactics through their perception of the intense competition for jobs dictated by labour market conditions.

Diane told me of her experience of applying for a job for which over two hundred other people had applied. From the two hundred applicants, twenty-five were invited to an employment interview for one job opening. In this way, the employment interview became a valuable and scarce resource. Interviews were characterised as a form of lottery. With so many people competing for so few jobs and so many people competing for the same job, participants often felt they were less likely to be picked because they were the best candidate. They felt they were more likely to get picked if they had a lucky interview, or 'a good run at it', or happened to be in 'good form' on the day. All these things were seen to be out with the control of the interviewee. Sue, for example, felt that luck was an important part of her successful employment interview experiences. Alex too felt that his successful interviews were 'just a matter of turning up and winging it' (Alex, individual interview, April 1995). Participants felt the odds were stacked against them in getting an employment interview, but if they were fortunate in getting an interview offer, many participants felt concerned to exploit that opportunity to the full. The intense competition for interviews also led to an intense pressure felt in the employment interview, involving feelings of considerable anxiety.

8.1.4.1.2 Anxiety

Feelings of anxiety were to play an important part in employment interviews. Sue described herself as feeling intimidated in an interview when there were two people interviewing her. She preferred there to be just one person whom she could talk to alone. With more than one interviewer present she experienced the setting as having questions 'fired' at her. This turned the experience into one of confrontation. Her feelings of anxiety during employment interviews were often quite intense. 'I get myself so worked up into a state and I start to stutter and I get my words all mixed up. What a mess I get into, I don't know why that is' (Sue, individual interview, April 1995). She did, however, offer some pointers as to what was inducing so much anxiety for her. Sue felt the atmosphere in the interview was crucial to how anxious she felt in the setting, particularly at the moment she walked into the interview. Those first few moments of entering the room could either settle her nerves or charge them. She described herself as relaxing when she felt the atmosphere to be relaxed. Here she was describing factors external to her own feelings. These were settings she was walking into rather than internal states she brought into each setting. This was something she could sense as she walked into the room, though she was unable to put her finger on exactly what it was about the setting and those in the setting that created this climate. She referred to the in/formality in how interviewers introduced themselves, their tone of voice, the expression on their faces, but could not put fully into words what was, for her, an intuitive reaction to each interview encounter. However difficult these feelings were for her, they were felt as central to her experience of employment interviews. She described the employment interview as a tinder box, potentially inflammable in respect to the intense competition that surrounded each employment opportunity. This tension would ignite considerable anxiety in her depending on the climate interviewers created in the interview setting.

The climate of heightened tension in the employment interview was also captured in the material shared by other participants. For example, the anxiety induced by being outnumbered by interviewers was prominent in much of this material. Interview panels were experienced as particularly intimidating. Participants described walking into a room full of interviewers sat formally around a desk. Often the layout of tables and chairs led participants to feel encircled and entrapped. For some participants they found the formality of the setting stifling.

> It was like piggy in the middle. All these people sitting around me, watching my every move, it was really horrible you know?.. [Paul: right] If I'd have known that there were going to be four people in suits there all interviewing me at the one time then maybe I could have done better, not being nervous and.. but it was out of the blue. I didn't like it, hated every minute of it.
>
> (Dawn, focus group, July 1996)

Dawn felt unprepared for the situation and this was an unpleasant experience for her. Alistair was prepared for being outnumbered in his employment interview. He was sent a letter a week before the interview to let him know that there would be three people on the interview panel. However, he still felt considerably anxious throughout the interview and felt this was due to the difficulty of having multiple interviewers present in the setting.

> It's say.. when you are feeling nervous, it is difficult to calm down when you don't know who you should be looking at. When one of them asks you a question, you look at them, but then you know that there are two other people there that you should be looking at as well [Paul: aha]. Because you are sitting there, they're not all talking to you, but you have to talk to all of them. They just talk to one person, you have to talk to three. It's awkward and doesn't really put you at ease at all.
> (Alistair, individual interview, September 1996)

Alistair was describing what essentially was an unfamiliar social interaction. Though it was a group setting, the interaction in that setting was experienced as multiple, one-to-one interactions rather than a group interaction. At one and the same time, the interviewee was asked to interact both with individuals (the questioners) and the group (the interview panel). Interviewers were asked only to interact with the interviewee. The unfamiliarity of many participants with how to manage this type of interaction exacerbated the feelings of anxiety that many participants experienced. For some participants this was to be a painful experience.

Even where participants were involved in employment interviews where they were interviewed by a single person, the feeling of the setting being a 'tinder box' of anxiety often remained. The tension was palpable in many participants' stories of their employment interview experiences, though those that described the panel interviews often brought this tension to the fore. Throughout such material, interviewees had feelings of being outnumbered and intimidated by interviewers.

8.1.4.1.3 Trick and stupid questions

In some of the material on employment interviews, participants expressed their concern over the type of questions they were asked in the interview. Some participants referred to these as 'trick questions'.

> They didn't really ask me anything about work, apart from why I left my job [Paul: aha] it was more hobbies and they asked some funny questions that had nothing to do with.. that to me were irrelevant but it must be how they find out what you are like and how you deal with situations.
> (Carla, individual interview, May 1997)

Carla felt some of the questions she was asked in her employment interview were irrelevant but was also aware they may have been part of a clever interviewing technique. She felt what for her were stupid questions may have been very clever in that the interviewer could use her response to uncover information she was not aware she was disclosing. She experienced this type of questioning as covert. The reason for the interviewer asking the question was not obvious to her.

Alex referred to some of the questions he was asked in an employment interview as 'very stupid'. Having experience as an interviewer, he was arguably in a good position to make such a judgement. He described questions as wasteful, particularly those that he felt he had already answered either through the application form or through an answer he had given to a previous question in the interview[1]. The type of questioning participants experienced in interviews often left them feeling manipulated and disempowered in the selection process. Alex felt manipulated by interviewers repeating the same questions throughout the interview, though worded slightly differently. He felt they were trying to trick him into providing inconsistent answers. He felt this was maybe a technique they used to test if you were telling the truth, but he found it insulting. Further, there was a feeling of information being extracted out with the control of the interviewee. This was felt when a participant talked of being asked strange questions they could not make sense of but suspected that they had a hidden or secondary purpose. Participants described this as a dislocation from the questioning and answering process of the interview. Often the questions asked were not felt to be the *real* questions and this made it difficult for participants to know how to respond and insecure over how their answers were being used.

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[1] *I am reminded of my own experience towards the close of this project when I too was applying for employment. In a job interview I was asked whether I had experience of writing for practitioners as well as peer review journals. As my CV had listed a number of such practitioner oriented documents - ie. the ones connected to this project - I began to tell the interviewer of my feelings about writing Codes of Practice for local employers. After realising the interviewer was looking increasingly glazed over I realised I may have misunderstood the question. It turned out she wanted a yes/no answer. I imagine the question was asked to all interviewees. I interpreted it's meaning specific to me, in particular with respect to the CV I had sent them.*

Further, where questions felt insufficiently tailored to a participant's own circumstances, this led to feelings of insignificance, of not being treated as an individual. This feeling was described as being processed, along with many other interviewees, on a conveyor belt passing through the selection process. Bill framed this concern better than I.

> You're just one of many. It's a funny set up ken? .. Someone else has been sitting where you are sitting, shook the same hands as you've shook, drinking the same cup of coffee... answering the same silly questions. You are trying to stand out and they are trying to treat you all the same.
>
> (Bill, individual interview, February 1997)

In what were already described as anxiety provoking situations, this led to added difficulty of interviewees effectively managing employment interviews. Earlier I talked of manipulating information. Here interviewees perceived the information was manipulated by interviewers. Participants became unsure of how the information was being used in the interview, there was the perception of a hidden agenda.

8.1.4.1.4 Feedback

Occasionally, though only occasionally, participants received feedback on their interview performance. In particular, the experience of being told your name would be kept on file was felt to be a fairly insidious form of feedback for some participants. Simon talked of being left in a state of limbo after an interview where the employer had telephoned him to say he had been unsuccessful at the interview but that they would keep his name on their records and let him know if another employment opportunity came up.

> I felt, like, have I got a job or not, should I wait?, maybe they'll give me a job next week. I've been waiting for two months and I haven't heard anything.. nothing. I don't like it when they do that [Paul: aha], you don't know where you stand. I doubt they kept my name anyway, maybe they were just saying it to keep me quiet.. I don't know.
>
> (Simon, focus group, July 1996)

As Simon described his experience, it involved him feeling unable to voice criticism about the employer or the selection procedure. He felt perhaps they were trying to keep him quiet. He was unlikely to criticise them when they still held an offer of employment over him. This employment offer, however, was sufficiently intangible to leave him feeling suspended in his search for a job. He was unsure whether he was genuinely to be considered for a future employment opportunity, or whether he had been unsuccessful with that organisation and should move on to apply for employment with other organisations.

He further told me how this took some of the drive out of his search for a job. He was caught between feeling he had attained a partially successful outcome, feeling he had sufficiently impressed the employer for them to keep his name on their records, to feeling the employer was just making an empty gesture. He had no means of knowing which it was. In a way, this felt more problematic to him than receiving no feedback at all. This practice left interviewees in a particularly insecure position in relation to securing employment.

Not receiving any form of feedback following an employment interview would be a more frequent experience of research participants. Often participants were left knowing they had not been unsuccessful at a job interview but not knowing why. However, there were several instances where participants were not even told they had been unsuccessful.

> I was waiting ages to hear from them [Paul: aha]. They said they would be in touch in two weeks. By the end of the third week there was still no news, so I just figured that I didn't have the job.. it's 'cause they couldn't even be bothered to let me know that I felt pissed off with them. I didn't know where the hell I stood.. there's too many of them that do that.
>
> (Ken, individual interview, August 1996)

Realising your employment interview had been unsuccessful was a conclusion the participant had to draw for her/himself. This depended on how long they felt 'no news' was indicative of them not getting the job. For that period of time, a participant would again be left in limbo. This lack of feedback that extended to not even knowing whether they had been successful or unsuccessful was described as particularly debilitating. Further, participants were left feeling empty when they were told, usually by letter, that they had been unsuccessful at the interview, but did not receive any form of feedback on their interview performance.

8.1.4.2 Employment interview experiences of disabled people

When disabled participants talked about their experiences of employment interviews as disabled interviewees, many of the concerns identified above similarly arose but the context and nature of these concerns was very different.

8.1.4.2.1 Anxiety

Feelings of anxiety continued to play a central role in this material. However, the source and experience of this anxiety were described differently. For example, similar to the previous section on anxiety experienced in employment interviews, Lorna talked to me of how in one employment interview she had 'the sweat lashing out of me'. However, she added to this her perception that she was under particular pressure in employment interviews because she was disabled. She felt there was more that was against than for her in such settings. I will describe her reasons for this later in this section. Diane felt it was particularly important for disabled people to relax in employment interviews. She felt disabled job applicants may feel everyone was against them. She felt a disabled interviewee was more likely to lack confidence, to feel awkward and to be nervous in an interview. She felt this was due to a disabled interviewee's lack of experience in interviews and experience of being 'put down' by the comments and actions of others. This was a familiar concern in material from disabled participants and one often developed in reaction to the nature of my research focusing on difficulties disabled people faced at employment interview. Disabled people were generally viewed as having a poor self-image and lacking self-esteem. Often it was felt this would have a negative impact on both the interviewee's performance at and experience of employment interviews. This was a dominant characteristic of discussions I had with PACT employees and at CEPD meetings. Further, this type of material came from disabled participants as well as non disabled participants. In the case of the latter, this was framed in terms of the hypothetical other rather than the participant talking of their own performance at job interviews. Where disabled participants reflected on their own experiences, the material changed focus and additional concerns emerged.

These additional concerns centred on the disabled interviewee's feelings of unease during employment interviews, their disability, and the reactions of the interviewer. Sandy talked of how he could detect when interviewers were nervous when he entered an employment interview. In particular, he sensed their discomfort at asking questions around his disability. This unease in turn made Sandy feel ill at ease. Kate also found interviewers to be uncomfortable with her disability. Kate had a hearing impairment. When she did not hear a question an interviewer asked her, she felt awkward when the interviewer avoided asking the question again. She was also aware of interviewers becoming increasingly self-conscious and she picked up on this discomfort by feeling uncomfortable herself.

> I was nervous to start with. It didn't help when you have these gibbering wrecks in front of you.. well they may not have been that bad but trying so hard to say and do the right thing. I can [lip] read fairly easily when people are talking straight at me, but I think they were a bit embarrassed, you know, worried about er.. patronising me. One of them kept covering his face, which made it hard to read what he was saying and I ended up getting myself all het up. If they were more relaxed .. I think I would have done better.
>
> (Kate, steering group, February 1997)

Anxiety was often invoked in these situations because of the perceived anxiety of the interviewer. This added to the interview nerves the disabled job applicant was already feeling. Further, where a disability broached a sensitive topic, participants again often felt uncomfortable through feeling the discomfort of the interviewer. Thus, the nervousness and anxiety felt by disabled interviewees was often worsened by the perceived discomfort of the interviewer.

8.1.4.2.2 Feedback

The lack of feedback on interview performance continued to be a concern though this was particularly felt by disabled interviewees where they were not certain whether their abilities had fully been recognised over and above their disability. Alex spoke of his concern over one part of an employment interview where he was asked to do a sight test.

> I don't think that I could read the screen at all... but I'm not sure. Nobody gave me, nobody came back on me which was quite a bad thing, we were under the impression that they come back to me, but er, they definitely didn't. I know I am getting old and senile and the rest of it but I would have remembered if they'd come back to me, but they never gave me a reason.
>
> (Alex, individual interview, April 1995)

For Alex, the outcome of the interview, in terms of securing employment, was unsuccessful. He was left not knowing whether he failed the interview because he failed the eye test or whether it was due to some other aspect of the interview. Indeed, he was unsure whether he had even failed the eye test, though he had suspicions that he had. Feedback figured prominently as a concern for disabled interviewees as they were left not knowing what was *wrong* with their interview performance. They were left not knowing whether their disability, if they had disclosed it, affected the employment decision made. As with the case of Alex, a strong theme was one of uncertainty over whether the employment decision had been made on the basis of their merit or whether it was based on their disability.

The importance of feedback also emerged in discussions at CEPD meetings. It was acknowledged among committee members that feedback was important for disabled job applicants. A disabled job applicant could use accurate feedback on their interview performance to prepare them more fully and appropriately for future interviews. This view was further supported in the Guarantee Interview Scheme (GIS) of one local employer organisation mentioned during a committee meeting. This organisation offered interview feedback to all disabled applicants who used GIS. Further, feedback was viewed as crucial when litigation was threatened against an employer. If a disabled job applicant is left feeling uncertain over whether it was their lack of merit or their disability that had the greatest impact on the employment decision, this could leave the door open for litigation.

> If you get turned down for a job, and the employer doesn't tell you why you didn't get it, then what is stopping you from thinking that they didn't employ you because of your disability? [Paul: aha] I know I've felt that I'd been turned down because I was disabled, and because they never told me why I got turned down there's nothing to stop me thinking that is there?
>
> (Sandy, consulting group, April 1997)

However, the employment interview was felt to be a place where interviewers could practice discrimination covertly, and where such discrimination would be impossible to pick up and prove under law. The material shared by Diane developed along these lines. She described how employers could just say the disabled prospective employee failed the interview, which would hide the discrimination that was going on during the selection procedure. Feedback could just be dressed up rhetoric that would cover up discrimination with excuses as to why they had not offered the disabled applicant a job. She felt that most employers would have clever enough lawyers to do this for them if they were unable to do it for themselves.

8.1.4.2.3 Distorting detail

As mentioned earlier, Diane did not balk at the idea of being dishonest in an employment interview. However, here she linked the need to be dishonest directly to her disability. She felt she would never disclose her disability during an interview. A reason for not disclosing a disability during the selection process was so that you could demonstrate your abilities. The act of identifying herself as disabled to an employer was, for Diane, commensurate with stating that she lacked abilities. She felt an implication of this would be her having to hide her disability throughout the time she was employed if the interview outcome was successful. She could find no way around this, preferring whatever the consequence not to disclose her disability for the sake of getting the job. She appreciated this was only a possibility for disabled people who were able to hide their impairment. Where an impairment was not hidden, she felt that you would have no other choice than to disclose. For Diane, disclosing her disability would have been problematic in her attempts to secure employment.

Prominent in the material from disabled participants was the issue of being asked about their disability at the time of applying for a job. Participants were caught in a quandary over whether to disclose their disability and risk discrimination or not disclose it and risk being found out as dishonest later in the selection procedure. The latter could result in them being either rejected from the selection procedure or dismissed following job offer. A particularly strong concern was the threat of early rejection from the application process. Just putting your disability on the application form was often felt to lead to your immediate rejection. 'Putting epilepsy down on the application form is the same as asking the employer to put your application in the bin. If you are going to do that you might as well bin your application yourself and cut out the middleman' (Marion, benefit advice interview, May 1995). Occasionally, this dilemma was eased if the participant felt they had something positive to offer through disclosing their disability. An example of this was where Claire talked of mentioning, during employment interviews, the Employment Service schemes she was eligible for. In particular, she mentioned the Access to Work scheme. She would mention that her disability meant she had access to funding and equipment from PACT. Here, disability was felt to be introducing negativity into the employment interview. This required interviewees to bring in something positive alongside the disclosure of their disability to compensate and lessen its negative impact on the employment decision reached.

Sometimes the felt need to keep disability an undisclosed aspect of your identity during an employment interview was intense. Marion talked of her fear when she was younger of telling anyone she had epilepsy.

> When I was younger.. and I had an interview I used to sit there and say [to myself] "they know I'm an epileptic, I am not going to get this job". I couldnae go through with the interview... when I was like eighteen, nineteen, I couldnae handle it, you know I wouldn't have told anyone I had it, I mean everyone knows but I wouldn't talk about it with anyone.
>
> (Marion, benefit advice interview, May 1995)

Diane described one interview where she had disclosed her disability to the interviewer. She was just about to leave when an interviewer asked if she required a special chair because of her disability. Diane said no, that she did not need any special equipment. She told me this was a lie, but she felt if she had said yes, this would have gone against her.

In such material, participants described the way they would distort detail about themselves, leaving some detail undisclosed and deliberately distorting other detail. Conspicuous to such material was a perceived lack of trust between the job applicant and the employer organisation. This lack of trust was both a lack of participants' trust in employers/ interviewers and participants perceiving employers/interviewers lacking trust in them. This latter point was particularly felt by Carla. She told me how she was not offered employment at an interview because the interviewer did not trust her to wear her hearing aid at work. 'I wear my hearing aid, I admit I don't like it but while I'm at my work I'll wear it [Paul: aha] and erm, somebody who sat in there actually said, the head one, and had said that I could be saying that I was wearing it and I wasn't' (Carla, individual interview, May 1995).

8.1.4.2.4 Awareness

As well as the distortion of detail, this research material reflected more general issues concerning the nature of how information was handled and communicated. This was very much an issue of the level of awareness of disability during the employment selection procedure.

The employment interview was felt to be a means of increasing awareness of disability issues in an organisation if disabled applicants were to apply for employment in that organisation.

> If they see there's a disabled person can answer all their questions, to me that'll help get rid of all their misconceptions, and probably the next time it happens, they'll be more prepared and more at ease. So basically it can change folk's attitudes even when they don't actually think they're doing it.
>
> (Sandy, individual interview, April 1995)

Sandy further identified a lack of communication within employer organisations which he felt would impede any awareness raising that takes place in an employment interview. He felt that if communication between personnel and other departments in an employer organisation were not sufficiently strong, raising awareness on disability issues would be difficult.

Sandy attributed his own positive experience of an employment interview to the fact the recruiting employer already had disabled people working in the organisation. In this interview, the interviewer never referred to Sandy's disability, though he had a highly visible impairment - Sandy used a wheelchair. He felt this helped towards the end of the interview as he asked the interviewer about the level of access into the building and the interviewer was well informed in respect to the access needs of existing employees. Sandy felt that where an employer was interviewing a disabled applicant for the first time, this may be awkward for both parties. However, he felt that even if disabled people had negative experiences from such encounters, it might help future disabled people who apply to that organisation, as the employer would have had more experience of interviewing disabled people. He felt this had happened in his own positive experience of an employment interview, where the employer was "disability aware". Also, Diane felt that having a disabled employee already in the organisation, and more so, having a disabled person on the interview panel was helpful in her employment interview, though in a way she did not realise at the time. She only found out that a member of the interviewing panel was disabled after she had been offered the job. She felt there being a disabled interviewer present was an important factor in her getting the job, feeling that particular interviewer would have been more understanding of her circumstances.

However, having a disabled interviewer was by no means a guarantee that a disabled interviewee would get a fair hearing. One disabled participant talked with embarrassment at the fact he would probably discriminate against disabled people, even though he was disabled himself.

> Now, you were talking about interviews, you know, I sit here feeling guilty because the position I am in now I do interview people for coming on the course, you know, and maybe it is being ignorant about, you know, different thingummies that if the chap is come away and he is talking about different things and er.. but I am afraid that the shutters come up, you know?
>
> (Ewen, focus group, April 1995)

Ewen was having difficulty expressing this view, this was perhaps especially difficult in a focus group of disabled people, but his views were honest and insightful. He admitted that though he was disabled himself he would still discriminate against other disabled people when he was interviewing people for a job. He said he would discriminate when he was uncertain what a disability meant. He mentioned epilepsy in particular as an impairment he knew little about and which he would probably have a "knee jerk reaction" to and discriminate against.

Material often focused on factors that played a role prior to the employment interview. As mentioned earlier, being identified as disabled on an application form was felt to negatively impact a person's chances of reaching the employment interview stage. Further, application forms themselves were sometimes felt to be disabling. John talked of an application form that he found impossible to fill in. In the end he had to turn to family and friends to help him, 'even mum said she's never seen an application form like that in her life' (John, individual interview, May 1996). Where Sue had an employment interview which she described as relatively unproblematic, she contrasted this with the application form she had to fill in when she applied for the job. She told me how she had 'everyone in the PACT office helping me with this form' (Sue, benefit advice interview, June 1995), describing it as a nightmare to complete. An additional aspect of the type of information presented on the application form was of concern to Lorna. She mentioned that often application forms state applicants would be required to attend a medical examination as a part of the selection procedure. This would often put her off applying for a job. She would feel unwilling to complete the form knowing she was likely to be asked to attend what she felt was a potentially humiliating medical examination.

Sandy pointed to the application form as providing too little information to job applicants, and said this might have a negative impact on disabled people in particular. As a wheelchair user himself he needed to know prior to applying for a job whether the work site had wheelchair access. He felt that the more information applicants were given the better - you would know whether you were suitable for the job and whether you should apply. He felt this would prevent wasting both disabled peoples' and employers' time. Disabled people would not apply for jobs which they would not be suited for. One piece of material, related to me from a confidential source, further added to my understanding of how poor pre-interview information could be detrimental to a disabled person's experience of a job interview. In particular, this story addressed an employer's poor articulation of job requirements in an advertised post. A deaf person attended an employment interview and on arrival was told that they had to be able to use the telephone (this was a standard telephone, not accessible to anyone with a hearing impairment). The need to answer the telephone had not been specified in the job description issued by the employer. When the applicant pointed this out the employer responded that this duty was included under "office duties" stating it was commonly known that answering the telephone was an office duty. The applicant was ultimately turned away. The narrator of the story told of how the disabled job applicant experienced a considerable loss of self confidence following this incident.

Material that pointed to the importance of the theme of awareness in the employment interview linked further to how and if a disabled applicant's abilities were identified. As mentioned earlier in section 8.1.2.5, Lorna compared her employment interview experience with her experience of an interview with Benefits Agency staff.

> The invalidity people were telling me you're fit for work [Paul: aha] [Ewen: *laughs*] you can take any job you like, you are fit for work. [Paul: right] [Ewen: that's it] You go for this interview and they go "wait a minute, look at this medical history, there is no way can she.." you know, so you have to fight and prove to them that you can.
>
> (Lorna, focus group, April 1995)

Disabled participants talked of having to 'prove themselves' in the employment interview. Often this was felt to be important due to the unequal treatment disabled applicants experienced. Where an employer looks at your medical history and begins to see you in more negative terms, you have to counteract this by proving to the employer that you can do the job, more so than if you were non disabled, or the employer did not view you as disabled. Here was the strong feeling that people should be judged on merit, and that disability should be put to one side. This often happened where there was a positive outcome to an employment interview. For example, Ewen talked of how he was offered a job once an employer had learnt of his experience in that area of work and once the employer had looked beyond his disability. In particular, interviewees needed to counteract a tendency of interviewers to identify an absence of ability when they presented themselves as disabled interviewees.

Information again was a central concern to how an employment interview was set up. As long as the interviewers had sufficient information on the disabled applicant's needs during the interview, potential problems were removed. Sue had a positive experience of an interview in which she was asked to do a typing test. She told me of how she had received a letter a week before the interview asking if she needed any special arrangements or equipment. As it happened, she did not need any such arrangements but said she went into the interview a little more confident knowing she would not be confronted by inappropriate test materials or an inappropriate interview environment. However, Sandy referred to his negative experiences of employment interviews as those that were badly organised, where interviewers had not considered, prior to employment interview, his particular requirements as a disabled applicant. He shared his experience of applying to one employer organisation where he was offered an interview. At the interview he was asked to perform a typing test. The arrangement of the desk and typewriter was such that Sandy was unable to use them. He referred to the interviewers as making mistakes 'all over the place'. He summed up his experience as '... it was as if they'd just said, "oh, we'll just stick him in there, he's disabled, we'd better just give him one [an interview]." That's what it felt like. I was just put in at the end without any thought' (Sandy, steering group meeting, April 1997). He was annoyed they had not told him about the test beforehand. If they had, he could have told them that he required special arrangements. The focus of Sandy's concerns was that the employer was poorly informed of his employment interview requirements.

Material shared by disabled participants on their employment interview experiences was replete with examples where they had been treated unfairly in the selection procedure. Here the interview itself was described as a barrier to employment. Lorna talked of her experience of having to go through four separate employment interviews for one job, where other non disabled applicants were only asked to attend one interview. During these interviews she was asked to hand over a report from her doctor before they would allow the selection decisions to move on. She talked of her personal outrage and the outrage of her doctor of having to go through such a long, drawn-out and humiliating procedure. She was put through such an extended selection procedure because the employer knew she was disabled. Her awareness that she was being singled out for 'special treatment' because of her disability invoked strong feelings for her. Sandy also wanted to be treated fairly at an employment interview. He wanted the chance to prove himself in the same way non disabled people were allowed the opportunity to prove themselves. He felt that often interviews would obstruct disabled people from showing employers their ability to do the job.

8.1.4.3 Summary

From the material shared with me by both disabled and non disabled participants, my understanding of employment interviews was of a social setting that could be considerably hostile. Interviewees were suspicious of interviewers and felt interviewers were in turn suspicious of them. The labour market conditions were intricately implicated in much of this. With competition for employment being so fierce, the employment interview became the focus of increasing pressure for interviewees. The interview setting was seen as a 'tinder box' of tension. The practice of interview panels (multiple interviewers) often exacerbated the feelings of anxiety and stress of interviewees with feelings of being 'ganged up on'. This was described as impacting upon the way information was handled by interviewees in the interview setting. Participants talked of 'bending the truth' in their attempts to secure employment. Further, the nature of how information was handled by interviewers was described as characterised by manipulation. Interviewers were seen as asking trick questions and having a hidden agenda. Further, interviewees felt as though they were being processed *en masse* ie. they were asked the same questions as every other candidate rather than treated as individual candidates for the job. Combined, this led to feelings of disempowerment and dislocation from the employment interview. Further, feedback following employment interview was highlighted as unsatisfactory. Little information was being exchanged back to interviewees which led to people feeling confused and insecure about the whole experience.

The above themes took on additional meaning in the context of the experiences of disabled interviewees. Stress was highly characteristic of such experiences, but here it was also seen as a characteristic of interviewers. Interviewers were described as reacting nervously and insecurely with disabled interviewees. This led to disabled interviewees picking up on and in turn experiencing such anxiety and tensions themselves. Lack of feedback also took on additional significance for disabled interviewees. With no feedback about their performance, disabled interviewees were left not knowing whether it was their disability or something else that was the reason for being unsuccessful at interview. With such information absent, this was felt to be a source of possible litigation. Thus, disabled interviewees may have little reason to counter their feeling that an employer had discriminated against them because they were disabled. The employment interview was also identified as an effective medium through which an employer could disguise any discriminatory practices towards disabled people they may have been guilty of. Information was described as distorted by disabled interviewees, this time driven by concerns to hide or avoid disclosing their disability. Disclosing a disability either in an interview or on an application form was seen as jeopardising a disabled interviewee's chance of securing employment. As one participant put it, if you mention your disability on the application form you are effectively inviting the employer to put your application form in the bin. However, if disability was addressed in employment interviews it was seen as having the potential to benefit subsequent disabled people who were applying for employment. Giving interviewers and employers more experience of disabled applicants had the perceived potential of ironing out problems of employers' unfamiliarity with disability issues. This was described as having the potential to benefit disabled job applicants in the future even if meanwhile disabled people had to experience unsatisfactory and inappropriate interview arrangements. Contact with disabled people was seen as having further benefit if such contact was in the form of the employer already employing disabled people, or better still, if disabled people were on interviewing panels. However, it was also noted that just because an interviewer was disabled her/himself, this did not preclude them discriminating against disabled people. Lack of awareness also related to the arrangement of the interview setting and/or test equipment used in an employment interview. Discrimination was an issue for disabled people in employment interviews, but was also an issue prior to employment interviews. As well as disclosing having a disability on an application form being problematic, the convoluted format of some application forms was seen in itself as an additional barrier against disabled job applicants. However discrimination was experienced, it left disabled applicants having to counter the negativity their disability brought into the minds of interviewers. Interviewers were described as associating disability with a general absence of ability. Disabled people had to counter and prove themselves above and beyond the negativity they encountered in employment interviews.

8.1.5 Summary of the research material

The research material I have described came from a variety of people in a variety of contexts, from unemployed and employed people, disabled and non disabled people and people working in voluntary and statutory settings. This offered me opportunities to understand the employment interview experiences of disabled people from multiple perspectives. The material covered four main areas: legislation, defining disability, unemployment and the employment interview.

Throughout, awareness and informational issues were intimately implicated in this material. With respect to legislation, and the DDA in particular, it was a theme that caused me alarm. From the material participants shared with me, it was clear there was a lack of awareness of the meaning of incoming legislation and this lack of awareness was widespread in the field. I felt this to be particularly worrisome. Conflict surrounding disability legislation was volatile during my involvement in the research project (see Chapter Three), and those who had most at stake, disabled people, were often not aware such processes were ongoing. There was also considerable cynicism over whose interests such legislation would serve. Was it for the benefit of disabled people or for employers? Where legislation was perceived in a less benign light, this was tied to links between legislation and the focus on defining disabled people as lacking abilities. It was also tied to disquiet over the link between disability and health and safety concerns. In this material, the extent participants would identity themselves as disabled would depend, among other factors, to how aware they were of legislation. The Green Card was often pivotal in whether a participant adopted the definition of being disabled, though such a definition was far from clear-cut.

Awareness and informational issues were also central to how disability was defined in itself. This is an area that has, for so long, been dominated by medical ways of thinking. However, much of the material, as I interpreted it, implicated the social in much of how disability was defined by participants. This was, I feel, well illustrated by the dilemma faced by Harry over whether he should use his stick to help him walk (section 8.1.2.1). Despite the high profile of social factors in defining disability, the Medical Model of disability was also implicated in much of this material. As such, a focus was often on identifying the absence of abilities through examining the functional incapacities of disabled people. This was often closely implicated in material where disabled participants found themselves in a dilemma over how the "disability" label applied to themselves. Some of this material was difficult for me to deal with, as it involved disabled people stigmatising the identity of other disabled people in an attempt to remove the negative label from themselves. Such material pivoted on defining disability according to an individual's impairment. Further, this type of definition was often described as problematic, participants felt it did not adequately account for non visible impairments and impairments that would fluctuate in the effect they had on a person's day to day activities. Inescapable from such material was the influence of stigma. This very much brought a social dimension back into this material. The perceptions of self and others were implicated in many of the central concerns of the research material.

A lack of awareness of what disability means was implicated in the material on employment interviews. For disabled interviewees, a major barrier they faced was poor awareness among employers of what disability means. This resulted in inadequate consideration of adaptations to interview arrangements needed by some disabled job applicants. Typically, interviewers were described as understanding disability to mean an absence of ability. This gave rise to the barriers of discrimination disabled people faced in employment interviews. A strategy that some disabled participants adopted was to distort the type of information they presented about themselves in the interview and prior to the interview through the application form. Thus, a disabled applicant may choose not to disclose their disability. Disclosing a disability in the employment selection process was often seen to forfeit a person's chances of securing employment.

As well as information that interviewers were *receiving* from interviewees, or at least the interviewers' interpretations of such information, a further issue was the information the interviewee received from the interviewer. Here, informational issues were implicated with the concerns participants expressed about feedback, or rather lack of feedback following employment interviews. There was little in the way of information exchanged back to interviewees, sometimes they were not even told the outcome of the interview but had to guess this themselves. The longer an interviewee did not hear back from an employer, the more likely it was that the interview had been unsuccessful. Feedback, when it existed, was also felt as misleading. This related to when an interviewee was told they had not been successful but their name had been kept on file - interviewees doubting the genuineness of such a statement. Informational issues often led interviewees to be left in insecure and confused states following an employment interview. For disabled interviewees, lack of feedback following employment interview took on particular significance. Disabled interviewees were left not knowing if it was their merit or their status as disabled that was being discriminated against. The former would be acceptable but the latter not. This opened up the potential for litigation, with disabled job applicants having no information to counter a belief that their disability had been discriminated against.

A poor level of disability awareness was also the source of anxiety and stress disabled interviewees felt to be experienced by interviewers. With interviewers who were unfamiliar with disability issues, this was felt to lead to their nervous and insecure social reaction to disabled interviewees. This in turn exacerbated the anxiety already felt by disabled interviewees in what for them were often very nerve-racking and tense interpersonal encounters. However, with more disabled people applying for employment and securing employment interviews, this was seen as generally raising awareness of disability issues with employers and interviewers. This was anticipated to have an attrition effect for disabled people applying for employment in the future, even if at present disabled people would have negative interview experiences. Further, awareness was viewed as increasing with greater contact between employers, interviewers and disabled people, either through having disabled employees, previous experience of disabled interviewees or disabled people on interview panels. However, having a disabled person on an interview panel was not seen as safeguarding discrimination against disabled job candidates.

Socio-economic themes were often implicated in the research material. Of particular importance was the context of the labour market. This was an important theme to material on disability legislation. When disability legislation was discussed in connection with the labour market, legislation was seen in a more benign light. Under a harsh and highly competitive labour market, legislation was seen as a needed legislative tool to protect the employment rights of disabled people. The labour market context was further linked in a particularly evocative way in the material that focused on unemployment. Employment was not the panacea that one would suspect to be the case for unemployed people. Despite the psychosocial costs of unemployment, low pay, insecure contracts and high competition amongst workers to secure and retain employment opened up additional psychosocial costs of securing employment.

The tactic of distorting information in employment interviews was also often described in the context of labour market conditions. This context was often implicated in material that described the high levels of hostility within the interview setting. Interviewees were suspicious of interviewers and felt interviewers were in turn suspicious of them. With competition for employment being so fierce, the employment interview became the focus of increasing pressure for interviewees. The interview setting was seen as a 'tinder box' of tension. The practice of interview panels (multiple interviewers) often exacerbated the feelings of anxiety of interviewees with feelings of being 'ganged up on'. This was described as impacting upon the way information was handled by interviewees in the interview setting. Participants talked of 'bending the truth' in their attempts to secure employment. Further, the nature of how information was handled by interviewers was described as characterised by manipulation. Interviewers were seen as asking trick questions and having a hidden agenda. Further, interviewees felt as though they were being processed collectively rather than as individuals. Combined, this led to feelings of disempowerment and dislocation from the employment interview. This tension in employment interviews gave rise to considerable levels of anxiety and stress for interviewees.

I used the material from this chapter to inform the intervention stage of the project and much of it became incorporated into the main body of the Code of Practice participants and I developed for four local employer organisations. I now turn to describe the processes involved in the research interventions I became involved in during the course of this research.

8.2 Praxis

Praxis is the practice rather than the theory of a field of study. It refers to the process of acquiring knowledge through action. The action element to this research project was realised both at an organisational and an individual level. I engaged with the former through the intervention stage of the project. There, research participants and I actively sought change in the staffing policy of local employer organisations. The change created through the research process at the individual level was grounded more in the experience of the research process itself. This involved the personal effect the research process had on research participants. I reflect on the effect of the research process on myself as researcher in Chapter Ten.

8.2.1 Individual interventions

The research process created change. Both research participants and I were affected by becoming active in the research process. For some participants this change may have been momentary and subtle. For others it was more long term and noticeable. I am only able to reflect more fully on changes that were more long term and noticeable where participants and I were in contact over a period and where they directly communicated these changes to me. For participants who I was unable to maintain contact with or who I did not seek such contact with, I am left to guess the extent their involvement in the research process may have created change in their lives. Opportunities for realisable change were opened by my offer to reciprocate, in kind, the support each research participant offered me through their involvement in the project. At other times, change resulted through a general engagement in the research process.

First, I turn to Jack. The research process intervened in Jack's life most noticeably in relation to his employment and income circumstances. Jack moved from unemployment to employment and back to unemployment during this research project. His active participation in the research process had an impact on these transitions in his life. He turned to me for advice on his eligibility for welfare benefits during his move into and subsequently out of employment. Further, his involvement in the consultancy groups and steering groups offered Jack additional sources of support and information concerning his employment rights and prospects. I will reflect on two research interventions that I can identify in relation to Jack.

The first of these interventions was unsuccessful from Jack's perspective. Following our first individual interview we arranged a benefit advice interview, during which we explored Jack's eligibility for disability benefits. Jack had been experiencing considerable difficulty in his life because of his disability. Through discussing how much difficulty he was experiencing and through our previous discussion in an individual interview of Jack's experience of disability, we were drawn towards the possibility he could apply for

Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Through discussing his previous attempts to claim DLA, we explored his experiences and reflected on how, during his interviews with both his doctor and Benefit Agency staff, Jack felt unable to sufficiently communicate the very real difficulties he faced. Here the material he was sharing with me during the individual interview and the benefit advice interview opened a process that would lead to an individual intervention. I encouraged and supported Jack's claim for DLA and offered him the opportunity to fully engage with research material that more fully articulated the effects his disability was having on his life. The immediate and practical support I offered Jack was to back up his claim for DLA and to support him in filling in the claim form if he chose to apply.

The outcome was not successful for Jack. Following our discussions, Jack had consulted his doctor but was advised not to pursue a DLA claim. He told me he found it too hard to try to articulate his difficulties to his doctor. The material he initially shared with me concerning his resistance to disclose the difficulty he was experiencing to professionals was again played out during his meeting with his doctor. He appeared to have insufficient room to develop the material that the research process had opened. Jack's doctor gave greater credence to Jack's account of his disability when he made light of his difficulties. He talked to me of his doctor's comments that 'you had to be *really* disabled' to be eligible for DLA. Jack was uncomfortable with the feeling he was claiming for something he was not eligible for and decided not to pursue a claim. He therefore did not take up the support I had offered. However, we were further to consolidate the material on the actual difficulties Jack was experiencing when it became useful at a later stage. There, our involvement in the research process again led to an intervention in Jack's life. This time the intervention was, from Jack's perspective, more successful.

By this time Jack had secured employment, albeit unsatisfactory employment. He found a job in a sheltered workplace but was finding himself increasingly disabled in that employment setting. The working environment he was in was causing him considerable distress. Jack telephoned me to say that he had taken "sick leave" and he wanted some advice from me. We talked of the difficulties he was experiencing. He wanted to leave work but was unsure if the extent to which his working environment disabled him was sufficient to justify this. In particular, he was concerned that if quitting his employment was not justified, he would not be eligible for unemployment benefit and therefore would have no money to live on. Again, he was caught amid concerns that he should be making light of his difficulties rather than 'overplaying them'. He was concerned his difficulties were not sufficient to justify his special treatment, ie. leaving work without losing entitlement to welfare benefits. Jack had again consulted his doctor who had referred him to a specialist. Both his doctor and his work manager had told him they would be happy to sign him off as permanently "sick" if this were the conclusion reached by the specialist. I arranged to meet John shortly before his meeting with the specialist and talked with him about the difficulties he was experiencing. Through supporting Jack in his interview with the specialist we were able to support material that described Jack's difficulties and avoid material that made light of those difficulties. Jack communicated the very "real" difficulties he was experiencing to the specialist. From Jack's perspective, the outcome was successful. He was given support to quit his employment without losing his eligibility for welfare benefits. I describe the meeting between the specialist, Jack and myself more fully in Chapter 10.

Citing as a successful intervention one that resulted in a research participant losing employment may appear strange, considering this project sought to remove barriers to employment. However, Jack felt it to be a positive outcome. He was able to remove himself from a situation that was causing him considerable distress and he could give himself 'breathing space' to consider his future employment prospects while outside the stressful situation he had found himself in. He expressed considerable relief at the outcome of his interview with the specialist. I believe Jack's involvement in the research process allowed him to develop an account of his experiences that supported him during a time of particular distress in his life. Further, the support of fellow research participants during our consultancy and steering group meetings also offered Jack the opportunity to hear other disabled people's employment experiences and often he told me of how he had obtained additional support from this. During these meetings Jack was increasingly becoming aware of his employment rights and was finding a supportive environment in which to express his concerns. Jack told me of the positive impact his involvement in the research process had for him. However, he also showed the value he placed on his involvement in the research process in other ways. Though I felt uncomfortable with this, Jack showed his gratitude through buying me on one occasion an ounce of tobacco (we were both smokers then) and on another occasion a half bottle of whisky. These gifts were substantial given the very low income he was on throughout this project. I found it difficult to accept these gifts as I was being singled out for thanks when I felt the gratitude would have been more appropriately directed to all those involved in the research process. However, by the nature of these being individual interventions, I feel it was no wonder that an individual was singled out for recognition. These gifts signified to me the positive effect Jack had experienced through becoming involved in the research process and the positive process of change that I had become a part of in Jack's life. I term this an individual intervention and the opportunity I had to intervene in this way was, I feel, opened through the different research roles participants and I occupied in the research process. I describe these more fully in Chapter Ten.

I now turn to Erica, and reflect on how her involvement in the research process may have effected moments of change in her life. At the time, Erica was studying for a BSc. degree at university. I begin by recalling a telephone call I received near to the end of my involvement in the research. 'Thanks, you've given me the confidence to do things I don't think I would otherwise have done' (Erica, paraphrased from a telephone conversation, September 1997). Erica called to invite me to the next steering group meeting. By that stage, she had taken over the running of the group. She also telephoned to pass on some good news that she wanted to tell me. She had been offered some individual consultancy work on employment and disability issues with a local employer organisation. This was bringing in a significant extra earned income to supplement the student grant she was on. She also told me of how she was gaining considerable feelings of purpose and excitement through getting further involved in disability issues in general and disability research in particular and being recognised as a valuable resource in terms of her knowledge and experience for which organisation were prepared to pay money. Though perhaps more of a reflection of Erica's generosity in allowing me to take credit for her new found career direction, she communicated what I consider a very sincere sense of gratitude for having the opportunity to become involved in the research process. She often made comments to me of this nature. She felt her involvement in the research process had given her increased confidence in her own ability both to act as a disability consultant and to engage in disability research herself at the end of her undergraduate studies and beyond. Among other times, the research process brought us into contact during the times she was preparing for and recovering from university examinations. Throughout, the research process was allowing her to take a more active role in a research setting, a setting which she was arguably being trained to function in through her university training. She was in her second year of her undergraduate course and was being reminded during her studies of the fact she was not yet at an academic level where she would be expected to engage in empirical research "proper". Early in her involvement in the research process she had expressed to me her lack of confidence in her own abilities to succeed at university. She wished to pursue a career in research but felt this to be beyond her at that time. However, through becoming engaged in the research process, she increasingly told me of her growing awareness of her abilities and talents in respect to engaging in research. Her involvement in the steering and consultancy groups was demonstrating both to herself and to others that she had a valuable contribution to make and could sustain herself effectively in a research environment. The research process allowed her the room to experience a research setting as a more active participant in that setting.

The research process created an additional practical and immediate benefit for research participants who became involved in the steering and consultancy groups through providing a source of income. This was perhaps most highlighted in the involvement of Dawn, Mark, Phil and Simon. These research participants were all working in a local Adult Training Centre (now known as "Resource Centres). In the centre they received a wage of between four and six pounds for working a twenty-four-hour week. The rest of their income came from welfare benefits. Through their involvement in the consultancy and steering groups they earned a wage of five pounds per hour. This was a considerable sum of money for them to earn, amounting to twenty fold increases in the hourly rate they were effectively being paid at the centre (twenty-five pence per hour). Each participant communicated to me their sense of satisfaction of occupying a paid role in the research process. Mark told me of how he had gained a sense of self esteem from being paid a decent wage. Through participating in a steering group meeting, participants would typically receive twelve pounds fifty (two hours work and a non discretionary two pounds fifty to cover expenses). This amounted to between two and three weeks "wages" at their centre. Through paying participants a wage for their involvement in this part of the research project, I was transferring some research resources directly to research participants. Here I was transferring the funding I had secured from a Local Authority (with their agreement) to research participants.

Less immediate, but still practical and financial, was the benefit advice information I offered to low-income research participants. I feel this was at the core of the individual interventions in this project. Here I transferred informational resources to research participants which, on occasion, led to participants being able to secure increases in their financial income. Thirty-six research participants took up the offer of this type of advice. I calculated a total of sixty-seven entitlement cases ranging from between one and six separate entitlement cases for each participant. I did not formally record the outcome of the advice given such as whether a participant's income increased/decreased or was left unaltered. I felt uncomfortable in pursuing participants to check what they had done with the benefit information I had shared with them. The benefit information was something I exchanged with participants to repay them for the material they had shared with me through the research process. I was reluctant to ask participants to then return information to me (ie. on what they had done with the benefit information). However, on reflection this was valuable information I was losing, information that could legitimise this type of research exchange and convince other researchers that this is an activity worth engaging in - assuming the outcomes were positive. Fortunately though, upon occasion research participants would get back in touch with me to tell me of the successful claims they made based on the benefit information I had shared. Also, when I was in contact with participants after I had offered the benefit advice I would often learn of the outcome of participants acting on this advice. In four cases participants took up their entitlement to free prescriptions and school meals which they were unaware they were entitled to before our benefit advice interview. One participant moved from lower to middle rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance. This was an increase in her weekly income of nineteen pounds. A further participant secured Industrial Injuries Benefit of twelve pounds per week. These latter two participants secured an increase in their gross income of 25 per cent and 30 per cent respectively from acting upon the benefit advice information offered during these interviews.

The positive nature of these individual interventions was not only measurable in a participant's increased financial income. It was also measurable in terms of a research participant's increased awareness of the welfare benefit system. The type of benefit advice they asked for was wide-ranging. For example, we looked at what would happen to a participant's benefit entitlement if s/he were to marry, if s/he were to join the Territorial Army, and if s/he were to return to Further Education to name just three types of advice different participants sought. Often the advice would be used to confirm a participant was getting the benefits they were entitled to and to clarify why they were receiving the benefits they were. On a couple of occasions, benefit advice interviews were used to check on benefit entitlement of participants who were feeling anxious that they were receiving more benefit than they were entitled to. One participant in particular was worried he was receiving too much money from the Benefits Agency. He was caught between deciding whether to inform the Benefits Agency and risk losing benefit if it he was indeed being overpaid and not telling the Benefits Agency and risk being found out with the consequence of being asked to pay back all of the money he had been overpaid. If the latter were the case, he was worried there would be many back payments for him to make which would have had a hard felt financial impact on him. The overpayments he suspected he had received were over a ten-month period, totalling some four hundred and eighty pounds. Following the benefit advice, he was reassured that he was in fact getting his full benefit entitlement which he told me considerably eased his worries. He was reassured he would not have to pay any money back. In a similar case, a participant had found she had been paid more housing benefit than she was in fact entitled to. At the time of our interview she had only just received a letter from her Local Authority instructing her of this. She came to the benefit interview seeking advice on what to do, she was particularly concerned she would experience hardship paying the money back as it amounted to what was for her a considerable amount. We worked through the benefits legislation and found that as the overpayments had been the fault of the Council rather than her own fault, she would not have to pay the money back. I gave her the appropriate information and references to the relevant sections of the legislation for her to quote when writing back to the Council. As a result she was not asked to pay the money back as the council accepted liability. In these cases, though participants did not receive an increase in income, they increased the security of their income from removing both real and imagined negative impacts on their benefit income.

Further, unemployed participants often used the benefit advice to calculate the financial implications of taking on employment. Several participants used the benefit advice interviews to test out a series of hypothetical cases to see what would happen to their income if they were to take on paid employment. For example, several cases were explored that looked at the full financial implications for participants of taking on part time as opposed to full-time work and work waged at different rates. This offered participants the opportunity to think realistically about the type of employment and the type of wage they should be looking for. This opportunity was not otherwise available to them due to the complexity and impenetrability of the benefit system and the reluctance of the Benefits Agency to provide such information to claimants. Given the material I describe in the earlier half of this chapter - the likelihood that employment could trap people into poverty - this was important information for participants to have access to. Again, the provision of benefit advice eased the insecure position many unemployed participants felt themselves in - being unable to plan for the financial implications of future transitions into employment.

These types of individual interventions had a positive impact on research participants. Such interventions were facilitated by the nature of the research roles participants and I could occupy in the research process. Participants had opportunities to take a more active part in the research process and research resources were shared with participants, both monetary and informational. However, the focus of the project was further aimed towards wider organisational change.

8.2.2 Organisational interventions

The first part of the intervention stage of the project engaged me in a process of securing funds to support a steering group and a series of consultancy groups. I applied to three Local Authority (LA) organisations detailing my plans for establishing these groups and my anticipation of the financial costing of the two groups (Appendix Three[f]). One LA agreed to fund this part of the research project. I obtained this support through the help of a member of the local Committee for the Employment of Disabled People (CEPD) who also worked in the LA. She was instrumental in following up my initial funding application and insuring the "right" information was heard by the "right" people. With this person's help I secured a grant of one thousand pounds. This money was offered to pay both the fees of consultants recruited into the two groups and for publicity costs including printing and postage costs of the information our groups produced.

My next task was to recruit people to participate in the steering and consultancy groups and to recruit employer organisations into the intervention. I sought to recruit employer organisations from a CEPD workshop on the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in December 1996. More than sixty major employers across Central Scotland attended the event. During the workshop I distributed information on my research and, in particular, on the intervention stage of the project (Appendix Three[g]). Further, a committee member during his closing speech to the workshop event told employers of my research project. I recruited six employer organisations from this event. Each had read the material I had distributed at the workshop and expressed their interest in the research by returning a reply slip included in the material. Each of these employer representatives indicated their initial wish to become involved in and/or to hear more about the intervention stage of the research. I then contacted each employer to arrange a time to meet.

I then moved to co-ordinate the steering and consultancy groups. I recruited members of these groups by sending, to all disabled participants who had been involved in the research, details of my intervention plans along with a letter inviting participants to become involved in either or both groups I was proposing to establish (Appendix Three[h]). Initially, thirteen participants replied stating they would like to become involved in the intervention. By the time we met for the first time, this number had reduced to nine.

8.2.2.1 Steering and consultancy groups

We established what was to become our first steering group in February 1997. We met as a group of ten people, nine research participants and myself. We held our meeting in a common room at my university. The members of this initial group were Mark, Dawn, Simon, Phil, Erica, Sandy, Ewen, Jack, and Kate. Participants attended the meeting to hear more about the intervention stage of the research. We began the meeting informally and between us we established a relaxed and informal climate for our discussion. For the first half hour of the meeting I shared my interpretations of the research material that had been shared with me during the research process up to that point in time. In particular, I focused on the issues of defining disability and employment interviews that had been a central focus of my research concerns. I invited steering group members to add comment throughout and we generated discussion on many aspects of the research interpretations I presented. I then introduced the idea behind forming the research steering group and consultancy groups. I described the consultancy group as visiting local employer organisations to consult on employers' policies on recruiting and retaining disabled employees. I further told participants the names of the employer organisations that I had so far been successful in recruiting into the intervention. I described the steering group as developing strategies for how consultancy groups would meet with employers and how they would seek to affect an employer's policy. I described how this group would oversee the activities of each of the consultancy groups.

During this first meeting I further introduced the group to the concept of the *Code of Practice on the Employment of Disabled People.* I put forward my suggestion of using the research findings to inform the Code so that it would act as an alternative to the Government's Code of Practice. The basis for this Code was a document published by the Northern Office Group (NOG, 1996). It was a Code of Practice developed through the collaboration of multiple organisations throughout the North of England. The Code was directed towards promoting good practice in the formulation of disability policy in LA organisations. The Code took the Social Model of Disability as its main focus and used this model to inform policy guidelines. Defining disability had been an important focus of the research material and this Social Model provided a liberating and empowering definition for disabled people that I felt may have resolved many of the concerns over definitional issues research participants shared with me. I sought participants' guidance on whether this was indeed the case. The result was that the model was enthusiastically accepted by all those in the group. The NOG document was published without copyright as the original authors sought to encourage use of their document as a policy guidance for employers and wished it to be freely distributed and freely used. My plan was to form consultancy groups that would meet initially with each employer to find out their areas of particular concern and to obtain enough information for us to develop an individualised Code of Practice for each organisation. This Code was to be based on the original NOG document which we would alter to take account of the research material from this project. I would then draft a copy of the Code and co-develop this with consultancy group members. We would then send the Code to the employer and meet again with them after they had time to consider it fully. In that meeting we would seek the employer's reaction to the document and co-develop with them a finalised Code which their organisation could use to inform policy in relation to their employee recruitment and retention practices.

All those at the meeting agreed to become members of the steering group. Between research participants and I, we agreed to meet once a month as a steering group for the intervention stage of the project. Initially four of the nine participants agreed to become involved in consultancy groups. We further began some exploratory talks on more specific detail on the consultancy groups and on the "house keeping" of running and sustaining such groups. I had at that stage organised the first consultancy meeting with one employer from the initial group of six employer organisations. Sandy, Erica and I decided to become this first consultancy group (CG1). Among participants, who had now effectively become steering group members, we negotiated general guidance for the roles of consultants. We decided our remit would be to present the Social Model of disability to the employer and seek to listen to the employer's concerns related to disability policy. Because we began planning the nature of the intervention consultancy groups would initiate during this meeting, I view this first meeting as a steering group meeting. This also allowed me to pay participants in the first group meeting for their involvement. I could pay participants as consultants working as a steering group.

We held our second steering group meeting a month later. We moved our venue to a community facility lent to us from a member of the CEPD. There were eight of us at the meeting. We allowed some time at the beginning of the meeting to share our experiences of disability and employment and we then moved to discuss the agenda of the consultancy groups and overall intervention programme in more detail. We began this process by Erica and I discussing our consultancy group's (CG1) meeting with the first employer organisation, Hopie Health Trust [pseudonym], during the previous month. We had met June, a director of human resources at that organisation. Our consultancy meeting ran for one and a half hours. We discussed the Social Model of disability and introduced the idea of the Code of Practice. June also told us of the particular concerns her organisation had over the recruitment and retention of disabled employees. We took note of these and agreed with June to develop a preliminary Code of Practice to address the issues she had discussed. Both Erica Sandy and I felt very positive about our meeting and found June to have been very receptive to our ideas. Erica and I summarised our experiences of this meeting to the steering group and this helped to inform the discussion that followed.

We negotiated a general plan (see figure 8d) for the next series of consultancy group meetings with the remaining five employer organisations. My own contribution to the plan was to bring points One and Two to the

PLAN FOR INITIAL CONSULTANCY GROUP MEETING

1. Ask the employer about their concerns and the issues they want to address.
2. Presenting the Social Model of disability.
3. Talk about changing attitudes.
4. Talk about changing the physical environment of the work setting.
5. Talk about statistics that show the value of disabled workers.
6. Thank the employer for their time and set up the next meeting.

Figure 8d: Consultancy group plan

agenda. These had been the two main elements to our first consultancy meeting with Employer One. However, these points were further explored and enriched by the contributions of the group in deciding the form these points should take. For example, Sandy innovated our approach by bringing in a flow chart to be used during point Two that demonstrated the differences between the Social and the Medical Models of disability (see Appendix Three[i]). He had used this type of material in his own involvement in a disability rights group. Points Three, Four and Five were brought to the plan by research participants. In particular, it was suggested we should focus on changing attitudes in the employer organisation before we talked to employers about changing physical aspects of work environments. This was felt necessary as the group did not want to put too much emphasis on the idea of adapting equipment. They felt this may have been off putting to employers as participants anticipated this would lead employers to focus on the costs before they focused on the benefits of employing disabled people. More generally, the group decided the consultancy meetings should place a focus on the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The plan we agreed was that each consultancy group would meet with the employer and then meet separately to draft a Code of Practice for the employer. It would be my job to make the alterations to the original Code and distribute it to the consultancy group to check that the alterations were what we had agreed before sending it to the employer. We would then set up another meeting with the employer to discuss the Code. We then went on to discuss preliminary ideas for the second of these series of two consultancy meetings with each employer where we were to negotiate a final draft of the Code. In response to steering group members' requests, I agreed to distribute copies of a general draft Code of Practice out to each member for the following meeting. Members agreed to critically reflect on the Code before they were used by the consultancy groups. At the end of the meeting we organised ourselves into two more consultancy groups (CG2 and CG3). CG2 included myself, Jack and Ewen and CG3 included myself, Erica and Mark.

By the time of our third steering group meeting we had run two further consultancy meetings with two more employer organisations, Oliver International and Forth Valley College [pseudonyms]. CG2's meeting with Oliver International had not gone to plan in that both Jack and Ewen, who had originally agreed to be involved in this consultancy group, were unavailable at the time the employer representative agreed to meet us, and another date could not be negotiated. I therefore met the representative alone and reported back to the steering group on this. However, CG3's meeting with Forth Valley College had gone to plan and Erica and I met with them and carried out the consultancy group plan as had been agreed by the steering group. I reported on how my meeting (CG2) with Fern, a Human Resources Advisor from Oliver International went well. I reported that, as with CG1's meeting with Hopie Health Trust, my presentation of the Social Model of disability was well received and Fern greeted the idea of co-developing a Code of Practice with enthusiasm. The flow diagram, suggested by Sandy during the previous steering group, was a particularly useful means of explaining the Social Model. I also came away from the meeting with a considerable amount of information on their organisation's staff recruitment strategies and several documents giving details on these. CG3's meeting with Ailsa, a Personnel Officer from Forth Valley College, went very well also. Again, we left feeling positive and well informed over the type of Code of Practice we were to develop for them. Further, we had held our second CG1 meeting between myself, Erica and Sandy where we discussed and co-developed the Code of Practice for Hopie Health Trust. From writing or telephoning steering group members before this meeting we received the go-ahead to use the draft Code as a basis of co-developing individual Codes for each employer. This was to be the first individually tailored Code of Practice we drafted and was a comprehensive document extending to some seventy pages of text (see Appendix Three[a]). Both Erica and I (Sandy was unable to attend this steering group meeting) reported to the steering group on how CG1's second meeting went and how our plans were being put into action. We had met at Sandy's house and spent an hour going through the original draft Code adding and omitting content to it according to the issues June from Hopie Health Trust had asked us to address. For example, she had expressed a concern that there were negative views widespread in her organisation about the productivity of disabled workers and concerns about the increased absenteeism of disabled workers. We therefore included a section that listed statistics showing disabled workers to be as productive and reliable, if not more so, than non disabled workers (see Chapter Two). Following these discussions I distributed the Code of Practice that CG1 had co-developed for Hopie Health Trust. As a steering group we set ourselves the task of briefly, though critically, examining the document. We did so on this occasion as it was the first Code we were sending out to an employer and we felt it important to have the Code cleared by the steering group first. A more detailed review of the document would be for both the employer organisation and CG1 to do jointly at their next meeting. After allowing a week for feedback from the steering group, I sent the Code to June at Hopie Health Trust. No amendments to the document were suggested by the steering group, though there was a concern that the document was too long for participants to examine it in much detail given the time table we were working to. We decided to allow more time for the steering group to review the Code if we were to do so again. Despite this lack of time, all steering group members reflected that from browsing through the document they were sufficiently happy to allow the consultancy process to go on.

Five of us were present at our fourth steering group meeting. We had much to discuss. In the month leading up to the meeting we had formed CG4 (Sandy and I) who had meet with Castle Council [pseudonym]. We met with Gina who was responsible for Equal Opportunities policy with that organisation. As with other initial consultancy group meetings, the meeting went well. We came away with many concerns Gina wanted to be addressed and felt positive over how both the Social Model of disability and our Code of Practice had been received. Also CG3 had met for a second time during that month to discuss and develop the Code for Forth Valley College. We met up at my office at university and spent an hour editing the original draft Code to address the concerns Ailsa had shared with us. During the week that followed I had put together and printed the modified Code and sent a copy to CG3 and with their permission then sent it on to Ailsa.

As well as discussing the activities of these various consultancy groups, we also used this steering group meeting as a make shift consultancy group (CG2) on the Code of Practice for Oliver International. Ewen Jack and I were still finding it difficult to arrange a time to meet. Both participants were present at this meeting, so we decided to use part of this meeting as a consultancy group but also to include other steering group members in on the process. I distributed material on the selection and recruitment practices I had been given by Oliver International and we proceeded to discuss these and the content of the draft Code that was to be developed for them. We agreed on the modifications we would make on the original draft of the Code. At the meeting, steering group members also expressed disappointment over the length of time Hopie Health Trust was taking in getting back to us on the Code of Practice we had sent to them. It had then been more than six weeks since we had sent them our draft of the Code. We further decided to abandon working with two employer organisations who we had yet to have our first consultancy meeting with. Despite several attempts to initiate a meeting with representatives from each of these organisations, they had not been in contact with us and we decided it was not worth pursuing them. Members felt the work we had before us in consulting with the remaining four employer organisations was more than enough to keep us busy over the coming months. We therefore decided to reduce the number of employers we were engaged with from six to four. Also during this meeting, Erica began to discuss the idea of continuing the group after my involvement in the research project had come to an end. My funding was to run out in four months time and I had warned the group during the first steering group that when my funding ran out I could not guarantee I could still be involved with the group. At this stage, discussion was speculative and it was decided this should be further discussed in future steering group meetings. We agreed upon a timetable for the completion of the remaining consultancy work. By that stage we had four employer organisations involved at different levels in the consultancy process. We had sent out individually tailored Codes of Practice to Hopie Health Trust and Forth Valley College. With Castle Council our consultancy group had yet to meet to decide the alterations needed for their Code. With Oliver International we were in the process of sending out a draft Code to them.

Eight of us were at the fifth Steering Group meeting. By the time of that meeting, the two remaining Codes had been drafted by CG2 and CG4 and sent to Castle Council and Oliver International. Both groups had got together to edit the original Code for each of these organisations. In each case the consultancy groups had reviewed and agreed for the Codes to be sent out to each respective employer. There was a growing frustration among members over the length of time the consultancy process was taking. By that stage, none of the employers were at the stage of being ready to discuss and co-develop a final draft of the Code with us. Hopie Health Trust had been sent the Code ten weeks earlier and Forth Valley College had been sent the Code six weeks earlier. We spent some of the time during this meeting discussing further the progress of the Code of Practice with Castle Council. Sandy and I went back over our report of our initial consultancy meeting with Castle Council. We talked about the positive feeling that came from that meeting. We reflected on the change in our mood in the light of the increasing delays in setting up the second consultancy meeting with them to discuss the Code.

Towards the end of this meeting, the group looked ahead to the time when I was to withdraw from the field. This was to happen following the next meeting. I explained to the group that I needed a month to write up the research (it would actually turn out to take considerably longer) which would mean I had to disengage from the fieldwork. Erica began directing the discussion and again members considered continuing their involvement in the group following my departure. Erica stimulated discussion on the future of the group and indicated she was prepared to take on the role of facilitating the group, a role that I was occupying at that time. She would also take over the budget and take responsibility for paying out of the money remaining in our grant to fellow consultants for their time.

By the time of the sixth steering group meeting, the last I would attend, we had completed discussions with three of the four employer organisations (Hopie Health Trust, Castle Council and Forth Valley College) on the draft Codes we had developed. Consultancy groups had met with each of them to get feedback on the Code and to negotiate changes to the Code to arrive at a final version of the document that both the employer organisation and the consultancy group would be happy with. In the case of Hopie Health Trust and Castle Council, a final Draft was not decided on. Both employers had told CG1 and CG3 respectively that they wished to use the draft Code as it stood but gave no indication to us that it would be used to inform their selection and recruitment policy directly. The only form in which they told us the Code would be used was as a "training resource". We got the sense from these two employer organisations that "training resource" was a euphemism for "it will be shelved". We got the impression that the Code was unlikely to be used by the employer in any useful way but would be filed away and likely to be forgotten. Both consultancy groups came out with very negative feelings about the outcome of these two series of consultations with employers. Neither organisation took up the opportunity to co-develop a final Code with our consultancy groups. Representatives from both organisations cited their own over commitment to other matters of policy development or cited difficulties they were confronting in getting other officers in their organisation to give the document their full attention. Thus, it appeared that a combination of these organisations being too busy to deal with our Code and also apathy within these organisations towards our Code were significant barriers to the finalisation of the Code. Also, in these final meetings with employers our consultancy groups became aware that the position of the employer representative we met with was often pivotal to how far the Code could progress through the organisation. Employer representatives we were engaged with during this process were either Human Resource Directors/Advisors or Personnel and Equal Opportunities Officers. Each of these representatives was positioned as middle managers in their respective employer organisation and considerable impediments were confronting these representatives to either encourage or allow the Code to progress to a more substantive position in their organisation's policy development. The feeling among members of the consultancy groups found the contrast between the first and second meetings with employer organisations to be stark. At the start they would be positive and supportive towards the aims of the consultancy groups and positive towards the idea of the Code and reacted favourably and enthusiastically to the Social Model of disability. After the consultancy group had sent out the Code and then met with the employer representative again, the mood would change considerably. The climate in these meetings, particularly with the two organisations mentioned above, was thick with caution, timidity and reservation. Both consultancy groups who worked with Hopie Health Trust and Forth Valley College came away from the consultancy process with the feeling that the employer representative had done a "U-turn". We suspected that someone higher up the management strata in their organisation had pulled in the reins and put a stop to the consultancy process we were seeking to establish. The prospect for positive change in these policies was thwarted.

Castle Council also had not agreed with our consultancy group on a final draft of the Code. However, the reason they gave was that they required more time to consult with different departments within their organisation. They gave every indication to us (CG4) that the Code was being considered as a document to be used in policy formation. As I write up the research, the Code is still circulating across several departments within that organisation and is still being considered by policy makers in that organisation. Our consultancy group very much got the impression that the Code was having an impact, but that the process of the organisation considering policy change was taking a considerable time. We had been unable to meet with Oliver International after continual attempts to set up a meeting with them. At each point of contact they told our consultancy group the draft Code was still being considered. This was, by then, after the organisation had possession of the Code for some twelve weeks. At the time of this write up the steering group continues to function and are pursuing these remaining Codes. They are further considering their reactions to the progress their Codes have made in the employer organisations they have been consulting with and reflecting on expanding their consultancy role with employer organisations in the local region. However, in recent months the future of these groups has appeared less secure with several proposed meetings being cancelled by the participant who has taken over facilitating these groups and dates for future meetings not being set.

At the time of writing up, a total of sixteen Codes of Good Practice had been distributed. Interest was shown in our activities from employer organisations other than those involved in the intervention stage of the project. These other organisations had heard of the project through research participants, employer organisations and members of the CEPD. These were anonymous versions of the Code developed for Forth Valley College. This particular version of the Code was chosen for no other reason than convenience. Organisations who received copies ranged across a variety of types of organisation, from social service departments in Local Authorities across Scotland, and one in England (Sheffield) and non-statutory organisations involved in the field of disability and employment. This gave us a feeling of guarded optimism in that multiple employer organisations over a wide geographic area were considering our work. We felt this to be an achievement of our steering and consultancy groups. However, we remained frustrated over prospects that our Code would "make a difference". As a group of individuals brought together in a small collective, it had made a difference in our own lives. We had created new opportunities to learn about and experience consulting with employer organisations on disability and employment issues. However, for myself I am left unsatisfied.

This project may have been, in the short-term at least, more successful at opening opportunities for positive *individual* interventions than *organisational* interventions. As I am writing up, research participants and I are sceptical in some cases and in anticipation in other cases over what, if any, positive organisational interventions we have effected. Given the short amount of time and relatively small financial budget we had, it is perhaps no wonder this is what we are left feeling. Given more time and more resources, we may have been more effective, and I have hopes the steering and consultancy group members will be able to realise this if they continue to consult with employers under their own steam. I reflect on the role of the social sciences as informing and affecting social policy in Chapter Eleven. Before I do so, I turn to review what others have written on the specific issues (disability and employment interviews) that the topic of this thesis has broached.

CHAPTER NINE

LITERATURE REVIEW II: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

In this chapter, I return to reviewing the literature. This time I briefly make the connection between the understanding I constructed from the research material on disability and employment interviews with the conclusions made by other writers in the field.

9.1 Empirical Research on Disability

The Medical Model underpins many "official" disability surveys. A criticism of the OPCS (Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys) research and others like it, such as the later SCPR (Social and Community Planning Research) survey, is that the decision over how disability was defined was given to the expertise of professionals such as doctors, psychologists, occupational therapists etc. Their expertise was privileged over the expertise of disabled people (Berthoud et al. 1993). This type of research practice that excludes the participation of disabled people in the construction of research has been described as oppressive. 'Our ideas about disability and about ourselves are generally formed by those who are not disabled' (Morris 1994a:106). More generally several commentators have identified the role disability research plays in the oppression of disabled people (Hunt, 1981; Oliver, 1990a, 1992; Abberley, 1992; Morris, 1992a) and the lack of opportunities for disabled people to do disability research for themselves (Oliver & Barnes, 1997). A common thread of such critiques is the imposition of a model of disability conceived by non disabled people onto the lives of disabled people. At issue is the exclusion of disabled people from the construction of these surveys, '... the subjects of Official Statistics are invariably the passive objects of the researcher's investigations' (Abberley, 1992:141).

Abberley developed this criticism of disability surveys further. He felt surveys like the OPCS contained definitions of disability that were oppressive not just by the nature of the non inclusion of disabled people in their construction but also as oppressive in the meaning the definition imposed upon the lives of disabled people (Abberley, 1991). Oliver develops a similar type of attack on the OPCS survey. He stated that by the end of the survey any disabled respondent would find it hard not to arrive at the conclusion that their present difficulties in daily living were a direct result of their functional limitations. For Oliver this is a form of oppression. The blame for disabled people's marginalisation in society is apportioned onto the deficits of disabled people rather than the deficits in the fabric of society that impose socio-economic barriers on their lives (Oliver, 1990b).

The influence of the Medical Model is most noticeable through the form and function of the questions such surveys ask. In the SCPR research the first question relating to the respondent's disability asked the respondent what the name of their 'disability/condition' was but this was prompted with the inquiry 'what does your doctor call it?' (Prescott-Clarke, 1990:Appendix D). A negative identity of the disabled respondent is built into the SCPR survey of the disabled working-age population as this piece of work was predicated upon the Medical Model. Respondents to the survey were:

> ... asked whether the condition they suffered from made it harder to get and keep a paid job (relative to other people in the same area with the same skills and experience). If not, did it affect the kind of work they could do? If not, they were asked if they were in paid work, and, if they were, whether their condition would make it harder for them (than for the same comparison group) to get and keep <u>another</u> job.
> (Prescott-Clarke, 1990:14 *author's emphasis*)

The report goes on to say that as a result of asking these questions the researchers could sift out those who did *not have problems* and those who *had problems*, but ones that did not affect their employment circumstances. This allowed the researchers to concentrate fully on those that had said they had problems in relation to attaining employment due to their impairment. Thus, the individual is problematised as a requirement of being included in their final research sample. The process must have been, by definition, oppressive rather than liberating for those disabled people involved. Walker (1981a) points to the fact that the stigma associated with disability may lead many not to identify themselves as disabled, even on anonymous return by post questionnaires. This is not surprising given the nature of questions that result from the use of the Medical Model. For example, disabled travellers are subjected to the humiliation of the *International Air Transport* booking procedures that ask such questions as "does s/he smell?" (Wood, 1990). With the focus of the Medical Model being on impairment, the functional limitations and the absence of abilities of the disabled person become the focus of enquiry.

Criticisms of disability surveys are not confined to the ideological violence against disabled people through the imposition of an oppressive way of thinking about disability. There are more immediate concerns over research activities that contribute little to the quality of life of disabled people (Davis, 1986; Abberley, 1992; Oliver, 1994b). Indeed, the argument is that the OPCS survey actually worsened the lives of many disabled people. Past surveys have seriously underestimated that prevalence of disability in society. Public expenditure and service provision has thus been limited to an estimated population that falls short of the actual size of the disabled population. This has resulted in disabled people having to endure life on the margins of poverty with an inadequate system of income provision and live with an inadequate system of services to meet their needs (Walker, 1981a).

Surveys of the prevalence of disability estimate there to be five hundred million disabled people in the world today. That is one in ten people (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1991). The OPCS survey estimated there to be over six million disabled adults in Britain. It further estimated 14 per cent of the adult population had at least one impairment. Further, 22 per cent of adults of working age were estimated to have a health problem or a disability (Prescott-Clarke, 1990). This is the official statistic upon which most major Government provisions for disabled people have been based in recent years. As suggested above, there have been quite fierce criticisms of this survey (eg. Abberley, 1992). Oliver (1994b) states several reasons for his objection to disability research that perform 'head counts'. First, he takes an epistemological perspective describing how such practices individualise what is essentially a social phenomenon. He feels these types of surveys are obstructive in the resources they take up from those who are seeking to identify the social causes of disability and those who seek to remove those causes. Secondly, he believes there are pragmatic reasons for abandoning head counts, namely the failure of such surveys to produce reliable figures. He notes that to date out of all the head counts done, there is no agreed upon a figure for the prevalence of disability among them.

Many authors are also sceptical over the professional and political aims that commonly accompany these sophisticated, though often misplaced, surveys of the disabled population.

> They depend upon the interests, intentions and unexamined presuppositions of those with the power to define, and the ability of those so defined to resist inappropriate conceptions of their reality. So far as the severity scales are concerned, the danger is that the spurious objectivity implied by calculations and an elaborate system of judgement panels seduces the social worker into concluding that degrees of disadvantage and suffering are amenable to statistical representation in this way, and that appropriate welfare provision and resource allocation may be determined on the basis of it.
>
> (Abberley, 1991:173)

With the power to define residing in the medical expertise of disability specialists, the Medical Model lays claim to be a value-free way of measuring impairment (Nagi, 1979).

> A particular source of error is the narrowly trained clinician who believes clinical criteria are appropriate measures of problems that arise from systematic social injustice. Psychologists, like others, to the extent that their thinking incorporates cultural myths, become prisoners of plausible but erroneous hypotheses.
>
> (Meyerson, 1988:183)

Here disability is determined under a scientific discourse that seeks to bring the "problem" under control through developing more precise measurement tools and monitoring and surveying practices (Ligget, 1988). Both Abberley and Meyerson are among the critics who question the scientific objectivity and political neutrality of these types of head-count disability surveys. Abberley points out the inherently subjective nature of many survey questions, such as questions that ask if a respondent has difficulty walking. One person's notion of difficulty can be very much different from another's and thus not appropriate for a measurement tool reported to be "objective" (Abberley, 1991). Stone (1984) argues the Medical Model strives for an unambiguous, objective measure of disability, but is continually frustrated in doing this due to the inherently subjective nature of the determinants of disability. The objectivity such surveys strive for may be an attempt to depoliticise the concept of disability. The criticisms of them often energise the political dimension to disability and of disability research. 'Disabled people, in this country and elsewhere, are increasingly conceptualising their lives in political terms and acting accordingly, rejecting the dominant "personal tragedy" [medical] model of our situation. In this context, no conceptualisation of or questions about disability can be seen as "neutral" ' (Abberley, 1991:174). Given these surveys are unlikely to be accurate because disability is a social construct dependent upon corporate interests, intentions and presupposition. '...all statistics are constructed by particular people in particular social and historical contexts for particular purposes, and can only be understood as such' (Abberley, 1992:143). The political purpose of the SCPR survey is made clear on the first page.

> The aim of this study, carried out on behalf of the ES [Employment Service] by Social and Community Planning Research (SCPR), was to estimate the size and regional distribution of the GB population of people registrable under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944; to estimate the numbers of people eligible for sheltered employment; and to provide information that would permit an assessment of the effectiveness of current provisions for disabled persons, and of the direction that ES services should take in future.
>
> (Prescott-Clarke, 1990:1)

Abberley goes on to describe the problems of consistency in defining disability and more widely with the political purposes of these types of surveys and points to the large discrepancies between surveys when estimating the size of the disabled population.

> Functional definitions are essentially state definitions, in that they relate to the major concerns of the state; as regards production, capacity to work, as regards welfare, demands that have to be met from revenue if they cannot be offloaded on some other party; they ignore any consideration of the role of the state in the construction and perpetuation of disability.
>
> (Abberley, 1991:158)

He goes on to consider the political purpose of gathering data on disabled people, provocatively reminding the reader of the connection between data gathering practices in Nazi Germany to the state's project of genocide, an analogy also alluded to by Oliver (see Chapter Two). Yet all these classification schemes to date have ignored the crucial socio-political embeddedness of the functional limitations these surveys seek to measure and are thus socially and politically naïve.

> In recognising that disability is finally whatever public officials say it is, both social scientists and decision-makers must also be aware that understandings are shaped primarily by the concepts inherited from previous research. Any approach to the formulation of disability policy that fails to encompass the political aspects of this problem, therefore, may be inadequate.
>
> (Hahn, 1985b:102)

I entered into this research project with an awareness of the damaging social stereotyping of disability. I sought to avoid asking questions that would render a negative identity upon disabled research participants. I further sought to engage with the meanings people made of disability rather than try to measure disability along more quantitative lines. Further, I was aware that politics was embedded in disability research and sought to recognise this throughout this project. These factors contributed to the type of understanding of disability I present in this thesis. The way critics of the Medical Model of disability charge it with promoting a negative view of disability is supported in the way my own understanding of disability was constructed in this project.

Participants would describe to me the turmoil they experienced over the issue of disclosing their disability. The stigma of being identified as disabled was powerfully felt by disabled participants in this project. The concern was to cover up any sign of disability or to make light of any difficulty disabled participants experienced. This material was made the more evocative through the subjective level at which I was able to engage with the research material. This material is difficult to capture in the more objective style of the disability head-counts described above. It captured the rich contextualised meaning that disabled participants gave to their disability. This led me to an understanding that disability is a topic that is multi dimensional and more fluid than static in the way it is defined and the effects it has on people's lives.

I took the stance of contributing to the literature in a way that would avoid further marginalising and stigmatising disabled people both in the content of the findings I report and the process by which I constructed those findings. A key issue I addressed was in the exclusion of disabled people from the very research activities that claim to describe the meaning of disability. I feel the material in this thesis is a result of adopting an emancipatory research approach - an approach that has been called for by several disability writers and researchers.

Also, during this project the fact that many disabled people lived on the margins of poverty was important to recognise. Without appreciating the economic context of people's lives, it would have been difficult to fully recognise the extent of their exclusion in society. In material that was drawn from the benefit advice I offered disabled participants, the reality of this lived experience became very much apparent to me. This is material that comes from the subjective, contextualised experiences of disabled people. While past disability surveys have captured the numbers of people living on low incomes and in unsatisfactory employment or unemployment, the type of material I have presented offers a further qualitative insight into what living through unemployment and a dependency upon welfare benefits means to disabled people, particularly as disabled people seek to become more active in the labour market. I consider this vital material to add to the persuasiveness of the message that disabled people deserve full social and economic inclusion in society.

A further important thread throughout this project was the importance of recognising the political context of both the research process and research content. As described above, disability surveys have a distinctive political agenda. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the nature of this project being both an empirical and political enterprise. The empirical was the presentation of the understanding I constructed from the research material, the political was the interventions the research process spawned. The literature *does* politics through being used to achieve political ends by policy makers (eg. the SCPR and OPCS surveys). Research can also *talk* politics such as the increasing number of disability researchers who are writing powerful arguments for the need for increased inclusion of disabled people in society. The contribution of this project was to combine the empirical and political in one research endeavour.

9.2 Empirical research on employment interviews

The largest body of research on employment interviews came during the 1970s and 1980s. Since that time, research has built upon but not conspicuously added to these earlier studies. Amid the literature, a common definition of an employment interview is that given by Wiesner & Cronshaw.

> The employment interview is an interpersonal interaction of limited duration between one or more interviewers and a job-seeker for the purposes of identifying interviewee knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviours that may be predictive of success in subsequent employment. The operational indicators of this success include criteria of job performance, training success, promotion and tenure.
> (Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988:276)

Employment interviews are one of many means an employer uses to select employees. There is a broad range of means by which an employer selects her/his staff. Many alternative forms are used together, such as reference checking, psychometric testing, and bio-data (biographical data such as that supplied on application forms) are often used in combination. Other alternatives include such diverse methods as handwriting analysis (Zdep & Weaver, 1967).

Indeed, in reaction to a changing labour force, employers are using a greater breadth of employment selection devices (Day & Silverman, 1989). Employment interviews can vary widely in content and structure. In content they may vary from a general discussion of an interviewee's employment background and present skills to a highly focused discussion of the nature of the advertised position and the requirements of the job. In structure they may vary from an unstructured non-directive informal meeting between the interviewer and interviewee to a highly structured, formalised oral exam.

Over the past nine decades, a large body of literature has amassed on employment interviews. Periodically, there have been a number of reviews (eg. Wagner, 1949; Mayfield, 1964; Ulrich & Trumbo, 1965; Wright, 1969; Schmitt, 1976; Arvey and Campion, 1982; Harris, 1989). Generally these reviews report low levels of confidence in the reliability and validity of the employment interview as a selection device, but note its continued popularity with employers (eg. Wagner, 1949; Rodger, 1952; Mayfield, 1964; Ulrich & Trumbo, 1965; Milne, 1967; Schmitt, 1976; Rowe, 1981; Arvey & Campion, 1982; Reilly & Chao, 1982; Eder & Ferris, 1989). Several of these authors point to the popularity of the employment interview, when there has been such a prolonged period of scientific disfavour towards it, to be built upon the marketing uses of the interview. Among Wagner's (1949) conclusions were:

> The interview remains popular as a selection procedure despite its questionable reliability. Even though the interview were thoroughly repudiated, it probably would not be abandoned; there seems to be a certain human curiosity which can be satisfied in no other way than by "seeing the man [sic] in the flesh".
> (Wagner, 1949:42)

In 1975, the Prentice-Hall Publishing Company and American Society of Personnel Administration conducted a poll of some two thousand five hundred employer organisations in the US and found employment interviews to be the single most important selection method used by personnel (Prentice-Hall Publishers/ASPA, 1975). The measure of the worth of employment interviews are ultimately based on a series of different predictors such as productivity, performance, wage and promotion of successful interviewees as well as more generally staff turnover (re: Schmitt, *et al.* 1984). Reliability is assessed on comparison of different interviewer ratings of the same interviewee.

Anderson (1988) reviews the employment interview literature by applying a theoretical dichotomy to what he views are two broad schools of thought. He terms these *objectivist-psychometric* and the *subjectivist-social perception* perspectives. The objectivist-psychometric perspective, as its name suggests, views the employment interview as an objective, employment selection device that should be comparable to forms of psychometric testing. Indeed, the employment interview is often measured in its worth against psychometric tests (eg. Hunter & Hunter, 1984). The subjectivist-social perspective views the employment interview as a social encounter characterised by negotiation and a bilateral exchange of information between interviewer and interviewee. Though as Anderson himself concedes, the latter is naïve in the face of an increasingly hostile and competitive labour market where job opportunities in many careers are becoming increasingly scarce, its use is in highlighting the dominant conception of the employment interview as a one way decision making process. Very rarely in the past has the interview been thought of as involving the interviewee receiving, interpreting and acting on information presented during an employment interview. In research, the decision-making processes of the interviewer are privileged over the decision-making processes of the interviewee (Gillespie, et al. 1990), though there are exceptions to this (eg. Keenan, 1978). Moreover, little research on employment interviews has considered the effect the interview has on the interviewee. An exception would be Rynes et al. (1980) who looked at the effect of employment selection practices on the attitudes and choices of job applicants, and Schmitt & Coyle (1976) who looked at interviewees' experiences of being interviewed.

A body of the literature points to the general error laden nature of the interview, finding that typically employment decisions are made very early on in the interview, as early as within four minutes (Springbett, 1958; Hatfield & Gatewood, 1979). Dipboye (1980) suggested that decisions are made earlier than that and are determined largely during pre-interview evaluations. Concerns over the reliability of the employment interview as a selection devise were voiced very early on in the history of empirical enquiry into the employment interview (eg. Binet, 1911; Scott, 1915) and these concerns continue today. Concerns over threats to reliability are addressed through the use of board interviews where the ratings of a number of interviewers all present in an employment interview collapse their ratings together. This has led to many researchers advocating board interviews as a more reliable selection tool than interviews where there is a lone interviewer (Pursell, et al. 1980; Arvey & Campion, 1982;

Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988). Reliability is viewed as stronger when multiple ratings are combined statistically to produce a composite rating of the interviewee (Pursell, et al. 1980; Rothstein & Jackson, 1980). As I describe in my discussion of triangulation in Chapter Six, multiple interviewers can converge on "error" as well as "truth". Thus, in my view such attempts to bolster reliability may be misplaced.

The saviour of validity is often cited in the structure of the interview, leading many researchers to advise interviewers to avoid unstructured interview formats. This has been a common theme for a number of years (eg. Wagner, 1949; Rodger, 1952; Mayfield, 1964; Ulrich & Trumbo, 1965; Milne, 1967; Wright, 1969; Schmitt, 1976; Rowe, 1981; Arvey & Campion, 1982; Janz, 1982; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988). The distinction between validity being improved with structure and reliability being improved with number (ie. board interviews) was empirically supported by Wiesner & Cronshaw (1988) in their meta analysis of employment interview research up to that time.

The presence of bias sits at the heart of concerns over reliability and validity. In this way, bias is often cited as problematic due to its presence in employment interviews. However, it is also an integral part of the decision making process in an employment interview. Even if it were to be desirable to remove bias, it would not be possible. Kelman (1991) felt bias to be the integrative factor that makes the decision making process complete. It is therefore not the desirability or not of bias in the employment interview that should be the issue, but the type of bias. A bias based on an applicant's merit would be appropriate. A bias based on an applicant's gender, race or disability would not.

The literature points to a need for the direct application of theoretical knowledge to real life settings. Mayfield et al. (1980) were critical of employment interview research for confining itself to the social science laboratory, and were not surprised that personnel managers have not been keen to take up the theoretical ideas germinated in these settings. They call for more applied work before results of manipulating interview variables can be truly assessed. A criticism against much of the literature is that the majority of empirical studies have either been based on artificial, laboratory interview settings, bogus application forms, hypothetical interviewees (paper and pen people as opposed to real people), and undergraduates assuming the role of interviewer rather than using real interviewers (Wright, 1969; Landry & Bates, 1973; Zedeck et al. 1983). There have been calls for research on employment interviews to be contextualised in "real" settings and with "real" people (Dunnette & Borman, 1979). There are only a small number of studies that are real in this sense (eg. Rynes & Gerhart, 1990). Further, empirical studies on employment interviews often focused on the effect of sex, academic background and performance on aptitude tests, information that is perhaps better suited to other methods of employment selection such as bio-data, ie. many studies focus on how information contained on application forms is processed rather than on the interpersonal interactions that occur in employment interviews.

The business world has effectively ignored the advice of social scientists to use alternatives to the employment interview and social scientists' concerns over the lack of reliability and validity of the employment interview. At the end of the day the world of commerce may have won, as increasingly researchers are finding ways to support employers' faith in employment interviews by showing employment interviews to be valid and reliable after all. Recent progress in research into the employment interview have been suggesting refinements to the interview that increase reliability and validity and fewer authors now call for interviews to be abandoned, but perhaps this is not surprising. Morale has been low among employment interview researchers with their findings on the whole being ignored by those whom they felt they were there to help - ie. to help employers recruit the best people for the job. There has been increasingly positive empirical findings on the validity of the employment interview, particularly those that focus on structured interviews (Mayfield et al. 1980) and structured interviews containing more job-related questions (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988). The latter is known as situational interviewing (Latham et al. 1980). In the situational interview, questions form around a series of 'critical incidents' developed from a systematic analysis of the job. Thus, the interviewer asks the interviewee what s/he would do in a particular situation that may arise in a job.

> The effectiveness of the situational interview is readily explainable. First, the interview questions are derived from the results of a systematic job analysis. ...Second, the face validity of the procedure is ensured by asking only job-related questions. This appears to increase the motivation of the interviewee to take the test seriously.
>
> (Latham et al. 1980:426)

There has been support for the situational interview in both the reliability and validity it achieves (Weekley & Gier, 1987). The questions focus on future job performance by asking and answering questions based on hypothetical incidents deemed by the employer as critical to the job.

Another improvement to job interviews is the technique of focusing questions on past rather than future employment incidents. This was the approach advocated by Ghiselli (1966). However, this technique could only be used where job applicants have had previous experience of the type of employment they are applying for. Further, Latham is doubtful over the predictability from past performance to future performance. He has more faith in predicting from intentions to future actions than recollections of past actions (Latham & Saari, 1984).

Many factors have been put forward to account for the lack of reliability and validity as well as the general variability in results of past research on employment interviews (re: Arvey & Campion, 1982; Zedeck et al. 1983). Such factors cover: the differential effects of positive and negative information (Bolster & Springbett, 1961); contrast effect between interviewees (Wexley et al. 1972); similarity between interviewer-interviewee, interviewer experience; the presence of visual cues and non verbal behaviour (Hollandsworth et al. 1979); primacy-recency effects (Farr & York, 1975); and, first impressions.

Zedeck et al. (1983) used real interviewers and interviewees in real interview settings making real decisions in the sense that the interviews were for real jobs. From their results that found large individual differences in the decisions made by individual interviewers, they ask for a focus to be placed on the decision making strategies of individual interviews and more research into what qualities make for a good interviewer. The situation at present is that interviewers are often untrained. Rynes & Boudreau (1986) found that employer organisations do not invest heavily in training their recruitment staff in how to conduct an employment interview. More often than not, an employment organisation will ask members of staff to interview prospective employees without offering them any preparation or training on employment interview techniques. Further, factors other than training can influence the interviewer's performance in an employment interview. The role of the employer organisation can further have a part to play on what happens in the employment interview, ie. the extent to which the culture and aims of the organisation are sufficiently clear to the interviewer in order s/he can make the best decision (Rynes & Gerhart, 1990). At present, there is still much inconsistency in employment interview research and a lack of any convincing theoretical understanding. The field has remained ripe for fresh insight and understanding for a considerable time. A fruitful area of research is that which is taking place in real settings with real people. For too long, employment interview research has been confined to social science laboratory settings, with understanding being built upon "actors" playing the roles of interviewers and interviewees in contrived and artificial settings.

The dominant focus in the literature has been with the concerns of employers and little attention has been given to the perspective of employees. Much of the research on the employment interview has grown from researchers seeking to help employers make more effective employee selection decisions. The employment interview has predominantly been viewed as of empirical interest to business and management scientists who have sought to make their research applicable to the commercial operation of employer organisations. A central concern has been to find ways of making interviews more valid and reliable and to develop increasingly sophisticated ways of doing so. My project has taken a human rights perspective towards the experiences of disabled interviewees in particular and I believe in this way it makes a very different contribution to the research in this field.

There is little in the research I have reviewed that sought to capture the subjective experience of being in a research interview from the perspective of the employee. Moreover, little research has addressed the implications of different employment interview strategies on the interviewee's subjective experience of the interview. Where I have concentrated on this in my own research, the employment interview becomes characterised as a particularly hostile social environment for job applicants. The interview is described as a struggle for employment, involving sometimes debilitating levels of anxiety for interviewees. Where in the literature sighted above the board interview was seen by some as increasing the validity and reliability of employment interviews, in the context of the subjective experience of interviewees in this project it was described as adding considerably to the heightened tension in employment interviews - interviewers ganging up on the interviewee. Further, participants were suspicious of interviewer's asking "clever" and "trick" questions. Interviewees found themselves second guessing the real intention of interviewers. The material I have constructed suggests that the increasing sophistication of questioning techniques used in employment interviews may be increasing the suspicion of interviewees and moving them towards counter-strategies of deception and distortion of information. The emphasis on increasing the structure of employment interviews suggests to me that the agenda of interviewers is being privileged over the agenda of interviewees. The knowledge I have constructed from my research material suggests interviewees are fully aware of this and are reacting to this in a covertly confrontational way.

Further, the material from my project makes the link between what happens in employment interviews with the general context of the labour market with particular force. There was very little evidence of such a connection being made in the literature I have reviewed. Mostly, such research is removed from any form of socio-economic context. The closest this concern came to being articulated in the empirical research on employment interviews was in the criticism over the artificiality of laboratory research. This is the key to the failure of much empirical research into employment interviews. In this project, employment interviews became real through participants telling me of their experiences of employment interviews. This reality was in the interpersonal interactions that participants described, but the sense that these experiences became further real was when participants described their awareness of the socio-economic environment in which their experiences were situated. In particular, this concerned the high levels of unemployment, widespread insecurely and poorly paid employment and the perception that this amounted to a buyers market for employers where potential employees were in an abundant supply and where among potential employees there was a fierce competition for jobs.

9.3 Linking disability, discrimination, legislation and employment interviews

Links in the literature among all the themes I have so far reviewed in this thesis (legislation, disability, welfare benefits and employment interviews) are most often found in vocational rehabilitation. Vocational rehabilitation tends to focus on changing the individual (Lunt & Thornton, 1993). There is little attention paid to changing the social and physical environment in which the "problematised" behaviour occurs. Rehabilitation rarely recognises the shaping of disability by social policy (Hahn, 1984a). This is noticeable in papers that target individual client behaviour for change. Farley (1987), for example, describes training rehabilitation clients in social skills as a means of increasing their employment opportunities. Such papers have also focused on: teaching appropriate relationship skills (eg. Farley & Hinman, 1986); training clients to fill out application forms (eg. Mathews & Fawcett, 1984; Means & Farley, 1991; Nelson et al. 1994); employment interview skills (eg. Grinnel & Lieberman, 1977; Hollandsworth et al. 1977; Furman, et al. 1979; Farley & Hinman, 1988; Taves et al. 1992); employment task performance skills (eg. Farley, 1985); job-seeking skills (eg. Keith et al., 1977); interpersonal skills in the workplace (eg. Farley, et al. 1986); and more generally ensuring clients are 'psychologically prepared' for employment by promoting such things that have been termed 'career decidedness', 'vocational identity', 'vocational knowledge' and 'readiness for vocational planning' (eg. Farley, Schriner, & Roessler, 1988); general preparedness for employment (eg. Farley, et al. 1990); and, motivation for employment (eg. Means, 1987).

Often research into the difficulties disabled people experience at job interview problematise the disabled interviewee. This is the case in a paper that studied the effect of non-verbal communication of disabled interviewees on interviewers' judgements (Wright & Multon, 1995). The problem of poor interview performance was located with non-verbal deficits in the disabled interviewees. Such research and the interventions they suggest are typically built on an assumption the problem lies with the disabled person. For example, both of the interventions used in a cross comparison by Farley and Hinman (1987) concentrated on this. The interventions they compared were a *skills deficit* and an *inhibition* model, both allocating the deficit with the disabled individual. Further, Hahn notes that many personnel manuals suggest to disabled job applicants that they try to disguise their disability in job interviews and job applications to make a good appearance on the interviewer (Hahn, 1987). Highlighting these attributes of the disabled interviewee implicitly places blame on them for the lack of success at gaining employment. Other studies are more explicitly blaming of disabled jobseekers such as Sigelman et al (1980) who focused on the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of interviewees with learning difficulties as predictors of successful job interviews (Sigelman et al. 1980). Indeed, in the actual study, the researcher excluded five participants from their study based on their 'total inability to participate in an interview' (Sigelman et al. 1980:69), a course of action that may not go down well under recent anti discrimination legislation if the study were an actual real life employment selection incident. Finding that people with poorer communication skills in employment interview settings were discriminated against, their resolve was to suggest training programmes for such individuals. Leahy et al.'s (1992) review of doctoral dissertations in the field of rehabilitation points to a preponderance of research on intervening with individuals and a relative paucity of research on more macro level interventions. Redress is taken against the appearance of disability rather than the appearance of discrimination.

Interventions that focus on fixing the worker rather than fixing the job have wider implications. For example, Gostin points to the risk that employers may screen out workers who are more susceptible than others to toxic environments rather than removing the toxic elements in the working environment. Such interventions may have serious implications for the public health (Gostin, 1991). The Social Model, focusing on the disabling effects of the environment, points to other solutions to the employment concerns of disabled people.

> Hence, attention is correspondingly focused away from the clinical orientation of medicine and the micro-analytic interests of career guidance to a broader evaluation of the impact of public policy on disabled citizens, and solutions to problems associated with disability can be sought through the extension of legal rights rather than through an exclusive reliance on the medical repair of physical incapacities or the improvement of occupational skills.
> (Hahn, 1993:741)

There is some empirical research that has targeted the environment rather than the disabled person as suitable for modification (eg. Bradfield, 1992). Though even where environmental factors are identified, this does not always remove the attention of the researcher to essentially blame the disabled person by targeting change through the practice of client rehabilitation rather than environmental change (eg. Renwick & Krywonis, 1992).

There is a literature, although small, that documents the negative impact the employment interview may have on minority group members. Reilly & Chao (1982) compared different employment selection methods, such as interviewing, bio-data, self-assessments, reference checks etc. and advised that interviewing was unlikely to be a fair selection method, believing it likely to have a disparate impact on minority group members. Concerning ethnic group minorities in particular and employment selection tools in general, we should not be surprised that selection tests favour majority group members if one considers the socio-economic status of such minority group members. The tests are most often devised and used by majority group members, ie. the non disabled, white, male, middle-class people. These tests are likely to favour those who are most like the tester and those who hold similar values to majority group members.

There has been little research on disabled people in employment interviews despite there being research on women, minority groups and elders in employment interviews (Harris, 1989; Gouvier, 1991; Marchioro & Bartels, 1994). There has, however, been some recognition that disabled interviewees may be discriminated against in employment interviews (eg. Arvey, 1979; Rose, 1980; Stone & Sawatzki, 1980; Scheuerle, et al. 1982) and a consideration of the difficulties faced by disabled people at employment interviews (eg. Tagalakis et al. 1988). Also, there have been several studies that have shown disabled job candidates may be rated as favourably as non disabled candidates (eg. Colorez & Geist, 1987; Krefting & Brief, 1976) and other studies that have shown conflicting results with some disabled people with particular types of impairment being rated more favourably than non disabled candidates (eg. Czajka & DeNisi, 1988) and some as less favourably (Drehmer & Bordieri, 1985) or more favourably than non disabled candidates. However, the more positive ratings must be taken cautiously as many commentators feel social desirability may have played a part in the responses of research participants in these studies (Gouvier et al. 1991), which are often laboratory based studies. Research participants may have rated disabled interviewees more positively to gain positive social appraisal from the researcher. It may appear clear that the disability of the interviewee they are judging is the pivotal variable to the study and participants may be sensitive to experimental settings that are seeking to show how people discriminate against disabled people. The findings from these studies may tell us more about how "interviewers" wish to be perceived by social science researchers than about their decision making in employment interviews. While there are studies that show biased appraisals of disabled people in employment interviews (Stone & Sawatzki, 1980; Arvey & Campion, 1982; Cesare, et al. 1990), the literature documenting discrimination against disabled people in job interviews is often less than convincing. A number of these studies suffer from the "halo effect" where disabled job applicants were either rated, in terms of desirability for employment, as either equally as attractive (eg. Krefting & Brief, 1976; Stone & Sawatzki, 1980) or as more attractive (eg. Cesare & Varvel, 1994) than non disabled job applicants. However, this is only found where there are no personal consequences for the interviewer, say when the interview is in a hypothetical employment interview set up for the purposes of research. As I stated earlier, participants who act as interviewers, more often than not undergraduates, may wish to appear more socially desirable than they might otherwise be if they were in a real life employment interview and they were asked to make real recruitment decisions (Taylor, 1961; Feinberg, 1967; Livneh, 1982). Thus, despite positive evaluations of disabled interviewees in some empirical studies they continue to be less likely to be hired than their non disabled counterparts in real life employment interviews. However, the hypothesised existence of socially desirable responses in these empirical studies needs to be made with a degree of caution. We take at face value negative appraisals made of disabled people. We may be operating a similar negative bias that those who problematise disabled people make in other areas of disability research (Wright, 1987; Meyerson, 1988). We may be questioning how "real" positive appraisals of disabled interviewees are but leaving unquestioned the existence of negative appraisals of disabled interviewees.

Rose (1980) described four types of variable he felt were related to discrimination against disabled people in employment interviews. First, was the nature of the impairment. Second were other personal attributes of the interviewee. Third was the type of job being applied for. Fourth was the type of employer organisation in which the interview took place. This was one of the few papers that directly looked at the issue of disabled people being discriminated against in employment interviews. Arvey and Campion (1992) felt there to be a growing interest in research on discrimination against disabled people in employment interviews, but I was not able to find such a growth of interest in my literature search of the field. It appears research in this area is particularly thin on the ground.

The issue of whether to disclose a disability at an employment interview is problematic for disabled people (Huvelle, et al. 1984, Tagalakis, et al. 1988). The selection decisions in employment interviews are built upon rejection and negativity, with the interviewer finding reasons to reject rather than accept prospective employees (Springbett, 1958; Bolster & Springbett, 1961; Hakel, et al. 1970; Hollmann 1972; Constantin, 1976; Schmitt, 1976; Rowe, 1989). This may have particularly disadvantageous consequences for disabled job applicants where disability is predominantly thought of in negative terms (Fichten, 1988; Marchioro & Bartels, 1994) and where disability can predominate how an individual's identity is perceived (Tagalakis, et al. 1988). This may lead disability being focused on during employment interviews, to be used as a negative factor that will speed the interviewer to a negative decision (Christman & Branson, 1990). A bleak outcome would be suggested by empirical research that shows how information in an employment interview that is initially negative which is subsequently followed by information that is positive results in a less favourable outcome than initially positive information which is then followed by negative information (eg. Peters and Terborg, 1975). If the initial impression made at an employment interview by a disabled applicant is negative, this may not bode well for the interview outcome. It may make disabled interviewees defensive and cautious over giving interviewers information on their disability if they believe the interviewer may view such information negatively. This was a conclusion made by research conducted in the 1960s by Weiss and Dawis (Weiss & Dawis, 1960; Weiss et al. 1961). However, in a more recent study that examined the perceptions of disabled interviewees of employment interviews, findings suggested that disabled applicants wished to discuss the job-related aspects of their disability. Further, the study suggested that some disability related discussion connected to job performance was actually rated positively by non disabled interviewers (Macan, & Hayes, 1995).

Connecting directly to the impact of legislation on employment interviews and disabled job applicants, Carlson (1967) found inexperienced interviewers would make poor selection decisions when they were made aware of legislative guidelines on employment selection practices. More experienced interviewers were unaffected. Thus, legislation can interfere with the quality of decision making of interviewers in employment interviews. This is particularly so when affirmative action guidelines take a role in the selection process (Heilman, et al. 1992) - ie. where a disabled applicant is privileged over a non disabled applicant. Indeed, affirmative action plans have actually been opposed by those who would appear to have most to gain from them, ie. the minority groups whom such guidelines protect (ibid.).

The literature suggests those who suffer most harshly from discrimination in employment interviews are those who have a psychiatric disability (Bean & Beard, 1975). Stone and

Sawatzki (1980) refer to this as discrimination being more common against a 'functional' than a 'physical' disability. They found this evident in their study on the effect of an interviewee's disability on interviewer's decision-making. However their study falls short of the criticism concerning artificiality cited previously as they used management students rather than personnel managers as participants and conducted their study in a laboratory setting.

Some commentators on employment interviews adopted a research practice that was discriminatory in itself. In looking at the influence of bias in employment interviews, many empirical studies used highly normative concepts that for disability writers such as Hahn would appear quite offensive. For example, research participants, acting as interviewers, are asked to rate the physical attractiveness of interviewees, which by definition asks them to identify people they find attractive as well as those they find ugly (eg. Heilman & Saruwataria, 1979). This seems to me to be an oppressive type of rating to make, particularly for the ratee. It is a type of rating that serves to discriminate against people purely on the basis of their physical appearance. Such ratings sit at the heart of racism, sexism, ageism and disabilism.

In the US, over half a decade after the introduction of the American's with Disabilities Act, there has been little to suggest we should view the employment circumstances of disabled people in a more optimistic light. Disabled people continued to be under represented in the labour force (Blanck, 1995). The same appears to be happening in the UK following the passage of the DDA.

The material I have presented in this project suggests that discrimination in employment interviews is very much apparent in the experiences of the disabled people. The descriptions research participants gave of how employers excluded them from the work force were clear. Many of these descriptions were provocative and alarming. These were the direct experiences of disabled people who had endured harsh discrimination in employment settings. The concern over whether to disclose a disability or not was heightened in the dilemmas participants faced when attending an employment interview. I feel this pointed to the centrality of disability as a focus for discrimination by employers. Employer organisations were often viewed as likely to discriminate against disability. The negativity in the experiences of participants was palpable.

I did not look for faults in disabled interviewees to account for such negative experiences. As such, this project has contributed to the field in a way unlike that made by most rehabilitation specialists. Still today, rehabilitation specialists command most of the research resources invested in this specialist area. Historically, they have invested these resources in fixing people rather than places. The material I constructed gave strong suggestion to those elements in the employment selection procedures and the general working environments that led to the negative experiences of disabled interviewees. Further, employment legislation was an important focus for participants, though it was not, at the time, viewed as a panacea. Often, participants' understanding of employment legislation was confused with little awareness of the DDA. Legislation was described at best as ineffective and at worst directly opposed to the employment rights of disabled people. Nevertheless, legislation was identified as a major factor that could promote more positive experiences of and outcomes at employment interviews. In general, I feel the material I have presented points more readily to political fixes than person fixes. As I moved from constructing an understanding of the research topic to implementing an intervention strategy it became clear that political fixes were more easily discernible and, for me, more intuitive. This project contributes to work on the "problem" of securing positive employment interview outcomes for disabled interviewees through the perspective it opposes as much as through the perspective it adopts.

CHAPTER TEN
REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In this chapter I place the research products I have discussed in Chapter Eight into the context of my reflections on the personal, social, organisational and political implications of the research process. In the first half of this chapter I focus on my qualitative analysis of these implications. In the second half I adopt a quantitative analysis of the power implications of two of the methods I used.

10.1 Reflecting on personal implications of the research process

This section gives me the opportunity to offer contextualised descriptions of the research process I was engaged in and report on my involvement at a deeply subjective level. In considering my personal reflections on the research process, the issues I am drawn to with greatest immediacy are the emotions I experienced during the process. Throughout the research, engaging at such a level with the research process was inevitable. Rather than closeting these emotions away, I have felt it more proper to keep them visible to the reader and by that make myself more visible to the reader. The reader thus has some material on which to base decisions about the ways and extent to which my actions and understandings have been the result of my subjective experience. As well as offering an additional layer of context in which to situate the research, I seek to draw out connections between my emotional experiences and the research process as it developed and the research material I gained. These emotions include anxiety, anger, fear, joy, warmth and comfort. I offer descriptions of some research encounters that led to the more salient of my emotional responses, and offer my personal reflection on them. I use the subheadings to highlight what I felt to be the emotions I felt most clearly in these particular research settings. However, they are by no means the sole defining characteristics of the emotions I felt. I use each subheading to indicate the "mixed bag" of feelings I associate with each encounter.

10.1.1 Fear with shame

Writing of this research situation is difficult as doing so is potentially damaging for the research participant involved. I have therefore changed the pseudonym I use for him from that I have used earlier. This is necessary as the participant, Alan, became intricately involved in the research, and his collaboration with me on the project figures prominently in this thesis. I thought long and hard over whether to articulate my feelings concerning this research situation. However, I believe it offers a rich insight into the very personal, emotional processes I engaged with throughout the research and the way this encouraged me to reflect on the research material at a deeper level.

The fear I experienced lasted for just a few seconds. My feelings of shame immediately followed this fear. The fear I experienced was towards Alan. The setting was our initial research encounter. I feel I should add that very shortly after this encounter I was to get to know Alan very well and found him to be a kind and sincere man. He is someone whom I hold considerable respect of and warmth towards and whom I continue to have intermittent contact with following the end of the project.

After completing my interviews with the first group of participants, I began to generate the next group of participants. Unlike the first group, I did not ask for details on a participant's disability (re: Chapter Six). This was to be pivotal to the experience that followed. I sent letters out to all potential participants with an invitation to join the research process. One of the first replies I received was from Alan. He wrote to me asking to participate in an individual depth interview in his home. As he was not in paid employment at that time, he suggested we meet on a weekday in the early afternoon.

I called round to his home at the time we had arranged. Alan was waiting on his doorstep ready to greet my arrival. His greeting was warm and he showed me into the living room of his house. As I entered his home, he locked the door behind me, explaining he didn't want us to be disturbed by a neighbour walking in half way through our interview. After he had asked me if I wanted a cup of tea and saw to my general comfort by asking if the house was warm enough for me, we began to talk quite informally. We talked about the weather and about my journey to his home. We both shared a smile as I disclosed my poor sense of direction and the roundabout route by which I had travelled to his house. After a few minutes, I took the tape recorder from my bag and began explaining the purpose of the interview and the reason I was taping the interview. After Alan told me he was happy to have our conversation taped and happy to continue, I turned the tape recorder on and we began.

I will now turn to the transcript of this interview. The notes on the right-hand side focus on my emotional reaction to the conversation I was having with Alan. I recorded these reflections on audio tape as I drove back home after the interview. This was normal practice for me whenever I had the tape recorder to hand after a research interview. It was an easy way to store my notes and attach them directly with the interview recording. I would then write up these reflections after I had transcribed the interview. Here I use the transcript to situate my emotional response to the research situation in the immediate context of the interview as it was unfolding. The excerpt signifies just a few minutes of an interview that lasted over an hour. The transcript below begins at the moment I switched the tape recorder on.

Paul
... it is quite informal so you can just say stop when you want the conversation to stop, and it is generally what you were about to tell me about. I am going around asking people about their experiences of job interviews.
Alan
Well, I have found that they are nervous things to go to in the first place but I found that it is more because of the nature of my illness or the disability that I have got.
Paul
Aha.
Alan
It is as if, I mean that if they have got a negative attitude to begin with, the slightest mistake that you make, or when answering the questions I think they tend to lean towards the opposite, you know?
Paul
Aha-
Alan
- the negative attitude.
Paul
So is it that they-
Alan
- I mean I had a good interview in the job centre the other week there and er, the chap, I cannae remember his name that interviewed me, was for

Here I am beginning the interview by seeking to establish an informal climate, both to relax Alan and myself. I fear Alan might feel me a little clumsy in my wording in this opening section of the interview.

Alan begins very quickly to focus on the research topic. At this stage I was still feeling a little anxious over the new social setting and interaction in which I was becoming enmeshed. The openness with which Alan enters into conversation with me is easing my concerns by this stage. At this point, I am conscious of the tape recorder and anxious to check it is recording our conversation.[1]

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[1] *This always happened in my interviews. Though I sought to establish trust in each research relationship, I have yet to trust my own memory to press the right tape recorder button or to trust 'Memorex' to record each word spoken in the interview.*

the Parlton Paper. Now I am a fitter for trade and I think.. ought that rather than put down schizophrenia on the.. on the application form I put a nervous breakdown. So this fellow didn't know what I was about when I went into that interview.

Paul
Aha.
Alan
And it started to dawn when I was telling him that the form of medication that I was taking was easier controlled than diabetes really because there was no injections and that involved. And I could imagine that his wheels started to whirl away and I think he had done some research into what a nervous breakdown was and the next thing I was completely unsuccessful and that was a good interview until the point I was leaving the door. There was nothing wrong with the interview, it went well. I think I impressed him on the technical side as a fitter and er..
Paul
So that was like after you left the interview, did you leave the interview thinking it was a good interview?
Alan
Aye good, aye, it was a good interview, aye. The next thing I got a letter saying that I was completely unsuccessful [laughs].
Paul
Did you mention schizophrenia in the interview?
Alan
No, no.
Paul
Just nervous breakdown.. you put on the thing.
Alan
That's right, that's right. I started doing that because at least you get a chance of getting an interview at some point you know because, it just tends to frighten them off this schizophrenia.. *[unclear 8 words]*

Here is where my emotions erupted. I was eager to keep these feelings to myself. The emotion I was feeling was fear. The image of the door being closed and locked behind me was at the fore of my mind. It was an intuitive reaction to Alan's disclosure that he had a diagnosis of schizophrenia. As soon as I felt this fear, I tried to put my emotions in check. I felt Alan was no more likely to pose a threat to me than any other research participant I was to interview. I had reacted sharply to a stereotype, knowing I had done so was filling me with shame.

I needed to acknowledge my initial emotional reaction to Alan's disclosure. I was trying to open space to do that, but it looks as though I was closing down Alan's opportunity to talk. Alan's contributions are brief. I felt a need to be honest, but was unsure how to do this without damaging a research relationship that was only a few minutes old. I was so preoccupied by my own feelings here that I was not listening as closely to Alan as I should.[2]

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[2] *My inattentiveness to Alan during this part of the interview can be seen in the eight words I lose from the transcript at this point and the two words I lose in Alan's next contribution to our conversation. These sections of the tape were unclear and my inattentiveness meant I could not fill in the gap from memory even though I had transcribed the tape on the same day as the interview.*

The funny thing is that I have been keeping quite well this last week, just er...

Paul

So you don't mention schizophrenia, you just mention-

Alan

- No, what I do is I use Gwen Hardy as a referee for it and she can go more full into it, more confidently speaking about it than I can. It is er.. it is only..

[unclear two words]

.. but it is so destroying, it has cost me my marriage and everything like.

Paul

Right.

Alan

You know.

Paul

And now it is a barrier as well to getting back into work.

Alan

That's right, it is a dead end like, aye. Completely.

[ABOUT THREE TO FIVE MINUTES LATER IN THE INTERVIEW, AFTER ALAN TALKED MORE ON HIS EXPERIENCE AT THE INTERVIEW].

Paul

You know, because it is like, you know.. all I was told was Alan MacKay had an unsuccessful job interview and he has got a disability, and like to be honest with you, I hope that I am well educated, but it is like to me, schizophrenia, when you mention it-

Alan

- Well I think that there are different forms of the thing as well of course. I mean I am bothered more by the paranoia side of it whereas other people hear voices and all the rest of it and, but er.. it is just the paranoia side that I get er.. If any time I have been bothered that has been what it has been. And it is either it comes on slowly where you are aware that it is coming on or it hits you like that [clicks his fingers] it is just like a switch..

Here I continue to focus on the label of schizophrenia. I am still uncomfortable with my initial emotional response to Alan's disclosure, and still feel I need to be honest in how I communicate this to Alan. Alan continues to allow me further into his private feelings, thoughts and experiences.

I was worried my initial reaction to Alan's disclosure on his disability could become a barrier to us forming a trusting research relationship.

Here I try to repair the damage I felt to my sense of self. I am licking my wounds by beginning to share with Alan the shame I am feeling about my emotional response to his original disclosure. I was unable to finish my confession, and felt unable to do so from there on. Alan interrupted me and I felt he was keen to continue with his story. By this stage, the interview was progressing and we were fully into Alan's description of his experiences with disability and job interviews. I was unable to

Paul
Yeah.
Alan
.. it is funny it is like when you do you literally just shit yourself and you just go for the medicine you know.

gain absolution and my emotional response remained private and as far as I knew, undisclosed.

In reflecting on these notes, they remind me of how my feeling of fear arose when I linked together Alan's disclosure of his diagnosis of schizophrenia and the few moments prior to that when Alan had invited me into his home and locked the door behind me. I had entered the research setting with the belief I had shed my prejudice against and ignorance of disability nine years ago as I entered the disability field. I felt I had not only shed these prejudices, but had further become sufficiently sensitised to the existence of such prejudices that I had become active, through both my personal and professional life, in working against producing and sustaining damaging stereotypes towards disabled people. That moment of fear I experienced in this research situation drew me kicking and screaming back to the realisation that I was not as free from prejudice as I had hoped. My prejudice became apparent in that moment of fear I experienced. I had not been at all anxious of Alan locking the door until he mentioned his disability. Thus, the timing of my feeling prevents me from making sense of my fear as a proper response to being locked in a room with a stranger. Though it took only a matter of a few seconds for me to redress my fears, I had surrendered to a powerful process of social stereotyping and stigma.

My experience of connecting so immediately and emotively to stigma influenced how I felt towards, connected to and presented the research material. I had already entered the project with concerns over stigma, but this experience focused my attention still further on such issues. As well as participants expressing a need to talk of such issues, I too had a personal need to reflect on the influence of stigma in my own positioning towards disability. I needed to consider my involvement in sustaining a negative social perception of disabled people, however painful that was for me to contemplate. In a sense the project may have served a function of my seeking to redress this and undoubtedly this will have had an influence on the content and direction of the research. During my analysis of the material, I was keen to find those moments during my engagement with research participants where they connected to the theme of stigma and discriminatory attitudes. I do not feel I had fully reflected on this until my meeting with Alan when my concerns turned in on themselves. The stigma I was so keen to document and explore actually resided in my own sense of subjectivity. This was to be an extremely uncomfortable reflection for me to make but valuable in making clearer my subjective engagement in the research project.

This experience may also have contributed to the nature of the material I was reporting on. I have documented the confusion and uncertainty surrounding definitions of "psychiatric disability" in Chapter Eight. Until meeting with Alan, I had not considered I too held a confused understanding of this topic in the way I subjectively related to it. These were not just issues I had identified from being engaged in the field, they were themes I brought into the field. Where I have reported on material that focused on the uncertainty and confusion surrounding definitions of psychiatric disability these are confusions felt by me as well as confusion felt by research participants. Through particularising people with psychiatric disabilities in much of this material I must reflect on both this being a feature of the field and a feature of myself as I became situated in the field.

The feelings I describe in this section also had an impact on the research process through the research relationships I developed with each participant. In my first meeting with Alan, I had, by the very nature of my emotional response, caused a fracture in the trust I sought to establish between us. Where I had entered the research setting with the aim of nurturing Alan's trust in me, I had in fact lost trust in Alan. Alan was blameless for this. That trust had been broken by a prejudice I thought I would not occupy. Much to my consternation, my momentary feeling of fear had led me to view Alan in a way that was ideologically violent towards him. I had perceived Alan as a threat. This was potentially damaging for the future research relationship that was to develop between us. With Alan, as with the research relationship that developed between other researcher participants and myself, I would engage in several other research settings with him and we kept in contact for over a year. Though short-lived, my early negative feelings towards Alan presented a barrier that I was keen to remove. Keeping in touch with Alan helped me to surmount the barrier I had set between us. It gave me sufficient time to reflect on the nature of social barriers Alan faced in his employment and other experiences and gave me time to heal the damage I felt I had initially done to our research relationship. The positive outcomes of sustaining our research relationship both in respect to the considerable depth of meaning I was able to enter with Alan's material and the enjoyment I experienced of being in Alan's company, gave me the confidence and desire to sustain further research relationships with other participants who became involved with the project.

I now turn to Alan's perception of this research encounter, or as much as I can glean from my conversations with him. I have never directly raised the issue of my own feelings during our first meeting. As far as know, Alan has remained unaware of this, though he may have sensed my nervousness during the opening stage of the interview. As is evident from the transcript, I made a move towards being open about my reaction moments after it had happened, but I felt unsure of how Alan would react. Alan was showing trust in me at an early stage in our research relationship. He was beginning to share personal and private feelings with me. As well as feeling embarrassed over my own prejudice, I was very aware that revealing these emotions to Alan may have added to the negative social encounters he had experienced because of the stigma attached to his disability. Further, it may have given him more reasons to distrust than to trust me. However, withholding my feelings from Jack went against the Person-Centred engagement I sought to establish between research participants and myself. This was a dilemma I was unable to resolve. My lack of disclosure may have affected the quality of the material Alan shared with me in that first interview. Had I been more open with Alan, I wonder whether we would have become engaged in an interview where each of us was prepared to disclose increasingly more personal feelings and insights. The extent to which I was holding back from Alan would have affected how I related to Alan and in turn would have affected how Alan related to me.

Unsolicited to do so, Alan told me later in the interview (in fact five minutes before the end of the interview) why he had locked the door after I had entered his house.

> I locked the door cause I didnae want anyone walking in on us.. like when we are talking about this and that and... like no one around here knows that I have got schizophrenia. If they knew.. arrgh.. I'd be a leper like, you know?.. I don't want them knowing my business.. it would be hellish for me.
>
> (Alan, individual interview, June 1996)

The irony does not escape me when I consider that his locking the door contributed to my feeling of fear, when it was Alan's own fear of our conversation being overheard by a neighbour that led him to lock the door. He had briefly mentioned this to me as I first entered his house, but I had not appreciated the significance of what I took at the time to be a passing comment. Alan lived in a small council estate, where neighbours lived in close proximity. The close-knit nature of that community meant that it was common for neighbours to walk into another person's house for an impromptu coffee and a chat. Though the community was close-knit, Alan perceived it to be rife with negative social perceptions towards disability. The negative stereotyping of his disability was quite literally at his doorstep. Moreover, Alan was showing considerable trust in disclosing his feelings to me, where he was so anxious of how they would be received by his neighbours.

While I would caution researchers in general to be wary of putting themselves in situations that make them feel uncomfortable, I would not wish anyone to cite this as an example of such a situation. Though it was perhaps unwise for me to be in a research setting where I became locked in a participant's home, there is no reason this should be more unwise because of Alan's psychiatric disability. However, we typically perceive the safety of researchers to be paramount. For Alan not to have locked the door behind me would have been unsafe for him. I wonder whose safety I should have privileged in this situation.

10.1.2 Anger with comfort

As I discuss the research encounter that left me with a strong sense of anger, I am much more at ease in doing so than I am in revealing the research encounter where I experienced fear. To me this story stands in such sharp contrast with the story involving Alan. The difference is pivoted on my feeling of comfort that became mixed with my anger. My preference for anger over fear is perhaps an articulation of my gender as it affected my engagement in the field as a male researcher.

The research encounter occurred in the second year of the research project. I need to alter many details of the encounter as I feel the incident is still too raw for the individuals involved and the event too public. I therefore must forgo a degree of accuracy concerning the encounter. However, I will relate the event as faithfully as I can in as far as detailing how I experienced and interpreted the encounter. I will deliberately mislead on other details to protect the individual who became the focus of my anger.

A local disability group had invited me out to a lunch. Through the research process I had become closely involved in the group for over a year. The group was active in protecting the employment rights of disabled people. The venue we had chosen for our lunch was one the group had used several times in the past. It was a small hotel in the suburbs of a small industrial town. The hotel had an excellent reputation for its good food and service. It particularly met the approval of the group as it was wheelchair accessible - several members of the group were disabled, one was a wheelchair user. During lunch the company was jovial and the atmosphere was relaxed. We spent a very pleasant couple of hours together. Towards the end of our lunch our conversation turned to telling humorous stories about disabled people. This was a practice I found usual in such group meetings. I have the impression this is in many ways a release valve for people working on socially sensitised, stigmatised and potentially inflammable issues.

We finished our lunch and were in the process of saying our farewells. Four of us were waiting at the main doors of the hotel. The proprietor saw us and came over to check we were happy with our lunch. As he came over to talk with us one of our group, Peter (a wheelchair user), was saying his goodbyes and making his way to his car. I mention the fact Peter used a wheelchair as this was pertinent to the situation as it was to unfold. The proprietor gestured to Peter and said how he always enjoyed him visiting his hotel, referring to Peter's sharp wit and good humour. We all agreed, particularly as Peter had been the instigator of most of the humorous stories over lunch. The proprietor then felt the need to tell us a story, it was a story that I feel was troubling him, and perhaps he felt safe, though he was to be mistaken in this, in sharing his story with us. He appeared to use Peter's presence at the lunch that afternoon to give himself the opportunity to relate to us his concerns. I will speak as though I were in his shoes, briefly citing his story below in a piece of prose.

> I'm always glad to see people like Peter come out to our hotel. He is a one for telling a good story, and you can always have a laugh with him. He is a good bloke. But I have to tell you something quite disturbing that happened here the other week. We had a party booked in for about thirty people and they were like you, you know, people working for disabled people. So we booked them in for lunch. When they turned up, well, I could hardly believe my eyes. It was awful. There must have been at least twenty of these people in wheelchairs with that cerebral palsy or something like that. Their arms were all over the place and their heads were going round and round, like they couldn't control their limbs. They had their carers with them, but it was all a bit

> too much, you know. Now, don't get me wrong, I have no objection when they come out here in their ones or twos, but a whole group of them, well that surely wasn't right, was it? You see, I have two young girls working for me, and they really shouldn't have to put up with things like that. I had to send one of them home because she was physically sick at what she saw. They were both very upset. Two young girls, you know? I have to think about my staff. No, ones and twos is okay, but I don't think that they should have brought a whole group of them in at the same time.

I will have inevitably treated the proprietor with an injustice, as I tell his story in the way in which I remember it, and that memory is one that is charged with emotion. However the core features of his story, the comments on 'ones' and 'twos' and the reactions of his staff are, I believe, faithful to the story he told. I was not alone in listening to his story. Three others from the group were listening to it with me. Their presence deeply affected my feelings. As far as I can gather, I gave little by way of an emotional response to his story. The response of those around me was considerably muted also.

When the proprietor ended his story it was as if a social vacuum were left. There was an awkward silence between us until one of our party made some light conversation which neither legitimated or delegitimated the proprietor's story. I felt an overwhelming urge to express my feelings, but the situation robbed me of the opportunity. I felt very alone, not knowing whether it was only me who felt this sense of outrage as I stood with the others in a state of emotional withdrawal. I feel none of us knew how to react. Perhaps we were concerned to maintain polite conversation and this muffled our emotional reactions.

We had room to vent our emotions once we said our goodbyes to the proprietor and moved outside to the car park. It was immediately apparent that I was not alone in my feelings. We were all appalled at the story we had heard, and we all felt a need to talk about it. In those moments of joint anger, I felt a sense of pride among us. Here was the feeling of comfort. We had been confronted by a damaging view of disabled people. We had reacted with horror, and collectively reflected on our abhorrence. I felt comfort as I was able to connect with and confirm my awareness of and disdain towards damaging disability rhetoric.

The proprietor's story was similar to ones I encountered on many occasions. It appears to be a consequence of working in the disability field. All the research participants I met who were active in promoting disability employment rights had similar collections of "horror stories" about attitudes they had encountered. Yet if it is so common an experience to working in the field, why mention it? I do so due to concerns that such experiences must impact on how researchers engage with their work but that this is often not fully articulated. This horror story, and others like it, has implications for my subjective engagement both with the research process and the material I have presented. These feelings, rather than the content of the story, led me to include it in this section. The anger and subsequent comfort I felt when I heard this story has led me to reflect on and engage with the material more fully. I feel this is true for much of the research material I have included in Chapter Eight. I believe the way I have analysed the material has been touched by my emotional reflections on that material. For example, I discuss in Chapter Eight how during group discussions on unemployment issues I often felt it difficult to cope with the feeling of despair facing unemployed participants. My emotional involvement in these discussions makes them prominent in my thoughts and they remained prominent as I began the process of pulling together the research material to present in this thesis. I would not argue my emotional reaction to this material was central in this process, but I would say it was intimately involved. I remember more vividly the material from these research settings because of the strong emotions I was feeling at the time. This will make some material more prominent in my thoughts and thus in my analysis. This would bring me to engage with the material at a deeply subjective level and layered an additional sense of meaning into that material. This additional sense of meaning has led to the material expanding beyond Chapter Eight. It has led me to engage with additional processes involved in the project. These include those sections on the social, organisational and political relations of the research process. Was I not to become so emotionally invested in the material I gained from the training centre for unemployed people, I may not have reflected so deeply with the organisational processes involved in this project. It has also directed my attention to elements of the socio-economic context I concentrate on in Chapter Three. It led me to examine more thoroughly the labour market conditions of the time. Reflecting back on the proprietor's story, this material added to my concern to engage with material on discriminatory practices against disabled people and oppressive ways of thinking about disabled people. This further directed, in part, elements of my literature review in Chapters Two and Nine.

My reaction to the proprietor's story was anger at the oppressive way he talked about disabled people, how they should only be let out in 'ones and two'. I also felt comfort knowing others were angry for similar reasons. I increasingly found comfort with material, research settings and more generally with theoretical perspectives that similarly offered me comfort in this way. In particular, I seized upon the Social Model of disability with passion. I felt the Social Model to be a liberating model for disabled people. It was a model detached from the negative and problematised way of thinking of disabled people. The Social Model offered a framework in which I could feel anger, the model acting as a buffer that would sustain feelings of associated comfort during my engagement in the research field. My emotional engagement with research material such as that of the proprietor's story also drove me towards a deeper reflection on the nature of how disability is defined. Was I to feel very little emotion when hearing stories such as the proprietor's story, I may have been less concerned at how such stories were constructed.

Before I leave these feelings of anger and comfort, I wish to push my reflections one step further. The feelings of anger and comfort not only made some research encounters more memorable and made me reflect and engage with some research material at a deeper level. They may further have led me to sustain engagement with research participants in some settings, disengage with participants in others and seek either to move towards or step away from entering further research settings. I am mindful I did not seek to pursue the hotel proprietor's story any further. I met him only once and I made no plans to meet him again. I had not invited him to participate in the research. However, I encountered many other people in various research settings who similarly I chose not invite to participate. I did not have the resources or the time to engage with a large number of people in the depth my research methods required. Also, at that time I was confident I had met a sufficient number of participants to cover the issues of interest (theoretical sampling - see Chapter Six) and I was approaching the final stages of the research project. However, these explanations do not fully convince me of why I did not pursue the proprietor's story further. This feeling of anger positioned me in an adversarial way towards research settings and some people in those settings and may have led me away from such settings. I sought to adopt an unconditional positive regard towards participants, but to those who were not participants I would relax this and allow myself to feel angry when the situation arose, though seldom would I ever directly express it. At times, this may have severed possibly fruitful areas of inquiry. A part of me does regret that I never asked more about the proprietor's views and his experiences. Instead I have chosen to strip the story of his own life context and position it under the concerns in this section. However, while closing some opportunities, these feelings opened others. This feeling of anger may have opened opportunities to engage with participants further. The methods I adopted in this project asked me to share my own thoughts and feelings with research participants. In the roles I was to adopt with participants, particularly those of advocate and friend which I describe in the section on the social implications of the research process, these feelings brought my level of engagement with research participants far closer. Being able to share such feelings allowed me to be more of an advocate of disability rights than an enquirer on disability issues.

In reflecting on my mix of feelings of anger and comfort, and turning more to that feeling of comfort, I am beginning to appreciate that this mixed bag of emotions may have come from my seeking to occupy the moral high ground.[3] By this I mean that I felt of myself as acting and thinking in a morally "proper" way. I was using moral arguments to support and sustain how I was reacting and acting in research settings. This is very different from arguing from an empirical base. I was arguing over *rights* and *wrongs* rather than *truths* and *falsehoods*. Arguably, through my training in psychology at university I had become skilled at arguing for the truths and falsehoods of empirical *facts*. My training in how to handle moral rights and wrongs in research settings had been less substantial. Much of my university training in psychology had been stripped of moral content while I worked under the illusion of a "value-free science". This may have been a reason for the tension I experienced immediately after I heard the proprietor's story, and tension I have felt after hearing other "horror stories". In the particular research encounter I describe here, had I tackled the proprietor's attitudes face on, I may have been faced with a far more complex set of emotions. The proprietor may have felt embarrassed over his views, but equally he could have felt affronted to have his moral views challenged. He too may have perceived himself to be occupying the moral high ground. He was making his hotel accessible to disabled people (one of the reasons we held the meeting at that hotel was its accessibility to wheelchair users), and encouraged disabled people to use the hotel's facilities (albeit in 'ones' and 'twos'). He also felt a warmth towards a particular

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[3] *I thank Susan Hunter from Edinburgh University who pointed out to me the risk of occupying the "moral high ground". This has couched my sense of comfort from such encounters with a degree of greater reflection.*

disabled person in our group. Further, he was apparently concerned for his staff's well-being. Here the difficulty appeared to me to relate to handling emotional responses to inflammatory and negative attitudes towards disabled people when they come from people who perceive themselves to support disabled people's rights. It did not take me long to wonder whether others would perceive me too as having good intentions but questionable values. The effect these reflections had on me was to maintain a critical perspective on my own moral positioning to the research topic during the final phase of the project and this is perhaps one reason I have sought to make my values clear in my thesis. These issues were particularly prominent in the next feelings I wish to discuss, those of disdain with disappointment.

10.1.3 Discomfort with disappointment

Here I address my feelings as they relate to the level of involvement of some of the research participants in the research process. I am talking specifically of several participants with learning difficulties who joined me on the project. Four individuals in particular invested a lot of time and energy into the project for a considerable period of time. My concerns are perhaps directed to people with learning difficulties as it is this area in which I first ventured as a researcher. It was also an area in which I have become experientially grounded through my involvement in social clubs, social service provision and advocacy activities. I was aware before I entered this research project that this section of the disabled population had become marginalised in the disability movement. I feel this is apparent in the separation that exists between the Para Olympics and the Special Olympics. Here people with learning difficulties have their own sports movement (Special Olympics) that is separate from the sports movement involving people with physical and sensory impairments (Para Olympics). Moves to join the two movements have been reacted to with hostility from within the Para Olympic organisation. As this project was set to involve people with a broad range of impairments, the research process was open to the possibility that such fractures between participants based on disability type could occur. Indeed, I feel this division was to become apparent in several research settings I entered and as such it was to invoke particular emotions for me.

To use transcript or prose would not capture where these emotions were situated. Not one sole situation fully captured these feelings. My feelings were evoked through attrition rather than ignition - evoked by a series of experiences in different settings rather than one experience. I will therefore jump from setting to setting to describe the context of my feelings.

One Sunday afternoon I was driving towards the centre where we (research participants and I) held our monthly steering group meetings. I was into the third year of the research and by then a group of participants joined me in the intervention stage of the project. On the way I had picked up three participants, Erica, Simon and Dawn. As we journeyed, I found myself deep in conversation with the Erica who was sitting in the front seat. Simon and Dawn sat in the back and were silent for much of the journey. I was particularly conscious that Erica and I were not including Simon and Dawn in our conversation and felt uncomfortable for the entire journey for this reason. The physical dynamics of the setting did not lend itself easily for me to engage in conversation with Simon and Dawn. Having to maintain eye contact through the rear view mirror, being unable to communicate non verbally other than nodding during any interaction we could establish, and having to give sufficient attention to driving to ensure a safe journey all compromised the depth of interaction we could enter. I could have excused the incident to the physical context of the situation, but I feel this leaves the picture incomplete. Simon and Dawn both were people with learning difficulties, Erica had a physical disability and I feel this was pertinent to the situation.

Sitting in a group setting I remember my increasing feelings of discomfort where the conversation among disabled participants appeared to exclude group members who had learning difficulties. Often, when group decisions were made, the views of such participants risked being overlooked. I continually felt the need to open room during group conversations so they could become involved. However, I was aware that this may have both highlighted their lack of involvement to others in the group, may have uncomfortably placed them in the spotlight, and that this was not congruent with the non directive way I sought to facilitate these groups. My discomfort became joined with feelings of disappointment. I left many such research settings feeling dejected that the research process was not allowing sufficient space for their involvement. I pondered on my method and on my approach continuously. The problem as I was to come to feel it was that other research participants may have been unintentionally ignoring the input of participants with learning difficulties. These feelings have marred many moments of excitement generated from research settings and have complicated how I view other research participants whom I otherwise hold in very high regard. In these situations I found such feelings difficult to manage. To highlight the exclusion, as I perceived it, in a way that would make my feelings clear to other research participants may have been a painful process for participants who themselves were being excluded from mainstream society. To parallel the oppression they faced with their own action or inaction towards other sections of the disabled population was, for me, too sensitive a task to undertake at that time. I felt as though I was caught between protecting the interests of some research participants at the neglect of others.

I also remember quite clearly my feelings of discomfort during a consultancy group meeting with an employer. Our consultancy group included myself and two research participants. We visited the employer organisation as colleagues working together. One of us had a learning difficulty. We met with a representative from the organisation. Our meeting took about an hour and throughout I was focused on the level of engagement of both my colleagues though in particular my colleague who had a learning difficulty. I was keen both had ample opportunity to direct our input into the meeting as consultants rather than have me direct our input into the meeting. Throughout the meeting I felt my colleague with a learning difficulty was not engaged as fully as I felt my other colleague and I were in our interaction with the employer. My feelings over how well the meeting went were strongly flavoured by my feelings concerning how disengaged one of us had become in that research setting. Again, this was an uncomfortable feeling for me. Irrespective of the success of our meeting in terms of achieving our aim of influencing the employer's recruitment and retention policy for disabled people, I came away profoundly disappointed.

This did not happen in a focus group only involving participants with learning difficulties. In such a group setting, research participants engaged me in very enriching and lively conversations. The same individuals who contributed fully and openly in such a setting were quiet and often uninvolved in the mixed disability groups, namely the steering and consultancy groups. Being aware of this made me uncomfortable in these meetings.

My feelings on these issues had an impact on the research process and the material I was working with. Again, issues affecting people with learning difficulties were important to me both in an empirical and a personal sense and led me actively to engage in these issues outside this research project. I became involved as an advisor for People First, a self advocacy group for people with learning difficulties. This is perhaps the source of my feelings of discomfort and disappointment. I was unable to engage with participants with learning difficulties, in the steering and consultancy groups, at the level I wished and at the level I enjoyed in my previous and present involvement in the learning difficulty field. These feelings heightened my attention to the input of people with learning difficulties in this project and would lead me to highlight the issues that directly affected these participants.

My feelings may have also exaggerated the level to which I felt participants with learning difficulties became disengaged from elements of the research process. The expectations and aspirations I held towards participants with learning difficulties may have translated into my setting a level of engagement which I hoped they would attain higher than that I set for others involved in the research process. I brought more "baggage" into research interactions with people with learning difficulties. By this I mean this is the area where I first "cut my research teeth". People with learning difficulties were the focus of my undergraduate final year research project (Duckett, 1994; Duckett and Fryer, 1998), and an area in which I had worked as a volunteer for six years before becoming involved in this project. These experiences were very much embedded in my subjectivity and will have informed the feelings I experienced. I believe these feelings impacted on the research process through the level of engagement I sought to establish with participants. Indeed, when I mention earlier my feelings of discomfort over the dilemma of not being directive in group settings yet wishing to bring participants with learning difficulties into the "spotlight", my feelings were impacting on the way I was either maintaining or changing my research methodology (the suspended structure approach). Further, these feelings may have led me to seek to maintain continued contact with participants with learning difficulties with greater energy than some other participants. My feelings of discomfort and disappointment may also have affected the relationships I maintained with other research participants who were involved in the consultancy and steering groups. Where I mention earlier such feelings tainting the otherwise high regard with which I held participants in this project, this may have created a greater distance between these research participants and myself than I desired. As I mention earlier, I found it personally too problematic to talk with participants explicitly about my feelings in relation to this issue. With hindsight, I wonder whether my relationship would have been even further enriched if I had shared these feelings, if I had been as honest in these relationships as I had set myself out to be at the start of this project. I wonder about the extent participants reacted to my latent disquiet during some steering group and consultancy group settings, the way in which they picked up and reacted to my disappointment, and how this may have affected our engagement in these meetings. I have no doubt my disappointment would have seeped out during such settings through my general demeanour, but I do not know how participants interpreted this, what meaning they made of it.

In relation to the research material, these feelings may have affected the prominence with which material from participants with learning difficulties figure in Chapter Eight and how these feelings affected my analysis of this material. To feel more comfortable with what research participants and I had achieved in this project, I may have felt obliged to include material from people with learning difficulties with more conviction and energy. However, on the positive side, I feel I have engaged with the material shared by participants with learning difficulties with particular passion. I feel that I gained insights into such material that, had I not brought such "baggage" with me into the project (even if that were possible), may have been lost. The intimacy of the connection to feelings of discomfort and disappointment in the research project makes tracing their influence apart from other influences on the research process and the research material difficult. However, I cannot rule their effect out, I can only rule their effect in.

10.1.4 Frustration with compassion

Here I refer to a series of research encounters with one particular participant, which today I still hold vividly in my mind. I will call her Sally. Sally was initially a source of increasing frustration for me. I initially found her to be extremely obstructive to the research project. Regrettably, I was unable to get Sally's reflections, as by the nature of the incidents I describe, finding a way into Sally's story of our encounters may have been problematic.

I first met Sally when she had asked to participate in a benefit entitlement interview with me. To set the interaction in context, I met Sally while visiting, for the second time, a local training centre for unemployed people. During my first visit to the centre I had negotiated with the centre's manager a role for myself of offering "trainees" welfare benefit advice. We then agreed I would visit, initially once a week, to run both group and individual interviews on disabled and non disabled peoples' experiences of employment interviews.

As I entered the centre the following week, I was told that a member of staff had scheduled a series of benefit advice interviews for me. I had not anticipated the level of interest and soon realised that over a dozen trainees had each been allocated fifteen minute interviews. Thus, I had begun the day aware that many more people than I was able to see were asking for benefit interviews on that day - each interview would normally last between thirty and forty-five minutes and I was scheduled to be in the centre for little more than three hours. After renegotiating the time slots, I began the interviews.

The first participant I interviewed had many stories he wished to tell me as well as a need for an intricate level of understanding of his benefit entitlement. This meant I went considerably over the thirty minute slot we had been given. Additional time was taken up when I returned to the staff member who was scheduling the interviews to find that she too had stories she wished to tell me before my next interview began. The second interview ran almost to schedule, but I was already well behind in the schedule of interviews I had agreed to take on. In the end, Sally was the third person I saw after a sequence of research encounters that were making me increasingly aware of the lack of time I had available in the centre. I was aware I had not interviewed as many people as both the staff and I had hoped and that there would be a backlog of people for the next time I visited the centre. From here, I will allow my field notes to tell the rest of the story. I wrote these field notes within half an hour of leaving the research setting, and I have quoted from them verbatim. As with the transcript I presented earlier, I have presented the field notes on the left and my later reflections that centre on my emotional response to the situation on the right. I wrote these reflections a week later as my interview with Sally was to occupy my thoughts for several days after my visit to the centre and I felt the need to return to my field notes to try to make sense of what had happened.

I was told [by the staff] that there were a few things that I should know about Sally, so rather than rush her interview, I had been advised to schedule her for the next meeting. Maybe it would be better to see her next time. The "things I should know" were not made explicit and I was glad they weren't. But they did say she had a lot of people looking into her benefit circumstances on her behalf.

[Notes on second participant's interview omitted.]

I then went back to the reception area. Mike's interview had only lasted half an hour, so I considered offering a brief interview with Sally in the thirty minutes that remained. I felt this would be better because there would be less of a backlog next time I visited. Also, I didn't really want to know her background. I thought that I would give myself a challenge and see how Person-Centred I could be.

Sally was very suspicious of me. Before the benefit advice began she asked me many questions. She seemed keen to label me, to box me - she wanted to know if I was a lecturer or a student. I said that I could apply various labels to myself, I felt uncomfortable at this point, I didn't want to say that I was a psychologist, also I didn't want to say that I was a student. She then asked me my motivation for doing the research. I explained that I had a career motivation, which I had to be honest about, but also I had disabled friends, and had been on Invalidity Benefit myself. At the end of the interview, I asked if she wanted to see what would happen if she successfully claimed Disability Living Allowance. She said that she was not prepared to tell me her disability, only that she had asthma, because I had not disclosed the disability I had when I was claiming Invalidity Benefit.

We did not get the chance to finish the interview. She expressed concern that I admitted to not being an expert concerning benefit advice. She said that the feeling among people in the centre was that I was going to have all the answers. She was fairly hostile throughout the interview, and

This type of introduction to a potential participant is, for me, wholly negative. It leaves me jumping to possible expectations, which I try to guard myself against doing. I had a feeling of cautious anticipation.

At this point my feelings were filled with fatigue coupled with expectancy.

This was an uncomfortable feeling for me, I am not used to being asked questions in such a quick, demanding succession. In adversarial terms, it placed me on the defensive. I was aware this was a critical point in our interaction, as the honesty and openness I displayed may affect the trust Sally would invest in me. I chose to allow Sally into my own life history, but only at a general level. I was dutifully served by Sally an impasse as quite rightly she chose not to disclose the particulars of her own life history.

I felt something was getting in the way of our interaction. My role had become ambiguous due to the way I presented myself in being coy about my professional status and self-demeaning in my level of knowledge. This when I asked if I could take a note of a few of the comments she made, she said quite strongly NO. Sally left saying that she bet I wished she had never come through the door. I said that I was glad that she had, because she raised important questions about my motivation which should be addressed.

negatively affected our research relationship. Sally appeared to acknowledge she was being defensive and obstructive. I was concerned that she was leaving the interview with negative feelings. I felt that my closing comments may have appeared as empty rhetoric. I felt compassionate towards Sally but frustrated in not being able to communicate this to her.

There are, I feel, many lessons I have learnt through meeting Sally. I was to meet her on several other occasions, and there remained a considerable amount of suspicion and distrust on her part, and frustration and compassion on mine. I got the feeling that Sally saw herself as quite obstructive to my research activities. I have come to reflect that her involvement was extremely valuable in some of the issues she explicitly raised.

During my series of visits to the centre, I became aware of Sally's circumstances. This was not through inquiring about Sally, but came from understanding more about the culture of the organisational setting and being offered an increasing level of detail on those who participated in it. Sally appeared to have a history of professionals intervening in her life, asking her questions and making decisions concerning her life opportunities on the basis of her answers. She had a recent past pitted with experiences of having her life controlled by seemingly benign professionals. I feel that this had led her to view being asked questions as a particularly invasive and oppressive experience. She had learnt to treat self-disclosure cautiously and information as precious. The act of questioning had become a very invasive process for her, and I was to become invasive by my very presence as a researcher. Her suspicion concerning my motivation was heightened and she made this explicit. This was more so than for any other research participant. I was frustrated that I was being perceived as a researcher in the very manner against which I wished to position myself. I felt compassion in recognising that I shared Sally's cynicism and suspicion of research, and I felt the legitimacy of her position on these points.

The feelings of frustration and compassion I experienced with Sally did much to persuade me of the usefulness of making myself more visible in the research process and has considerably encouraged me to do so in this thesis. Much of the problematic nature of my research interaction with Sally and the resulting emotions I was to feel came from my lack of personal disclosure and honesty with Sally. I was tired, I felt pressured for time and I lapsed from fully adhering to the procedures I had developed and sought to use. Further, Sally was particularly sensitive to any hint I was "holding back" on her and when she detected this was what I was doing she reacted in a very negative way. Our research relationship fractured at that point and Sally closed the door on me. I know that I lost much valuable and rich insight into the research topic that Sally could have shared with me. Sally reminded me of the centrality of the research relationship to my research and to research more generally. This research relationship was crucial to the type of material participants were prepared to share with me as well as to the issue of whether they were prepared to share anything with me at all. I felt frustrated at being unable to connect with Sally, at being unable to establish a research relationship that was sufficiently trusting for us to discuss the research topic in any depth. This perhaps has implications for all the material I gained in this project. The type of material I have covered hinges on how research participants and I related to one another and the level at which we trusted one another. The level of my personal disclosure was crucial in Sally's interviews, as I believe it was in all interviews, to the level of disclosure participants were prepared to reach.

Further, after this research encounter I reflected more fully on my motivation for being involved in the research project. My career motivation did not always sit comfortably with my personal interest in disability issues. I feel Sally was not convinced this dual motivation was unproblematic. Following my interview with Sally, I am not totally convinced of the unproblematic nature of my motivation either. The motivation of wishing to progress my personal career prospects through becoming involved in the research project possibly blemished my motivation to become involved in issues that interested me and affected people around me about whom I cared. Many research participants were unblemished by this career motivation and became involved in this project because they were genuinely keen to contribute to the research process through their interests in and concerns over the research topic. My feeling of compassion towards Sally and the issues she was broaching when we met meant it was not easy for me to discount what happened in that setting. I could not write the encounter off as just a bad interview. Rather, it propelled me into a greater depth of reflection on these issues than may otherwise have been the case.

10.1.5 Summary

In this section I have presented examples of the many different experiences I had that invoked strong emotions in me. The experience of my research meeting with Alan, where I experienced a moment of fear of being locked in his house is, for me, an example of my intuitive side both encumbering and enriching the research process. It was a hindrance in that it could have potentially damaged the research relationship I sought to establish between Alan and myself. It was helpful as it gave me a particularly vivid experience of the pervasiveness of negative social stereotypes concerning disability and their damaging effect on interpersonal relations and an even greater, though more uncomfortable, level of reflexivity over my ownership of similarly stigmatising perceptions. After listening to the negative views of a hotel proprietor towards disabled people, I felt angered at the proprietor's story but also comforted by a feeling of self righteousness. I am now ambivalent towards the moral stance I adopted on that occasion and on many others. It reminds me that tuning into my emotions required further reflexivity as to what those feelings were related to. Addressing my feelings concerning the implicit exclusion of participants with learning difficulties during many group settings raised uncomfortable questions for me, tingeing some of the warmth I felt towards many of the project's participants with disquiet. Finally, being perceived as the *enemy* for reasons that made me feel like the *ally* touched me with frustration. I do not believe the existence of these feelings is confined to the type of research process I describe. I believe that the research process does, however, allow their articulation. Each of these experiences had an intimate connection with the resulting research process and the material I analysed and reported on throughout that process.

10.2 Reflecting on the social implications of the research process

The social relations between participants and myself exerted a strong influence over the entire course of the project. My empirical methods were inherently social and my task of gaining research material was embedded in social interaction. I feel the quality of these interactions very much contributed to the quality and authenticity of the research material in particular and the research process as a whole.

Where I reflect on my personal involvement in the research process in the previous section, here I reflect on how I brought *me*, the researcher, into the complex milieu of *others*, the research participants. I have chosen to explore this through the nature of the social roles both research participants and I undertook during the process and the interpersonal qualities these roles demanded and sustained.

10.2.1 Multiple social roles

During the course of the project, I acted in the role of a researcher, a friend, a confidant, a colleague, an advisor, and a facilitator, among others. Metaphorically, I wore many different hats during the project. Similarly, participants occupied various roles such as research informants, group discussants, benefit claimants, consultants, colleagues and friends. These roles were multiple, developing throughout the research process.

I begin by reflecting on the involvement in the research process of one participant, Jack. I do so as Jack and I occupied many differing and developing roles together in this research project. Our research relationship covered many of the roles I undertook with other participants. Jack, however, entered more roles than most other participants. I believe that by telling the story of his involvement in the research process I will make clear the opportunities that were opened both for research participants and myself through adopting the research approach I chose. I will then go into greater detail on the roles I believe these differing forms of contact involved and the implications these had for the research material I report on and the research process as a whole.

I first met Jack while I was occupying the role of researcher. I called around to his house one summer evening to conduct an individual interview. We sat for an hour, during which time Jack told me his experiences as a disabled man seeking employment. Many of the barriers he faced in his employment experiences and life experiences in general were social. This, for me, placed a considerable onus on us to ensure that we created a research context which banished any such barriers from our own research encounters. There was the very real possibility that

Jack may not have related his experiences to me if the research process itself presented him with social barriers. Jack was concerned I felt at ease in his company and I was concerned Jack felt at ease in mine. I believe fairly early we developed a warm rapport. Later conversations I had with Jack confirmed this to me. The interview finished and he asked if he could use the benefit advice I was offering. We agreed to meet during the following week when I would bring my laptop computer along and we could work out his benefit entitlements.

A few weeks after our benefit advice interview, Jack contacted me by letter asking for further benefit advice. We were intermittently in contact in this way over several months. On one occasion, he was considering putting in a claim for Disability Living Allowance and wanted my advice. After several telephone calls we decided that I should offer more concrete and active support for his claim. I wrote him a letter of support - detailing my perceptions of the extent of his difficulties caused by his disability - which I invited him to use if he decided to put in such a claim (see Appendix Three[j]). I designed the content of the letter to increase Jack's chance of being successful in his claim. I further agreed that he could supply my name and contact address to Benefit Agency staff so that they could contact me directly on this matter with the promise that I would do all I could to ensure his claim was successful.

After this period of intermittent contact by letter and telephone, we met again when I invited Jack to become involved in the intervention stage of the project. He agreed, and we began meeting along with other group members in both steering and consultancy groups. Just before Jack became engaged in these groups, he contacted me again asking if I would call round to see him for a talk. He had things on his mind and he needed someone to sit with him while he got these things "off his chest". I called round to his house and we spent two hours together talking.

While we were involved in the intervention stage of the project, we met outside our intervention roles on another occasion. Jack had secured employment but found himself in a work environment that was creating difficulties for him. He asked for my support in his request to have his work contract terminated so that he may return to claiming Unemployment Benefit. I joined him before, during and after an assessment interview, run by someone representing the medical establishment.

This brief review of mine and Jack's developing relationship points to the different levels of our engagement which entailed us both becoming involved in quite distinct social roles. It is to these that I now turn in more detail.

10.2.2 Researcher

Jack first met me while I was occupying the role of researcher. I was most prepared for this role. Through undertaking this role, my main responsibility would be to my funding research council and the university to which I was affiliated. Jack's role was as a research respondent. This was perhaps a role he was less familiar with. Though he may have had the experience of meeting market researchers while walking through town, and being asked to fill in a census questionnaire etc. it is likely these experiences would have been momentary and fleeting. For me, my role as researcher was vocational and as such substantial to my identity at that time. To this extent, I believe my role during our initial interactions was more familiar to me than Jack's role was to him. This was the role research participants and I would occupy most centrally in the project. As with Jack, this would often be the initial roles we would enter. These were the roles participants and I entered during individual interviews, focus group interviews and telephone interviews. It would also be my initial role during participant observations and field visits.

Under a conventional research approach, my role was to collect, analyse and present *data*. Participants' roles were to provide *data* and to either acquiesce to my research agenda or to be *inspected* during participant observations and field visits. I have critiqued this conventional approach earlier in Chapter Five where I describe the way my research approach differs from conventional approaches. To recap on my approach, I focused, through my research role, on promoting each participant's positive experience of the research process and outcome. I sought to ensure the results of my analysis and presentation of the research material would have positive outcomes for disabled people. Securing positive outcomes for participants was central to my community psychological approach. However, this was positioned fairly abstractly for the majority of research participants. While I could strive to make a participant's involvement a positive experience, securing positive outcomes from this process was less tangible while

I was occupying the role of researcher. This called for me to adopt flexibility in my role which led me to adopt additional research roles. I took on these additional roles to make these positive research outcomes more tangible.

10.2.3 Advisor

The most immediate and practical means to achieve a positive outcome from the research process for research participants on low incomes or on welfare benefits was to offer free and confidential benefit advice. Jack made use of this advice very early in our research relationship. He requested a benefit advice interview following his involvement in the research process while I was acting in the role of researcher. In the benefit advice interview we occupied quite different roles to that of participant and researcher.

As a benefit advisor, I was contacted by Jack on several occasions, both to update information on his entitlement circumstances and to offer general advice concerning implications of changes in his employment and domestic circumstances on his entitlement status. Further, I was sometimes called upon to update this information when there were changes in the benefit system that affected Jack's entitlement to benefits. Thus, I was in contact with Jack intermittently over a considerable period. We mainly kept in touch through letters. Jack would write explaining the information he needed and the changes in his circumstances he anticipated. I would then recalculate his benefit entitlement. In this way we kept in touch for several months. We did not meet during this time, yet our research relationship was sustained.

My role required me to stay up-to-date with changes in the benefits system. I therefore joined the Child Poverty Action Group, and maintained a subscription to the Lisson Grove programme both of which allowed me to continue to function in this role. The former gave me up-to-date information on and implications of the changes to the benefits system and the latter ensured I had continuous access to the latest version of the computerised benefit entitlement package. Further, where I lacked information, I would contact local benefit advisors such as those at the Citizens Advice Bureau. I advised Jack on such things as Disability Living Allowance, Disability Working Allowance, Invalidity Allowance and Jobseeker's Allowance. This led me to spend a considerable amount of time concentrating on benefit entitlement information during these periods of the research project. This was a role that required a careful and methodical approach to reviewing the benefit entitlement literature.

In occupying the role of advisor in addition to the role of researcher, my responsibilities were joined by a responsibility to each research participant. Specifically, I was responsible for giving participants up-to-date, accurate, relevant and comprehensible advice on their benefit entitlements. This responsibility entailed implications concerning the accuracy of the information I was giving to participants. I felt such concerns more strongly during this role than in other roles I was to occupy. As was the case of my role as researcher, I undertook the role of collecting, analysing and presenting material, but for very different reasons. The material was not to be used as research material, but as the participant's own private material which they used for their own purposes. Here all three activities were to meet my responsibility to the research participant rather than those responsibilities I had through my role as a researcher. However, to renege on my responsibility as advisor would have impacted on my responsibility as a researcher as the role of advisor was a product of my research role. This initiative of changing roles moved my role as *data collector* to the participant and moved the participant's role as *data provider* to me. Thus in each case, after the initial offer of advice, participants became the initiator of contact. As I mention earlier, in Jack's case this led him to sustain our research relationship by intermittently telephoning and writing to me. Similarly, through adopting the role of advisor I maintained continued contact with a number of other research participants.

10.2.4 Advocate

I think of my role as changing to that of an advocate when Jack was seeking support with his claim for Disability Living Allowance. Jack was finding it increasingly difficult living on his benefits. He had become aware of benefits available to disabled people during our benefit advice interactions and felt positive about his eligibility to apply for them. However, he felt considerably intimidated and confused by the whole benefit claiming process and had been very much left isolated by his doctor and other professionals in the past when he had made inquiries about his benefit eligibility. In such encounters he related to me how he was typically told that he was 'not disabled enough' to be eligible.

I would take on the role of an advocate with a number of participants. In each case this role would develop from my advisor role where the advice I offered led to participants wishing to take action. As with Jack, becoming an active agent in the highly bureaucratised and densely complex welfare benefit system was a daunting prospect for many others. In these instances I sought to support participants' activities. I did this by writing letters of support for individual claims and/or becoming a referee participants could use in their dealings with Benefits Agency staff. Participants could refer the Benefit Agency staff to me if they wanted additional support for their claim.

My role changed from advisor to advocate - from my being a source of reference to a source of support. Our roles changed as research participants and I were situating ourselves towards a third party (the Benefits Agency). It moved from a dyadic to a triadic relationship. During this phase we would correspond both by telephone and letter. The participant's role was not solely to obtain advice or data from me. We became engaged in a collective task, we had to mutually decide a course of action and thus our roles were negotiated. We decided between us the course of action that would be the most appropriate - the way I would offer support or back up a participant's claim. This took a great degree of reflexivity on both our parts, as we needed to determine how my role would operate in respect to the Benefits Agency. As with my role of advisor, my responsibility still remained towards each participant, though it would involve both of us representing ourselves to a larger organisation. I discuss this more fully later when I reflect on organisational implications of the research process.

My role of advocate would also extend beyond my involvement with the benefit claims of individual participants. My advocacy role also led me to become more deeply involved in two disability organisations. I joined one as a committee member and the other as a group advisor. The fundamental reason I joined both these organisations was to fulfil my role of supporting and becoming an ally for disabled participants. I needed to work on the same side as disabled participants. This, I feel, naturally led to my becoming involved in disability user-led organisations as part of the research process. This was further a public demonstration of whose side I wished to be seen to be on. I have not included these activities in previous chapters as they were extra-curricula to my involvement in the research project. However, I do reflect upon them briefly later in this chapter.

10.2.5 Confidant

I perceive my role as confidant when Jack asked me to call round for a chat. He had some deeply personal issues he wanted to discuss with me. In particular, it concerned events in his childhood and how he felt these events were now affecting him. He wanted to both hear my views and to have me there just to listen. We agreed a time to meet and I called round to his house. We sat together for two hours and Jack told me about his family history and his concerns about his present circumstances. He was looking not so much for advice, but more for a listening ear. He had become isolated from people about him in the previous few months and felt the research relationship he had developed with me could be used to support him in this way. Having no formal training in counselling, I had to negotiate this new role carefully with Jack. We clarified my role before I called round. I explained that I could sit and listen in the role of a colleague or an acquaintance, but not in the role of a psychologist.

When I engaged with participants on occasions like these, and it would happen with two other participants (Erica and Marion), my role as confidant changed the parameters of our respective roles once more. In these settings, participants were not giving me research material and I was not collecting research material. Further, I was not acting as an advisor, and was not negotiating a role where I could act on a participant's behalf in respect to a third party. I was asked just to listen and to understand. In the case of my meeting with Jack, he wanted me both to hear his *real* story of his disability - to talk at a deeper level as to how he came to be disabled - and to engage with his thoughts as he reflected upon them. This was similarly the case with one of my meetings with Erica. She wanted someone to listen to her worries over developing a future career for herself. Also for Marion, she needed someone just to listen to her 'rant and rave' (her words) for half an hour. I believe that following this change in my respective role with these participants, each of these research relationships was considerably enriched and a bond of unconditional trust had been established between us. We were often engaged in conversation at a highly personal and subjective level. For Jack, having the opportunity to talk freely to someone was important for him. For Erica, she needed to "bounce" ideas off someone. For Marion, she wished to "let off some steam" after a bad day at work. To return to this role as it developed with Jack, he was aware I understood his disability, that I had a positive regard for him, and I believe this made me a useful listener for him. For me, it was important that I maintained a relationship of trust with Jack. That evening was very moving for me, and I consider myself fortunate that he allowed me to get to know him in such a trusting way. I hold this to be the same for my research relationship with Erica and with Marion. It was at this point that I feel our research relationship was particularly enhanced. This was not a research setting as such, but was a role that developed from the way I initially positioned myself in our earlier research encounters.

In seeking to facilitate positive outcomes for research participants, this was perhaps the level of intervention one would expect from a clinical rather than a community psychological orientation. However, adopting my community psychological approach meant this was one of the many roles my research approach asked me to adopt, rather than a role I would privilege. Further, this was the only role I adopted where I had to explicitly disconnect from the everyday understanding of my role as "psychologist". This was driven by my concerns of being perceived as offering a psychological counselling service that I was not professionally recognised to do (further driven by the British Psychological Society moves to make more distinct such professional boundaries). However, this was also driven by my concern not to raise false expectations in research participants, ie. they may have felt I was professionally trained for such situations. However, I feel it ironic I had to disengage from the role of a "psychologist" and engage instead with participants under a personal rather a professional guise in this type of setting. I feel it is ironic as the role I adopted in seeking to secure positive outcomes of the research process at such an individual level is the role an everyday understanding often ascribes to psychology and psychologists.

10.2.6 Facilitator and consultant

As Jack became involved in the research intervention, we again occupied changing roles. Here, Jack and other participants became consultants, and I was both a group facilitator (during steering group meetings) and consultant (during consultancy group meetings). Therefore, our research roles changed as we entered a group setting - we became part of a team. Our responsibilities became tied to a collective responsibility to the group as a whole, both to contribute to group discussion and to sustain the group's activities. In these meetings we became colleagues working together. We established a mutual exchange of information.

Unlike the individual interviews where the method was a vehicle for the participant to relate her/his story to me, or the benefit advice interviews where I sought to relate information to research participants, steering groups were settings where each group member was there both to hear other peoples' views and express views of their own. For Jack, our relationship had moved from a dyadic, to a triadic and now to a group relationship. For other participants our research relationship would similarly follow this transition. Further, each participant in these groups was paid to fulfil this new role. I feel this monetary aspect was also a significant change in research relations. Throughout a research council was paying me to conduct the research. Up to that point, each of these participants was giving their time voluntarily.

In the consultancy groups, participants and I interacted more clearly in the role of colleagues. My role was not to facilitate meetings, but was to collaborate with participants in small group settings. We interacted as consultants as we sought to develop a strategy to work with local employer organisations in developing an employment Code of Practice. This involved me sharing my analysis of the research material with participants. I would further hand out draft Codes of Practice for participants to comment on. I believe we established a research relationship that was distinctively collaborative in its nature. As in the steering group meetings, we established a mutual exchange of information. Research participants and I became engaged in these roles in our efforts to realise positive outcomes not only for participants involved in the research but more widely across the disabled population in the local region. Where in previous settings I became engaged in the roles of advisor, advocate and confidant, I did so to facilitate change for particular research participants. Here my and participants' focus on promoting positive change was directed to include people who had not taken part in the research process. These roles were intimately bound to my community psychology approach. These roles entailed a more public move from documenting to challenging discrimination against disabled people.

10.2.7 Friend

I return to focus again on Jack's involvement in the research process as it is with Jack that my research role most clearly turned to my becoming a participant's friend. Towards the end of the research project Jack asked me to support him at an interview he had scheduled with a medical professional. His doctor who had felt unqualified to give judgement over Jack's ability to continue working had arranged the interview. Thus, the interview was set up to assess whether the way Jack's work setting was disabling him meant he was unable to continue at his work. Jack was anxious to leave this work setting. He asked if I would sit with him during the interview. He felt I would be able to more easily articulate his circumstances to the medical professional than he could himself. I would have construed my role as advocate, but Jack referred to my role in this regard as 'having a friend along' who could support him. I therefore refer to my role in the way Jack articulated it.

I met Jack about an hour before his appointment and he was understandably anxious over what would happen that afternoon. He felt there to be so much at stake. From Jack's perspective, an unsuccessful interview would mean he would either have to return to a hostile working environment that was causing him considerable distress, or leave work but not be eligible for any form of income for a considerable time. We shared some time together going over what he wanted from the meeting and how he was going to present his concerns. He was highly self-critical about expressing himself. Jack particularly felt unable to express himself when confronted by professionals and when he felt pressure to express himself well, as was to happen that afternoon. He asked that I help him to express what he wanted to say. He showed considerable faith in my ability to do this and, of more satisfaction to me, he was unquestioned in his belief that I knew his circumstances sufficiently to be able to speak on his behalf. We went into the interview focused, if not a touch afraid. We came out an hour later with great relief, a touch of euphoria and broad smiles on our faces - the interview was a success. We also exchanged quizzical looks as we realised that Jack had articulated his concerns extremely effectively throughout the interview and I had not uttered a word. Just through my being there, Jack had felt sufficiently confident to express his thoughts for himself. He may have been perfectly able to do so without my being there, but Jack was generous enough to tell me that my being with him during the interview had helped. He told me he was glad to have a friend in the interview with him to support him if he needed it.

I am unsure if this was the only time a research participant and I occupied the role of friends during the research process. Reflecting back, I feel some other participants did indeed become my friends during the research process, but I feel it would be presumptuous to say this is how such participants in turn viewed me. Even if Jack was the only participant where such a role developed it has, I feel, important implications for the project in general and the research material in particular. A friend is someone whom you know well, whom you regard with liking, affection, trust and loyalty. A friend is someone who is an ally, who is on your side. I sought to position myself on the side of participants in my role as advocate and consultant, to be loyal in my role as advisor and show liking, affection and trust in my role as confidant. Where Jack described our relationship as being friends it suggested we had got to know each other at a deeper level than these other roles suggested. The empirical drive behind the research was to enter participants' frames of reference to explore rich levels of contextualised meaning in their experiences of employment interviews. Developing friendships during the research process may be indicative of a successful empirical venture. Here, perhaps more than any other role, I got to know research participants and got to know their concerns.

10.2.8 Summary

These are examples of the many research roles I occupied during the project. Each of these roles allowed me to explore the research topic in greater detail. They also allowed me to participate in people's lives and in research settings in a positive and active way. My community psychological approach encouraged me to step out of the traditional research role and into additional roles, roles that would allow participants and I to be more actively engaged in the research process. The praxis I describe in Chapter Eight is a result of engaging in these additional roles. Participants and I engaged in a variety of social settings and we occupied a variety of social roles and relationships with one another. I would gain understanding through engaging with participants as a researcher, an advisor, an advocate, a confidant, a facilitator and a friend. This offered me multiple perspectives on research issues. I feel it also helped me to reach a further aim of my community psychology approach. It helped to make me more transparent to participants. Participants would not just get to know me as a "researcher". Further, the nature of these developing research relationships gave me material that could form longitudinal case studies of several participants' involvement in the project. For example, it offered me the opportunity to reflect on one participant's understanding of the research topic through his transition from unemployment to employment and back to unemployment.

However, with such multiple roles there was a greater degree of insecurity and uncertainty for me over my research role. With the flexibility I sought to establish in my own role, this left me feeling less in control of the research process as a whole. This was most clear during consultancy group meetings where I could not control the course and content of the meetings participants and I had with employers. In these meetings participants were working alongside me as colleagues. Adopting these roles required that I give up some control over the research process to others engaged in the research setting. I believe that doing so considerably enriched my understanding of the research material and the research process. Further, adopting the multiple roles I have described in this section meant I had to invest a considerable amount of personal energy in the research process. As may be evident from the previous section where I describe the emotions I experienced in various research settings, this was, at times, an exhausting and challenging project to be involved in. It may similarly have been exhausting and challenging for research participants who became deeply involved in the project, but again I feel there were also considerable rewards. Though I mostly reflect in this section on the multiple roles *I* engaged in, this also offered a variety of roles for *participants* to become engaged in, ie. participant, advisee, consultant. Their roles were considerably freed in this project from the traditional roles of "subjects". For steering group and consultancy group members, this extended to a paid consultancy role. Indeed, these participants continued to occupy these consultancy roles as my involvement in the project came to an end. One participant is actually sustaining this new role in her life through securing a further consultancy role that is bringing considerable financial security for her. Generally, opportunities were opened for participants in this project to become more active in the settings where research was taking place.

Finally, though the different roles may appear to fragment the research process, as participants and I jumped from research role to research role, I felt a great deal of interconnectivity between each of these roles. I would say that such interconnectivity was apparent through the defining feature of all the research relationships: *trust*. This links with the previous section on my personal reflections upon the research process. An example of the trust that developed between myself and other research participants is clear, I feel, from the account I have presented of my research relationship with Jack.

10.3 Reflecting on the organisational implications of the research process

Throughout the research process I not only engaged with individual research participants but also with organisations. In this section I reflect on how alone or in co-operation with research participants I engaged with these organisations. To do this I relate both to the research process and to the research context. I then consider why I/we engaged with these organisations: what were my/our motivations. I also explore the nature of what was exchanged or shared during these interactions. I then move to reflect on the level of contact that I/we established with each of these organisations and define who initiated this contact. I follow this by offering a brief overview of the types of organisations involved. I have summarised these issues and my reflections in two diagrams below (figures 10a & 10b). To avoid the awkward sounding "I/we" (myself/myself and participants) I shall use the pronoun "we" whenever this seems appropriate, ie. where it is not clear I was acting alone.

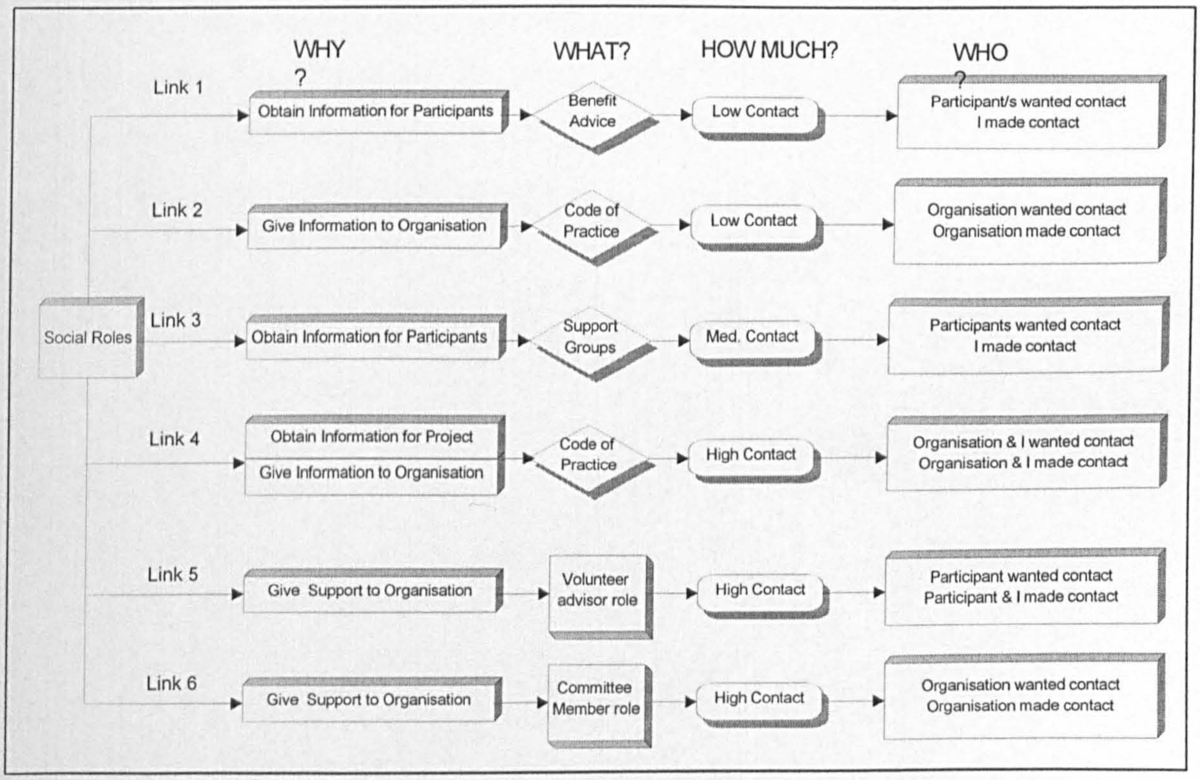

Figure 10a Linking to organisations through research roles

We became involved in organisational settings in one of two ways. First, we would engage with organisations through the nature of the research roles we adopted which I have described in the previous section. For example, acting as "advisor" I would contact organisations such as the Benefits Agency, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Child Poverty Action Group (link 1 in figure 10a). Further, in my role as advocate I became involved in two disability organisations (links 5 and 6). In my role as facilitator, I would contact voluntary groups of unemployed people (link 3). More centrally to the intervention stage of this project, in our roles as consultants we became involved with local employer organisations (links 2 and 4). Each of these connections between the research project and various organisations was intricately bound to the research roles participants and I occupied.

The second way I became involved in organisational settings was through the context of the research project (figure 10b). The context I refer to is the setting in which the research was initiated and the sources of funding that supported the research venture. The Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities (CEPD) provided the impetus for the original research question and was intimately involved in the beginnings of the research project. Other organisations also involved, through their direct links with the CEPD, were a local Placement, Assessment and Counselling Team (PACT) and a local Ability Development Centre (ADC) - both parts of the Employment Service (ES). I would not become involved in these organisations primarily because of the research roles I adopted but because of the

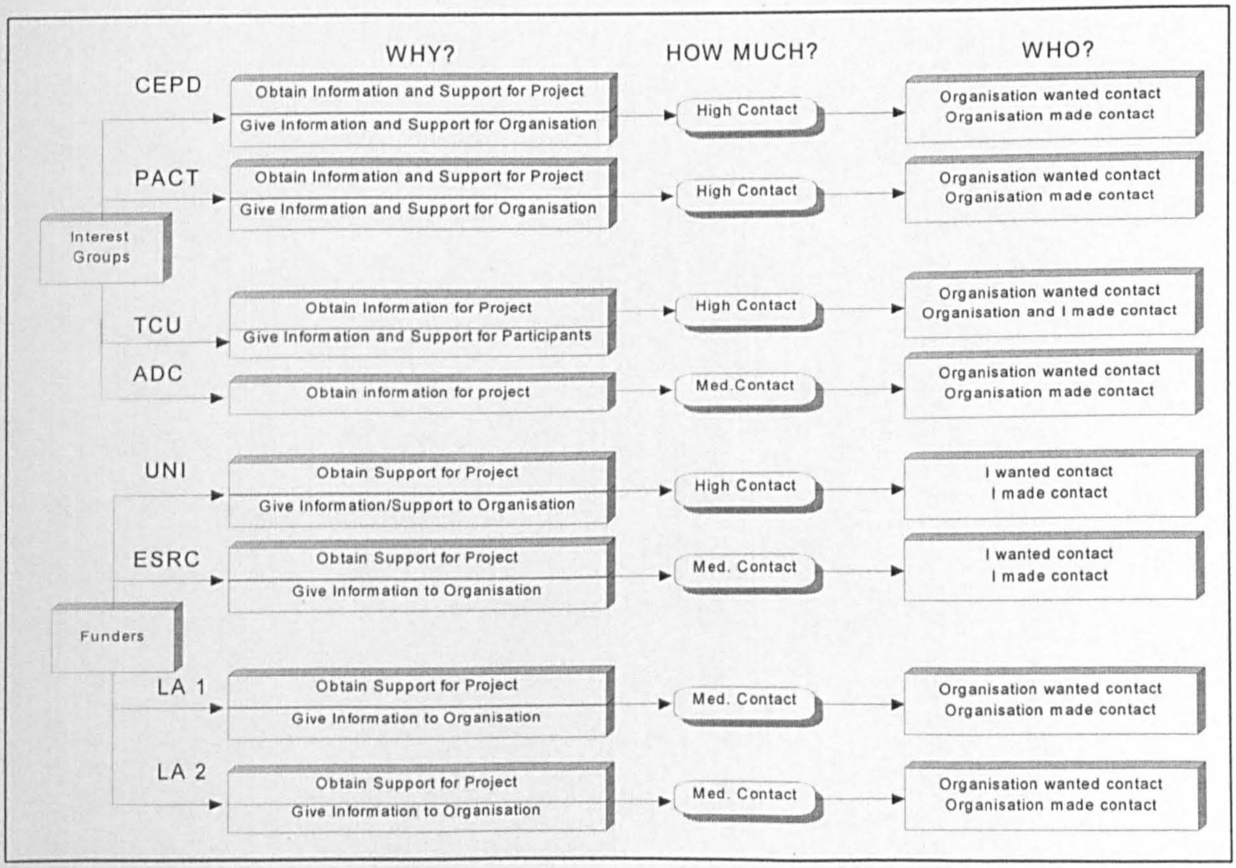

Figure 10b: Linking to organisations through the context of the research

organisational settings in which the research was initially grounded. I have also included the Training Centre for Unemployed People (TCU) here as the manager of this organisation was a member of the CEPD and as such this organisation was also part of the backdrop to the research project. There were four main organisations that provided funding and resources for the research project. The main funding body was the Economic and Social Research Council. This organisation effectively paid me a wage for doing the research through a Ph.D. studentship award. This organisation also provided money to the second organisation, the university where I became based. The university provided material support (office space, printing, telephone, computer and mailing facilities). There were two additional funders, two Local Authorities (LA). Each provided one off grant payments of one thousand pounds to support the project. One grant was given at the start of the project and one at the end during the intervention stage.

The nature of what was shared between myself, research participants and this mix of organisations varied considerably. I have signified this in the series of boxes I have placed under the headings "Why?" and "What?" in figure 10a and "Why?" in figure 10b. The first theme I reflect on is the purpose of engaging with these organisations. I have simplified this into the themes of seeking to *obtain* something from or seeking to *give* something to these organisations. Where I have linked to the theme of either obtaining or giving I don't wish to suggest that it was strictly a case of one or the other. I feel both giving and obtaining were implicated in each type of interaction we became involved in. Instead, where I have chosen one or other of these themes I do so to reflect the one I felt dominated these interactions. This theme gives a sense of the direction of exchange that took place between the project and the organisations linked to it. The second theme I focus on is the nature of what was either given or obtained. I refer more specifically to this in the diamond boxes under the heading "What?" in figure 10a (the nature of what was exchanged was too multi-faceted to fit into the second diagram). The "commodity" exchanged was either information or more general support. The information obtained from organisations was typically either information *from* that organisation or information *about* that organisation. The former would be information sought from the organisation - knowledge it possesses such as an expertise on welfare benefit entitlement. The latter concerns information sought about the organisation - the ethos and structure of the organisation such as voluntary organisations that support disabled people. A further theme I focus on is who the information or support was either sought for or given to. The box that sits under the heading "How much?" refers to the level at which we engaged with the organisation - the depth of contact we sustained. "Low Contact" refers to a marginal level of engagement. Typically there would be just one point of contact such as a telephone call or letter. We would not meet the representatives from the organisation face-to-face. Further, at this level of contact it was usually unnecessary to inform the organisation in any depth about the background to the research project, though when we sent the Code of Practice to an organisation, such information was contained in the document itself. Nor would we seek any depth of knowledge on the nature or cultural ethos of the organisation. Where I refer to "Medium Contact" (Med. Contact) this would usually involve a face-to-face meeting with representatives from the organisation and/or a series of telephone calls or letters. This level of contact would entail familiarising ourselves more fully with an organisation and maintaining contact over a longer time than was usual for organisations with which we were in low contact. Also, we would offer a greater level of depth on the nature of the research project. Often, there would also be a greater parallel between the aims of the research project more generally and the remit of the organisation and we would usually create opportunities for the organisation to become more involved in the research project, ie. representatives becoming involved as participants in their own right. At this level of contact a more tangible relationship would be struck up between ourselves and the organisation - the connection between the research project and the organisation was more established. I refer to "High Contact" where a more intimate relationship was initiated between ourselves and an organisation. Contact would be maintained for considerably longer periods of time than in low and medium levels of contact and we would become more involved with the organisation. We would seek a greater level of awareness about the organisation and would give detailed information on the nature of the research project. The final series of boxes in figures 10a and 10b that sit under the second "Who?" heading focus on who initially wanted to establish contact between the organisation and the research project and who actually made the contact, ie. which party (myself, participants and/or the organisation) telephoned, wrote or set up a meeting. To contextualise the themes, I now turn to each of the interactions in these diagrams.

I became involved with organisations through occupying the roles of advisor and advocate during the research process (link 1). I became engaged with organisations to obtain information on a participant's behalf. I was contacting organisations to obtain information *from* an organisation rather than information *about* an organisation. In most cases I would seek to obtain benefit entitlement information for participants. The organisations I contacted for this included the Benefits Agency, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Child Poverty Action Group and Local Authorities (including housing and education departments). For example, I telephoned the education department of a Local Authority to look into the possibility of one participant getting financial help to attend college. In another instance I made a telephone call to a Local Authority housing department to ask about a participant's entitlement for housing benefit. Though the type of information I would seek was typically related to welfare benefits, there was an exception to this. Acting in my role of advocate, I contacted an organisation to obtain information for a participant on his future employment prospects. This was following an interview with John. At the end of the interview I asked John if there was anyway I could reciprocate the support he had given the research project - his involvement in the interview. John did not want benefit advice and I was aware he had, by then, gained little that was tangible from the research process. Straight away he asked if I could telephone a local employer to explore employment opportunities for him. He had done so himself but with no luck. He asked that I try on his behalf to see whether this would lead to a better outcome. I therefore contacted the employer on John's behalf. This was different in nature to the information I sought on participants' benefit entitlement, though it followed a similar pattern concerning the role I occupied and the direction and nature of my engagement with the organisation I would contact.

On each of these occasions where I contacted an organisation, the level of contact I established was low. Typically, I would write or telephone on one occasion for each participant. I rarely gave any background information on the research project and would centre the interaction on the information I sought rather than seek to hear more about the organisation. I would remain apart from these organisations and my involvement with them often gave me little information on the organisation.

In all these cases, participants would ask me to contact organisations on their behalf. I would be the one to make the contact. There were specific reasons why participants chose not to contact these organisations themselves. Sometimes this was because I had access to a telephone - several participants were not on the telephone, and many found the cost of making telephone calls prohibitive. For example, a twenty minute call would cost approximately a pound, and many low income participants did not have this money to spare or could better spend it on other things. In other instances, participants felt either too intimidated or ill-prepared to contact the organisation themselves. This was particularly the case where participants needed to contact the Benefits Agency. Some participants felt they did not know the right questions to ask. Others felt the Agency to be so impenetrable they would not get anywhere if they tried to get through to the Agency themselves. A common reason for participants asking me to contact an organisation on their behalf was their perception I would know the right person to talk to, the right questions to ask, and would know how to navigate "the system" - though I did not necessarily have this knowledge. In further cases, participants asked me to use my role as researcher to access the organisation at a higher level than they felt able to do so themselves. This typically happened where participants perceived themselves to occupy low status (say for example they were unemployed and/or a benefit claimant) in regard to the person they wished to contact in the organisation. In this way, I acted as a facilitator between participants and organisations. In the case of John, who asked me to telephone a local employer organisation, he felt unable to gain the full attention of the manager of the organisation himself. He felt he was not getting his questions properly addressed and felt that he did not carry sufficient 'clout' (John's words) in order to be heard. He believed my role had sufficient status to gain the attention of the manager. Generally, the more bureaucratic participants perceived an organisation to be, the more often they would ask me to contact the organisation on their behalf.

While I adopted the role of group facilitator in support groups at the training centre for unemployed people, I also contacted other organisations (link 3). During support group meetings I was asked to contact external organisations on the group's behalf. As with the contacts I established in order to secure benefit information, participants wanted to establish this contact while I made the actual contact. Also, like the organisations I contacted for benefit information, through initiating these contacts I was seeking to obtain information for participants. However, the nature of that information would be very different. Here I was seeking information *on* the organisations I was contacting rather than asking for information *from* the organisation. Participants asked for information on the type and nature of organisations of unemployed people in the local region. I was asked to find out more about what these organisations did and to explore the possibility of setting up a local unemployment support group. I contacted local groups engaged in volunteer work with unemployed people and met with their representatives to explore these issues. This entailed me engaging directly and more intimately with each organisation. I had to find out about them not just extract information from them. Thus, I would seek to familiarise myself with the culture of each of these organisations. Further, I would seek to make the organisation aware of the research project and open possibilities for their involvement in the project. Unlike the peripheral contact with organisations I have discussed above, here contact was maintained for a longer time. Thus, relationships were struck up between myself and representatives from these organisations. I needed to establish what I term a medium rather than a low level of contact.

Again, there were reasons why participants did not contact these organisations themselves. I had access to transport - the organisations were dispersed across the region and the depth and nature of the information we required was such that someone from the support group would need to meet with rather than telephone or write to these organisations. Travel costs may have been off-putting for participants to visit these organisations themselves. Also, I was able to travel out to these places during working hours (the only times they were open) whereas participants were all required to attend the training centre during working hours as a condition of their benefit entitlement. Further, the nature of the information we sought could have compromised participants' unemployment contract with the ES. Basically, this contract (now referred to as a Jobseeker's Agreement) meant participants could only claim unemployment benefit if they demonstrated they were actively seeking employment. They were on a training course to assist them to become employed. The nature of the support group we were seeking to establish was to assist unemployed people to cope more satisfactorily with being unemployed. This was very much against the philosophy of the ES that sought to increase an unemployed person's desire for employment. The activities of the support group could have threatened their unemployment contract with the ES. For me to contact these organisations gave participants a degree of anonymity and arguably kept their unemployment contract more secure.

In our roles as consultants in the steering and consultancy groups during the intervention stage of the project, participants and I engaged with organisations at various levels of intimacy. The reason for such contact was to give information to an organisation (link 5) or to both give and obtain information (link 4). In the case of the former, our steering group would be contacted by an organisation and asked for a copy of the Code of Practice we were developing with local employers in the region. Organisations from across the country (eg. Dundee, Edinburgh and Sheffield) asked for copies of this Code. In the case of the latter, the steering and consultancy groups were contacted by local employer organisations seeking to develop with us individual Codes of Practice. In both cases the initiative for this contact was wanted and made by these organisations. Thus, the dynamics of this engagement were quite distinct from those I have previously described. Contacts were being initiated outside rather than from within the research project, ie. by external organisations rather than by myself or by research participants. Further, the flow of information was very different. Rather than information coming into the research project, ie. through me contacting organisations to obtain information for participants engaged in the research process, the information was going out of the research project, ie. information gained from the research process was being sent out to organisations.

Where the organisations contacted us to get a copy of the Code of Practice, the level of contact with organisations was usually low, the only contact would be their request for a copy of the Code. However, on one occasion the level of contact went deeper. On this occasion I was invited by an organisation - a forum of employers - to present the Code of Practice at one of their monthly meetings and to explain more fully the contents of the Code and the research process that had gone on behind it. We became more centrally engaged with organisations where we were seeking to co-develop Codes of Practice with four local employer organisations. I have explained this process more fully in Chapter Eight. However, here it is worth considering the dynamics of our engagement with these organisations. The purpose of engaging with each organisation was both to give information to them (the Code of Practice) and to obtain information for the research process (to get information to help us tailor each Code of Practice to each organisation). Thus, the flow of information became more reciprocal. We had information coming into the research process and going out to employer organisations. The organisation was seeking information from us and at the same time we were seeking information from them.

We (the consultancy group) would meet with these organisations as representatives. We would seek to represent disabled participants who had been involved in the research project and the individuals we met were representatives of their organisation. The nature of our representative roles would affect our interaction. I will discuss this point later in this section. The level of contact between ourselves and the organisation was high. We were in contact for an extended period. We would meet on at least two occasions and exchange a great deal of information between us. The nature of these exchanges created a close relationship between these employer organisations and the research project.

While occupying the role of advocate, I was to become even more involved with certain organisations. I am referring here to links 5 and 6 in figure 10a. In each case the focus was on my giving rather than obtaining. I became engaged in these organisations to give support. As I mention in a previous section where I describe my advocacy role, I was seeking to position myself on the side of disabled people through supporting user-led disability groups in my local area. This led to my level of contact with two organisations to be particularly high. Indeed, my relationship with these organisations would be so intimate that I would become part of them. I became an Advisor with *People First* and a management committee member with *Reachout*. People First is a self-advocacy group for people with learning difficulties. Reachout is an expressive arts project which creates an alliance between users of psychological services, volunteers and professionals and promotes awareness of mental health issues. My contact with these organisations would alter my identity while working in the field. In the case of People First, contact was initiated by a research participant, Jerry. The nature of how this contact was made is very similar to that I described earlier involving John. Jerry contributed to the project through participating in a research interview at the end of which I offered him benefit entitlement advice. Rather than take up this offer, Jerry asked if I could offer him support in a different way. Jerry worked for People First. At that time, they were seeking to establish a new group in the area close to where I live. He asked if I could suggest anyone who would be prepared to take on the role of an advisor and help to establish this new group. When I asked Jerry to tell me more about the organisation he showed me around the People First building where we were holding our interview and introduced me to the other people working there. I ended up applying for the advisor post and shortly after our research interview, I began working as a volunteer for a new People First group.

People in Reachout had heard of my general area of work and invited me to become involved in their group. I became engaged with this organisation not through the initiative of a participant or through my own initiative but through that of the organisation. There were parallels here with how I became involved, through a low level of contact, with organisations in my role as consultant. These organisations had heard about the research project and had initiated contact with me. I became involved in these organisations through working in the disability field. However, with the Reachout organisation this level of contact would be considerably higher as I became a part of the organisation.

Though I was closely connected to these last two organisations, their presence in my research material and more generally in my thesis is conspicuously absent. The reason for this is the dynamics of my engagement with them. In these organisations the focus was explicitly on giving rather than obtaining. Thus, I became involved in these organisations not to *feed* the research project but to use the research project, so to speak, to feed external organisations. Unlike the Codes of Practice, this did not specifically involve information but involved more general support such as offering advice at committee meetings (People First and Reachout) and helping with in-house evaluation exercises (Reachout). However, as I stated earlier, the distinction between giving and obtaining did not hold as both were implicated throughout my involvement with organisations. As I mention elsewhere, I was to obtain a considerable amount of experience of disability issues through my involvement in these organisations and this has implicitly informed the content of this thesis.

I turn now to diagram figure 10b. These were organisations connected to the research process by virtue of the research context - the organisations involved in initiating and funding the research project. Here the picture of our interactions with organisations is very different from those I have described so far. First, all these interactions, except one, were reciprocal in nature. Thus, contact would involve both obtaining and giving either information or more general support. Second, the initiative more often came from outside the project, ie. not from either myself or research participants.

The CEPD was an organisation connected centrally to the research project. I became actively involved in the committee at an early stage of the research. I attended all committee meetings held and CEPD events ran during the course of the project. I contributed to the discussions that took place in the former and planning and execution of the activities that took place in the latter. There were a number of contributions I made to the committee: writing reports for the committee for use during Government consultation exercises (Appendices Three[a] & [b]); training committee members in focus group facilitation techniques in preparation for employer workshops; co-facilitating a CEPD workshop event; and, producing marketing documents, such as a workshop report, for their use with employer organisations (Appendix Three[d]). I thus contributed both specific information and support to this organisation. I also gained considerable information and general support from them. The committee became a resource for keeping me up-to-date on legislative changes and on the latest service provision arrangements in the field of employment and disability. This was particularly so during the Government consultation exercise on the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Moreover, I was often informed of legislative changes before they had become public knowledge. This presented me with difficulties as the nature of this information often had to be handled confidentially. I discuss this more in the next section. Aside from me obtaining information, I also gained considerable support from the committee. Committee members offered support through encouraging me in my research activities and through the enthusiasm they held towards the research topic. Very early in my contact with the committee they became a resource for me to use. The committee was further supportive in creating opportunities for me to meet with employer organisations and representatives from the ES. Further, the committee members provided the initial contacts from whom I recruited groups of research participants.

The two branches of the ES that the CEPD linked me into were PACT and the ADC. The nature of my involvement with PACT was similar to that with the CEPD. I obtained a great deal of information and support from this organisation. I also gave back to the organisation through contributing to a PACT workshop (an in-house training event) and facilitating a group discussion on disability issues during a PACT managers' meeting. I prepared a short feedback report for PACT from this meeting (Appendix Three[e]). The nature of my involvement with the ADC was further reciprocal though there was less exchanged between us. My involvement revolved around a single field visit where I learnt of the organisation's activities and aims. I sustained this contact further through updating the organisation periodically on the progress of the research and on the research outcome (the Code of Practice). I did so through maintaining intermittent correspondence with the manager of the centre. The information and support these two organisations contributed was directed towards the research project rather than, as previously, towards individual research participants.

The final organisation I have included among the interest groups is the Training Centre for Unemployed People (TCU). I made a series of field visits to the centre. During these visits, several trainees took part in interviews and discussion groups. However, I was not only interacting with individuals and small groups but was interacting with an organisation. In this setting I was seeking to gain information for the research process (research interviews) and to contribute information (benefit entitlement information for trainees) and support (establishing a support group at the centre) to people in the organisation. That I was interacting with an organisation rather than interacting with a group of individuals was made clear to me through my experience of setting up the support group. As the support group developed, its aims became incompatible with the aims of the organisation, so much so that I was unable to sustain my activity in the centre for very long. I had entered this organisational setting first to run a series of benefit advice interviews with trainees. The manager and staff at the centre had told me of their trainees' need for benefit advice. In this way, I entered the setting to contribute information to the organisation, specifically to its trainees. I then sought research material from the setting through running a series of group and individual interviews. After the first focus group interview, participants asked for a different form of group meeting. From our discussion we negotiated the beginnings of a support group. Here my focus switched back to contributing something to the organisation. Soon into the first support group meeting, members aired their concerns over their roles as "trainees" at the centre and over the increasingly hostile labour market environment they were in. The group began exploring ways of adapting to their unemployed status in more positive ways and this became a central topic for further meetings. The philosophy of the centre, an organisation under contract to the ES, was one of removing the unemployed status of their trainees and ensuring trainees did not return to the unemployment register. The aim of the support group was to encourage more positive ways of viewing unemployed people and to consider ways of removing some of the hardship they experience. It was not long before the organisational setting was unable to sustain our activities and I was asked to stop running the support group at the centre. The aims of the group were antithetical to the aims of the organisation in which it was situated. At that stage, the group had too little time to coalesce sufficiently for it to continue outside its organisational setting and my attempts to continue the group outside the centre were ultimately unsuccessful.

Finally, I turn to the organisations that provided funding for the research. The main funding body was the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). I initiated contact with the organisation through submitting an application for funding. The relationship that developed between myself and the organisation was based on the type of reciprocity I have described earlier. Further, I did not seek reciprocity in this relationship, ie. I did not negotiate this relationship myself, reciprocity was made conditional by the organisation, and the nature of the funding contract. The ESRC would give me financial support in return for information I supplied to the ESRC on the research process. In the short term, this information took the form of annual reports on the progress of the research and in the long term the information was the submission of a thesis of which they would own the copyright. The ESRC also offered information to the research project through providing me with access to a large database relating to the labour market (National On-Line Manpower Information Service). I maintained contact with this organisation intermittently. This contact centred on the annual research reports and correspondence that came with the yearly renewal of financial support.

The organisation I was more closely connected to was in an academic setting. For three years I was based in the psychology department of my local university. Again, contact was initiated by myself and the relationship that developed was, like my relationship with the ESRC, based on reciprocity. The university provided me with office space, access to training resources, shared use of a car, access to a computer, and mail and telephone facilities. In return, I supplied the university with twice yearly research reports, other less formally arranged progress reports on the research and, at the end of the research project, a thesis. I also brought money from the ESRC to the department to cover overheads, and additional benefits of having an ESRC funded student working in the department. Further, I helped with teaching (running tutorials, marking essays, giving lectures etc.) and contributed to the publications coming out of the department. Through the project I had a research supervisor whose role was to oversee and support my research progress.[4]

Through being based at the university, this was an organisational setting I became intimately connected with. Moreover, the reciprocity between obtaining support from and giving information and support to the organisation was more immediate and more recurrent than that I felt during the research process with the ESRC or any other organisations I have so far described. At times, my progress in the field was halted until I had sufficiently reciprocated the organisation's support, in particular through providing a "satisfactory" report on the progress of my research. This would often happen through less formal channels. For example, during the first year of the research project I gave an informal talk about my subjective reflections on the progress I had made. Following this, I was asked to produce a more formal report on my research activities to satisfy the department that "real" progress had been made. I was asked to produce this report so that, in effect, the department would continue to support my research. The gatekeepers to the department's resources at that time had a view of research progress and a view on how progress should be reported that showed little tolerance of my approach to subjective reflections on research activities. Further, to me these gatekeepers appeared intolerant towards qualitative inquiry more generally. At the time, it would have been easy for me to view such "attacks" as personal, but viewed in the context of an organisational setting it would be hard to reach that conclusion. I was working within a community psychology approach and using mainly qualitative enquiry. Further, I was working with a research supervisor who taught community psychology, qualitative inquiry and critical psychology in the department. Each of these approaches in psychology occupies a marginalised position in the version of psychology promoted by the British Psychological Society (BPS). The department I worked in was recognised by the BPS and was keen to maintain this recognition. The teaching and research activities of the department were

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[4] *Though David Fryer, my PhD supervisor, was part of this organisational setting, we managed to build a working relationship that was unfettered by organisational constraints. I feel fortunate that David and I freed ourselves from our supervisor and supervisee roles and worked together as colleagues very early on in this project.*

dominated by a laboratory based, positivist approach to psychology which was antithetical to my own vision for psychology, as articulated in the way I conducted my research. I may thus have become a vehicle through which to undermine the research approach I adopted. Further, I may have been used to undermine my supervisor so as to undermine the alternative psychologies he taught within the department. The picture of more traditional psychologists having to steer non traditional psychologists in the "right" direction is useful in maintaining the respective status of each. This is despite the former having a poor conceptual understanding of the theoretical perspective and working practice of the latter.

I therefore had to spend time in preparing a more formal report for my department written in a more "objective" style and invest emotional energy in working in what, at times, I experienced to be a hostile environment. On such occasions I felt a painful friction between obtaining support from and giving support to this organisation as I still feel as I write up my thesis. These connections with the university were thus not always helpful to working in the field. Sometimes this took me out of the field to satisfy the reciprocating relationship I needed to keep with the university. The formal report I had to write during my first year took up research time that I could have spent elsewhere and the emotional drain such conflicts caused me left me fatigued and bereft of energy to invest in the research process. This also filled me, as a new researcher at the time, with a sense of insecurity and self doubt over whether I was making research progress. I am in no doubt such factors at times impacted on the quality of my research. Thus, I felt this relationship became problematic. Unlike the reciprocating relationships I developed with the other organisations I became involved with, here the information I exchanged encompassed the whole of the research process itself rather than individual elements of it. Similarly, the support I sought was core material support for the research project. Where I became involved in contributing to organisations, in no other instance had the reciprocity been so conditional, so immediate and so crucial. There was a potential conflict here between those individual and often separate activities that were of interest to the organisations I was involved in external to the university, and the interest of the university department as translated by the department gatekeepers' views on what constituted "good" research. Such conflicts were thankfully rare but when they did occur they shook to the very heart of the research process and caused me particular concern and disquiet.

The last two organisations I linked to were again related to the research process as funding bodies. Each was a Local Authority (LA) organisation, both provided small grants. The first LA gave a grant to the research project at the beginning of the project and the second gave a grant during the final year at the intervention stage of the project. Contact with the first LA was initiated from the organisation itself, though was linked to the CEPD as a committee member initiated this contact. This funding was discussed before I became involved in the CEPD, so I had no part to play in how this contact between the research and the organisation was initially made. My involvement was either to accept or to reject the support offered by this organisation. Similarly, a key figure who secured funding for the project from the second LA was also a member of the CEPD, though here we were able to jointly discuss connecting the LA with the research project. I made these interactions reciprocal, but unlike funding from the ESRC and the support of the university, this was not conditional under the funding contract but was conditional due to my self-imposed etiquette for the situation - I felt I had a duty to return information to both these organisations. I did so by sending research progress reports to both organisations. I did this informally through my contact with the two key figures in these LAs who were also members of the CEPD. I felt I had an accountability to these organisation and, as such, maintained contact with them.

10.3.1 Implications of engaging with organisations

There were implications involved in engaging with organisations additional to those of engaging with individuals. This was particularly clear to me when I contacted organisations to obtain information from them. While I would still be involved in a research relationship with an individual, such individuals would meet me as a representative of their organisation, ie. a benefits advisor, a housing officer or an employer representative. One implication of this was that often the locus of expertise and experience was not solely with the individual I met but was dispersed more widely in their organisation. For example, in order to give me the information I required, a benefits advisor needed to talk with colleagues, a housing officer needed to refer to personnel from another department and a representative of an employer organisation needed to consult with their line managers or staff. Where the organisational setting was increasingly complex, expertise and experience were more difficult to locate. Indeed, the contacts I made with organisations to obtain information on a participant's behalf often arose from participants' concerns that some of these organisations were too complex for themselves to penetrate in order either to obtain relevant information or to speak to the right person. Further, participants asked me to contact organisations myself as they felt they could not get a straight answer out of an organisation. One participant expressed her concern that it would take her thirty minutes to get five minutes of information from a LA housing department. She believed twenty-five minutes would be spent being connected to different people in different departments and being placed on hold until the "right" person was free to talk to her, and more generally to 'cut through the bullshit' (participant's words). The line of communication would not always be clear. Even when it was, the message would not always get through.

It was also often harder to elicit opinions and views from representatives of organisations. Representatives often wished to consult with colleagues before giving me the "corporate viewpoint" - the perspective of their organisation. While individuals knew their own minds, they may not have known the "mind" of their organisation. Individuals would know their thoughts and feelings about the research topic but where they were representatives of an organisation they did not always know, or were not always confident they knew, their organisation's views on the research topic. The former was informed by an individual's personal experiences, the latter was informed by often quite complex, internal, organisational policy. An organisation's policy was where corporate ideas and preferences were set, and where guidelines for organisational activity were located. This also left me feeling there was less flexibility in working with representatives than in working with individuals. Arguably it was easier for a participant to change her/his mind than for an organisation to change policy. Where individuals had set perspectives and views, I experienced these as less entrenched than those I confronted when meeting organisations.

The research relationship I established with representatives of organisations also would be quite difficult to manage on occasions. Often, I would face a representative of an organisation whose own values and attitudes were not congruent with those of her/his organisation. Where I sought to hold an unconditional positive regard for research participants, this became difficult when an individual expressed both corporate and personal points of view that contradicted one another. I was left unsure of whether I should hold the organisation in a positive regard when this was not how the participant who was also a representative of that organisation privately perceived it. This was an implication I often felt where I sought to give support to some of the organisations I became in involved in. This was particularly to be the case in working with staff from the TCU. In this instance, the manager who had facilitated access for me to the centre was herself highly sympathetic to many activities of the support group participants and I established in that setting. However, professionally she saw friction between the centre's aims and the aims of the support group. Ultimately she had to ask me to stop running the support groups in her centre. Instances like this made interpersonal relations with participants who were representatives of organisations more problematic. The research relationships I had established with many research participants focused on relationships of trust. This was most difficult to sustain when a participant was acting as a representative of an organisation.

To promote a trusting and open relationship with an organisation's representative in no way led to an open and trusting relationship with that organisation. Often, representatives of organisations were bound by their company/institution/department's policy. This was particularly so for those working in the statutory services. Their professional role (ie. civil servant) would often mean they had to avoid any activity that might upset the remit of their respective organisation (ie. the ES). There were certainly feelings of constraint in my interaction with some of these individuals. They were bound by their organisational identity. Representatives of such organisations were often prevented from discussing matters openly unless they freed themselves by stepping outside their organisational roles. As a civil servant, a participant was unable to give her/his opinion on aspects of legislative activities ongoing at the time. They were under contract not to do so. However, such participants would give me their private views in confidence. On such occasions it was made clear to me that this was a private opinion being expressed and was to be disassociated from their professional role. When this occurred I did not feel I was interacting with their organisation. Perhaps it points to the difficulty in engaging with organisations in the research process, as through participants stepping out of their organisational roles interaction between us would often be considerably eased.

The nexus of decision-making was seldom held by the representative with whom I met (in this project contact was typically made with middle management employees). This resulted in considerable delays where our research activity was focused on change (ie. during consultancy meetings). Decisions needed to be passed onto board and committee levels. More generally this created delays in time-tabling meetings between myself and research participants acting as consultants, and the representative of the organisation. Often meetings had to be postponed until the organisation had time to react to material through predefined bureaucratised channels. Our Code of Practice was circulated across different departments and working parties within an employer organisation and needed a variety of individual personnel and groups of personnel to read and react to it before the organisation was comfortable the Code could progress through the organisation to inform their policy. Thus, interacting with organisations often involved considerable delays in the research process and was often very time consuming. This made deadlines and research targets difficult to set and reach.

The reason I sought to engage with an organisation would determine how much contact I needed to sustain with that organisation. Where I needed in-depth information on the organisation itself rather than on the knowledge they had access to, I often had to get closer to the organisation and maintain a greater level of contact. Such was the case in getting information for participants in the support group on organisations for unemployed people. It was further the case during consultancy meetings with employers. On several occasions the high level of contact I established with organisations led me to becoming almost and, in two instances, actually assimilated into these organisations. Actually becoming assimilated in an organisation occurred with People First and Reachout. I also almost became assimilated in the CEPD through my high level of involvement in their activities. I say almost assimilated as I did not become a committee member, though I was invited to do so. Through becoming assimilated into the People First and Reachout organisations, I effectively changed my research identity. In these two settings I no longer considered myself to be acting as a researcher. My distinctive identity in these organisations became *advisor* and *management committee member* respectively. This was why I chose not to accept an invitation from the CEPD to become a committee member. I felt it could compromise my role of researcher, it would certainly make me something other than an independent researcher in that setting and I would have arguably been perceived as someone other than a researcher by other research participants. This was so for the CEPD but not so for People First or Reachout as the former was a statutory organisation and the latter were voluntary organisations. Thus, with the CEPD

I could justifiably have been seen by others in the field as someone working on behalf of the Government. I pick this point up again when I reflect upon the political implications of the research process.

As well as becoming almost assimilated into some of these organisations, I was also partially rejected from organisations. Such was the case with the TCU, though it was only my involvement in support group meetings that was effectively barred. I was still permitted to visit the centre and talk with trainees individually. I also felt subjectively rejected by the organisation with which I was most closely connected, my university, for reasons I have described above. Where I became almost assimilated in an organisation, my concerns over how open representatives of organisations could be with me became somewhat diluted. When closer links were established between myself and organisational representatives, views and opinions were often more freely exchanged between us. Taking an active role in the organisations in which I did, often led to improved communication with those organisations through affording me an inside (*emic*) understanding of their activities. In these instances the effect was to enrich the research process and my understanding of important issues in the field. However, in each case my involvement in these organisations did not ask me to conform to the policy of these organisations. My research aims and research direction were not compromised in these setting. Effectively, each organisation gave me a free reign to conduct the research in the way both participants and I wished. My rejection from the training centre for unemployed people and my rejection by my university were instances where more close involvement with these organisations led to compromises between my research activities and the policies (formal and informal) of these organisations. This, I feel, points to a further consequence of engaging at such a close level with organisations. There is a danger the policy of such organisations may lead to compromises and conflicts in the research process.

My level of involvement with an organisation also impacted upon the nature of what was exchanged during the interaction. In a typical research relationship the dynamic is one of researchers *obtaining* information from the field. The reciprocal nature of *giving* information and *obtaining* support is usually pivoted on a researcher's relationship with funding organisations. In this project, such reciprocal relationships were maintained with organisations other than funding bodies. I both obtained information and support from and gave information and support to such organisations. This brought me into closer contact with them. It further required my analysis and reporting of the research material to be relevant to and usable by these organisations. Thus, I produced reports and working documents which these organisations used as resources. From this reciprocal relationship I felt a sense of accountability to these organisations. If the quality of the information and support I was giving was poor this could lead to negative consequences for the organisation. I felt this particularly strongly during my involvement in the consultation exercise with the CEPD, which I describe in the next section. The material I was producing for the committee was being used to represent their views to the Department of Education and Employment. The accountability that I experienced towards people in these organisational settings perhaps unexpectedly caused friction in my relationship with my university department. Research information and activities that were moulded to be of practical use to organisations external to the university did not sit as comfortably as I hoped it would for the particular research interests expressed by my university department. If there is a gap between the interest of academia and the interests of non academic organisations, such research ruptures may be expected, and perhaps I should have anticipated them better.

How I engaged with organisations during the research process also points to the particular dynamics of the research process. Here I am referring to who was driving the research. Was it myself as researcher deciding who to contact, what information should be sought, and how should it be sought or did this drive come from elsewhere? In my research methods I sought to create opportunities for research participants to gain some control over the research process and to drive elements of the process themselves. This is reflected in those contacts with organisations made by either a combination of research participants and I, or by research participants themselves. In the connections made to organisations through the research roles I occupied, it is clear participants took considerable control over which organisations were contacted and why they were contacted. For example, contacting the Benefits Agency was driven by participants' need for benefit entitlement advice and contacting unemployment support groups was driven by participants' need for information on service provision in the voluntary sector for unemployed people. However, for reasons I state earlier, it was most usual for myself to contact these organisations on participants' behalf.

The research process also opened room for elements of the research to be driven by organisations in the field. This is suggested by the frequency of contacts established between the research project and organisations in the field that were initiated by the organisations themselves. Through the contacts I had developed while working in the field, a wide sector of organisations involved in employment and disability issues came to hear of the project and of the Code of Practice. This led to organisations contacting me directly to ask for copies of the Code. Also, for example, the initiative for my involvement with Reachout came from Reachout themselves. Indeed the initial drive behind the research came from an organisation in the field - the CEPD. Further, PACT, ADC and TCU all initiated contact with the research project themselves rather than being approached to do so either by myself or by research participants. As well as the research process being driven from an academic setting, conspicuous through my involvement with the research council and the university, it was also being driven by organisations external to academia, and located more closely in the field of disability and employment. In figures 10a and 10b this is evident in the number of boxes under the "Who?" subheading that describe the initiative for contact coming from organisations.

The fact that many organisations had become aware of the research project and had then initiated contact with the project was attributable to one of the benefits I felt from interacting with organisations. This benefit, as I was to experience it, was the network of communication my involvement in these organisations helped me to establish. By this, I mean word was spread quickly and broadly in the local region among organisations working in the field of disability and employment, and more generally across networks of employer organisations. It was through this process that external organisations contacted the research project. These networks of communication were situated in the personal contacts I had established with individual members of the CEPD and contacts in PACT and the ADC. It was through these channels that other organisations heard of the research. I was thus able to use these networks either explicitly (as with generating groups of research participants) or implicitly (through relying on word of mouth for awareness of my research project to spread). I had little control over what was being communicated across these networks, which made it especially important that I informed people in these settings in considerable depth about the research. This was a fortunate result of connecting to organisations through the course of this research. However, as well as carrying positive messages about the research project, these multiple lines of communication could all too easily have sent out negative messages about the research project.

10.4 Reflecting on the political implications of the research process

Addressing the organisational implications of the research process touches upon political processes. It does so both through the nature of engaging with organisations which are guided and informed by policy and more explicitly through engaging in local Government and statutory organisations such as PACT and the CEPD. The political implications of the research process were most noticeable during my involvement with the CEPD on consultation exercises surrounding the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). However, I also would become involved in political activity elsewhere. This would have a distinct impact on the research process. In this section I describe this impact through centring on the issues of research confidentiality, research momentum and research continuity. However, first I reflect on those activities that were, to me, explicitly political and would also appear so to others. I then reflect on those activities that were implicitly political, ie. less discernible as political. I begin by focusing on my involvement with the CEPD.

10.4.1 Consulting on the DDA

My involvement with the CEPD began in October 1994 and ended early in 1997. During my time with the committee, the Government began a series of consultation exercises on disability anti discrimination legislation. The committee was called upon to be active in these consultation exercises. As I was an active participant in committee activities at that time, I too became active in these exercises. Thus, my role along with fellow committee members became one of informing and contributing to discussions on these matters. The content of these discussions were both recorded as formal responses to Government consultation exercises and were also fed through to members of the National Advisory Council on Employment of People with Disabilities (NACEPD) through the committee chairperson's membership on that council. I was to take an active role in the decisions the committee took during this time. My political involvement pivoted around the committee's consultancy role on the DDA. I feel this to be essentially a political activity as I was working directly with Government bodies - the ES, the Department of Employment (now the Department of Education and Employment), the

NACEPD and the then Minister for Disabled People (now the Minister for Employment and Disability Rights). Becoming involved in these political processes altered my research role and my research identity. I was to take on a political identity.

I positioned myself as an independent contributor to the CEPD's consultancy role on the DDA rather than as a committee member. As I mention in the previous section, through my contact with the committee I had been invited to join the committee as a member. As someone who was gaining experience of the employment circumstances of disabled people through the course of my research, I was seen a good candidate for such a role. However, I chose not to take up this offer. Becoming a committee member would have given me a particular political identity that I felt could have been detrimental to the research process. In particular, this may have compromised the independence I had as a researcher. It would have made my research role essentially a political one, but not in a way I felt would have been beneficial to the research process.

The committee was not allowed to lobby on issues concerning Government policy. The role of the committee, for example, prevented them from lobbying for legislative change. Further, the committee did not consult on alternative Parliamentary Bills circulating at the time. The material the committee focused on was that they received from Government ministers and Government departments. Their role did not permit them to support alternative initiatives coming from organisations external to the Government. During the political activity of the time, their role was to support and assist Government initiatives. To adopt a CEPD identity would have aligned myself to the Government to the extent I would be asked to support Government initiatives. Such an identity may have been problematic in my role in the research process.

An immediate problem would have been my role as advisor, where I gave participants benefit entitlement advice. The fact I could offer independent entitlement advice as someone who was working independent of the ES meant there were arguably fewer risks for participants to disclose details on their financial and domestic circumstances to me. If participants perceived me as connected to the ES, this may have compromised the trust we could have established in our benefit advice interviews. More generally, in relation to research interviews that broached the topic of disability legislation, participants could have justly perceived me to have affiliations that were not congruent with their disquiet concerning Government legislation. Where participants were highly critical of existing and forthcoming legislation and service provision in the field of disability, my identity as a member of the CEPD may have compromised my role as a researcher. I may have become someone that participants had to *convince of* rather than *confide in*. If my role in the CEPD was to support Government initiatives, I would have been on the side of the legislators rather than the side of people being legislated about. Rhetoric may then have had a larger role to play in what was exchanged during research interviews. Sandy, a participant who was active in lobbying for disability rights, was well versed with and practised in meeting policy makers to persuade them to modify their policies in light of his and other disabled people's concerns. If I entered my research interaction with Sandy as someone supporting existing and future Government policy (ie. a CEPD member), our research interaction could have become another such instance for Sandy to practise his powers of persuasion rather than share with me his more personal and subjective thoughts and feelings on the research topic.

Aside from the impact such an identity would have on the research process, it could also limit the level at which I could engage in the political activities of the CEPD and beyond. As an independent participant observer, rather than a CEPD member, I could become involved more directly in the political processes ongoing at that time without compromising the statutory responsibilities of the committee or my own research role. Throughout the research process I could challenge Government thinking and ES policies towards disabled people and support alternative Parliamentary Bills and initiatives coming from organisations external to Government departments. Arguably, there could have been room for me to operate both independently as a researcher and as a committee member. I could act as a committee member during CEPD meetings, but outside such meetings I could have functioned independently as a researcher. However, as the committee was my source of contact with employer organisations, confusion over my identify, specifically over whether I was acting independently or whether I was acting as a CEPD representative, may have been harmful to the committee and to the research process in general. For example, my research activity may have been harmful to the committee if the Codes of Practice I co-developed during the intervention stage were perceived as CEPD material. This would have compromised the statutory responsibilities of the committee (see Chapter Three). As an independent observer, I was not bound by these statutory responsibilities. This would be important during the intervention stage of the project with employer organisations where I could complement input rather than add to the input from the ES.

My concerns were borne out in research reality during my involvement with the CEPD. Some of the tasks the committee was set during the DDA consultation period included consulting on the Government's Code of Practice and on guidance documents on the definition of disability and on the future role of CEPDs. I took part in the committee's discussions on these documents and prepared two reports - one on the activities of the CEPD (Duckett, 1996b) and one on the committee's reactions to the Government's proposed Code of Practice and Guidance documents on the DDA (Duckett, 1996a). The committee used these reports during the consultation process. In the case of the latter, I took on the role of summarising the committee's response to draft documents published by the Government. This report allowed me little room to express my own opinions as I wished to summarise the opinions of committee members. However, in the case of the former report I analysed the effectiveness of the committee's activities in respect to the Government's considerations over the future roles of CEPDs. I was able to use the report as a vehicle through which to address some of the concerns raised by my research. I could do so as I wrote the report from the perspective of someone independent of the committee. Having a separate identity from the committee meant I could offer my suggestions as to the future of the CEPD from a more autonomous position. For example, I strongly recommended the Government continue to support such committees. For me to recommend continued support for the activities of these committees as a committee member would have been very different from me doing so as an independent observer. As the former, my vested interests would be clear. The recommendation could be seen in the light of the recommender directly profiting from the recommendations made. As an independent observer, self-interest in the recommendations would have been less discernible, though that is not to say they did not exist, ie. continual existence of a supportive research interest group. The political roles I both adopted and chose not to adopt had a direct impact on the type of research activities I could engage in. This may have impacted on how my research activities would be interpreted both by research participants and by Government officials.

I further became involved in disability legislation through consulting on the Disability Commission Bill, an alternative to the Government's Disability Discrimination Bill. The Bow Group published this alternative Bill in the middle of 1995. The Bow Group is a forum that conducts policy research within the Conservative Party. Here I was engaged in written correspondence over the consultation document published by the Bow Group. This was external to my involvement with the CEPD and came about as I was searching through the literature on legislation and was keeping in touch with legislative activity ongoing at that time. Through my contact with the Bow Group, I related some of my research findings and gave my reactions to the Government's Bill and the Bow Group's alternative Bill. Again, I positioned myself politically towards the research process and used my research interpretations up to that point to inform the stance I took towards legislation. As with my activities with the CEPD, I was offering my advice to the Bow Group as an independent commentator rather than someone affiliated to any particular political organisation.

The political identity I adopted through becoming involved in the legislative processes also had a further impact on the research process. Through the contact I established with the CEPD and PACT I would further be privy to discussions focused on social security legislation, specifically Incapacity Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance, and on Department of Employment initiatives such as Access to Work and Sheltered Employment provisions (see Chapter Two). Through occupying a role that involved me in such discussion I would come to both translate and anticipate social security legislation, and pass this on to research participants during benefit advice interviews and support group meetings. The introduction of the Jobseeker's Allowance with the ensuing changes to the Benefits Agency and ES caused much disruption, particularly among unemployed research participants. Further, the introduction of Incapacity Benefit caused disruption to the lives of disabled, unemployed research participants. Many participants were considerably anxious about these changes. During the research project I thus became involved in translating policy to inform concerned disabled research participants. I did so at the time legislation was enacted, and anticipated such policy at the time legislation was still being formed. Here I was using the political debates on forthcoming social security legislation at CEPD meetings to inform research participants of the changes in the benefits system. Having privileged access to ES staff at committee meetings led me to interpret these activities politically. Also, becoming involved in a political role positioned me differently to research participants, as I was able to feed information to them that they may only otherwise have received from the media or from officials working for the ES. Being engaged overtly in political processes offered me particular insights on and access to such material.

10.4.2 Policy and polity

I became closely involved in matters of policy and polity during the intervention stage of the project. By polity I refer to how organisations manage their public affairs through constructing and implementing organisational guidelines. Here research participants and I were interacting with employer organisations. Our activity was focused on changing and informing the organisations' policies towards the recruitment and retention of disabled employees. I more fully describe this activity in Chapter Eight. This was to have particular political implications for the research process. I think of this activity as political as we were focused directly on issues of polity. Here, the political implications were very much on the surface, as the research intervention targeted the policies of local employer organisations. However, the political implications of the research process were not always so transparent or obvious, but nonetheless had a powerful effect on the course and content of the project.

Through engaging in organisations, the research relationships I developed with representatives of organisations were affected by the organisations' policies and polity. This was not immediately obvious to me at the time, unlike during the intervention stage of the research. It was only through later reflection that I connected my research experiences to the political nature of the field. The two most prominent instances were those times when I came across friction while interacting with organisations. Arguably, this was a direct result of my research aims and an organisation's policies being in conflict. Essentially these were political conflicts and political fallings out between myself and an organisation. The two instances I am thinking of are those between myself and the training centre for unemployed people and myself and the university. The first related to the politics of the field of employment and the second to the politics of the field of academia.

In the previous section I briefly discussed the friction between my research activity with the support group in the training centre for unemployed people (TCU) and the policy of that organisation. I also made gestures to the influence of the Employment Service (ES) on what occurred. This section allows me to consider this more fully and to consider further political dimensions to make sense of what happened. The philosophy of the training centre was very much pinned on a negative view of unemployment and a positive view of employment. The former was seen as an undesirable status to have, one that should be avoided at all cost. The latter was seen as a desirable status and one that should be sought. The funding of the centre was dependent upon turning unemployed people into employed people through providing trainees with skills training and securing job placements with local employers. This was a key organisational focus of the training environment. The centre was essentially under contract to the ES as a training provider. As such, it was bound by the political parameters of the ES. By this I mean it could not transgress ES policy on employment issues. Considering this, my fracture with the centre was perhaps better thought of as a fracture with Government policy as put into practice at the training centre rather than with the training centre itself. It was more a fracture created by my being within the particular political climate of that time. This political climate was characterised by Government activity that sought to reduce the prominence of unemployment by reducing the number of people eligible to register as unemployed. Further, Government activity promoted supply led interventions rather than demand led interventions (see Chapter Two). This entailed problematising the behaviour of unemployed people rather than problematising the lack of economic and employment opportunities available to unemployed people. Further, Government policy acted in ways that disempowered the social status of unemployed people and denied them an effective voice of their own. The politics I brought into the training centre was such that I sought to promote a positive social identity for unemployed people. Further, I sought to heighten awareness of the paucity of employment opportunities available to unemployed people and promote awareness of the numbers of people being removed from the employment register for reasons other than their securing employment (ie. having benefits withdrawn or changes in the way the numbers of unemployed people were calculated). The aim of the support group was to create a sense of solidarity between unemployed people in the local region and create opportunities for unemployed people to have a stronger political voice (ie. a say in policy decisions that affected them). These political features that characterised my involvement with the support group were in direct opposition to the political direction taken by the Department of Employment and ES. The support group developed a polity that was quite unlike Government policy. It was not long before we were unable to sustain the political activities of the former in the political context of the latter. The centre manager felt compelled to withdraw support to our group.

My experience of rejection from my university can also be thought of in more political terms. Indeed, it was difficult to avoid briefly making this connection in my discussion on this matter in the previous section. My feelings at the time were that my research approach was seen as poorly fitting my department's idea of "good quality" empirical research. I was advocating a qualitative approach to the research topic in a department dominated by quantitative approaches to research. However, I was not readily convinced the friction created was just between myself and my department. Here I can reflect on this more fully. The department was situated in a university receiving Government funding (ie. from the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council) and attracting additional funding from research councils and other research funding bodies. Further, it was a department that wished to satisfy the criteria of the BPS to receive BPS accreditation. As such, the department had multiple demands made upon how it implemented and constructed policy. It had to fulfil multiple responsibilities to these organisation to secure and retain funding. The friction I experienced with my department may have had less to do with my department and more to do with the policies of these other organisations. Such policies decide the type of research that receives funding. This has a powerful impact on the type of research done in academic institutions such as my university department as well as on how research would be received in this institution as a whole. Times are slowly changing in relation to the marginalisation of qualitative enquiry within the social sciences in general and psychology in particular. Indeed, this research project was funded by the ESRC, and increasingly qualitative research projects are securing such funding from such esteemed research councils. Further, non traditional approaches in psychology (ie. community psychology and critical psychology) are becoming more tolerated. This was certainly not so but a couple of decades ago. Many values of the past that favoured quantitative research in general and the positivist approach to science in particular over qualitative research may still be deeply entrenched in the policies of institutions such as the one in which I was located. This may be both formally or informally built into an academic institution. An example of the former would be departmental guidelines and the latter would be research agendas of resource gatekeepers within departments. Further, research cliques may form within departments that simultaneously create supportive and non supportive research environments - supportive for "traditional" and non supportive for "non traditional" researchers. Thus, I believe polity - the manner in which my department in particular and the university in general managed its public affairs in relation to the research it supported - had an impact on the research process of this project in the way I describe in the previous section.

There is an additional layer to the political implications involved in this research project. This was my own political orientation. This is implicit in the values I brought to the research. I have sought to make the values I hold towards both research and disability issues transparent in Chapter Four. These values were towards emancipation, egalitarianism and democratic participation. This effectively positioned me politically towards the topics of un/employment and disability. My sympathies were and still are to the left of the political spectrum. At the time of this research, the Government (Conservative Party) was to the right of the political spectrum. Voting against the Conservatives successively for the past eleven years, it is perhaps not surprising that I found myself opposed to much of Government policy on welfare and employment issues. By this, I would not accept any criticism that my politics blinkered my process of enquiry. I maintain the act of understanding is only ever given meaning when framed within our political and moral sense of propriety - our sense of what is "right" and "wrong". I was not political in the sense that I was partisan to any particular political party. There was a point in the research process that I found myself unsure this was strictly the case. I appeared to find much to support in Parliamentary Bills developed by parties in opposition and much to criticise in Parliamentary Bills developed by the party in power (except for a Bill drafted by the Bow group). The change of Government late in the research project confirmed to me I was not as partisan to any particular party as I had wondered. Was I to continue with this project today, I have no doubt I would attack with passion the present Labour Government's disability welfare benefit reforms and noticeable procrastination over strengthening or implementing the DDA. Further, Sandy, a participant who became central to the research process through working alongside me during the intervention stage of the project, was a supporter of the Conservative Party. Despite our differences, we were both equally as scathing, distrustful and disappointed with the DDA. My politics provided drive and passion that continually revitalised my energy during the course of the project. My politics did not "cloud" my judgement, it gave me reason to make a judgement.

The political implications I have described above have thus affected the research process. It cautioned me concerning the nature of my role in relation to the CEPD, affected the nature of the information I was able to give to participants in benefit advice interviews and support groups and caused my actual and felt experiences of rejection from organisational settings. I also brought my own political values to the research project. I reflect on how the political implications generally affected the research process by focusing on three themes in closing this section - research confidentiality, research momentum and research continuity.

10.4.3 Research confidentiality, momentum and continuity

Throughout the consultation period on the DDA the research material I was pulling together, including documentation shared with me by the CEPD and my notes from participant observation of CEPD meetings, grew constantly. The CEPD research setting held a wealth of rich detail on employment and disability issues. However, this was not without its problems. The nature of the setting and the nature of many things that were discussed would prevent me using the material directly in writing up the research. A problem arose as I was often receiving confidential documentation on local and national issues that were political in nature and required careful handling. This was particularly the case during committee meetings where, along with committee members, I was informed of confidential matters. In all of my research interactions I assured participants that I would handle the material they disclosed to me in a confidential manner. However, in these instances the issue of confidentiality would go beyond replacing participants' identities with pseudonyms. The very material, not just the source of the material, had to be retained from publication. This became an issue both due to the nature and timing of the material. Thus, material would be confidential in as far as the documents I was shown were for internal purposes only. For example, some documentation was only to be used by personnel working in the ES, or was feedback on meetings held in private with Government officials and was not for the public record. Further, some material was confidential by the nature of when it was disclosed to me, ie. details on forthcoming changes in legislation that were not ready for public disclosure at the time they were disclosed to me. I did relate some of this material to other research participants. For example, I would share news on the progress of the DDA with disabled participants and implications of the Jobseeker's Allowance with unemployed participants. However, I was careful not to disclose the source of my information and often I had to talk in very general terms rather than give the specifics of the confidential material to which I had access. This was also true of material disclosed to me in other settings. I am thinking in particular of the Codes of Practice that were developed with local employer organisations. Each organisation would disclose their concerns over recruiting and retaining disabled employees and more general information on their employee recruitment and retention practices. Arguably, information on an organisation's staffing policies, in particular information that might highlight difficulties the organisation was experiencing, could have been advantageous to that organisations' competitors in the marketplace. Again, this information was such that I had to handle it carefully. It led me to make an anonymous Code of Practice where other organisations asked for copies of the Code. This perhaps tested to the full the relationship of trust I had sought with research participants. As with the social implications of the research process I describe earlier, trust played an important part in the research process. I gained the trust of both committee members and employers who shared confidential information with me.

Several people who participated in this research were civil servants and as such they operated under strictly defined parameters restricting the information they could disclose to people outside Government office. Any "leaks" my research could have created would have had serious repercussions for some research participants. I also had a more general responsibility, as do *all* researchers working in the field, towards research practice more generally. I do not know whether participants in these settings had been involved in research projects not involving me. If they had, I was not sure of the nature of their involvement in such research. Where I became involved in a setting where politically sensitive information was being shared, participants showed a great deal of trust in me. It was clear to me that I had both responsibilities to researchers who may work in this area in the future and to participants in the research settings. I was aware that as well as any impropriety on my part that could compromise the integrity of research participants (ie their position on the CEPD or their position in the ES), it could have further made it more difficult for other researchers to enter the field and attain levels of trust with research participants.

In my field notes at the time I reported my feelings of 'playing cloak and dagger' when such confidential information was being shared with me. I often felt placed in a unique position of connecting to information circulating among Government policy makers, but felt in a difficult position in regard to protecting the interests of research participants and making full use of these unique insights into political processes I was being offered. These issues were tied closely to the political implications of the research process and made research confidentiality a particularly important issue. The political nature of the material made this both an important and a complex issue to be addressed.

The political implications of the research process also affected the momentum behind parts of this process. There were dynamics operating in the field quite separate to the research project, but which would intimately affect the research process. Here I am referring to the momentum behind the consultation exercises on the DDA. Through my involvement in these exercises, specifically my engagement with the CEPD, this led to my involvement in many aspects of the research project being time-tabled externally, ie. not controlled by me. This made the dynamics of parts of the research process very much more reactive than proactive. These exercises were driven by Government at a fast moving pace with deadlines for consultation exercises set by them. In the CEPD, the nature of our input into these processes was to react to material being circulated on forthcoming legislation rather than formulate such material ourselves. Our role was to react to legislation rather than propose legislation. Often the deadlines committee members and I had to meet to respond to the documentation we were sent was so short that it seriously impeded the level and quality of feedback we able to give. Often we had to give crude feedback to meet deadlines set for the process. It also placed pressure on me to get reports out, such as the two I mentioned previously. Here, deadlines were particularly important to meet. The consultation process would have continued with or without my and the committee's participation. The dynamics of the consultation process situated these elements of the research process in "real time" with respect to the immediacy with which we had to react to legislative processes ongoing at that time. I feel these dynamics were particular to the nature of being so intimately engaged in political processes through the course of the research.

There were also particular dynamics involved in the consultation process with employer organisations. Again, these were very much timetabled by employer organisations and the speed at which the process progressed was very much out of my and fellow consultants' hands.

Here, in contrast to the often fast moving pace of the legislative process, progress in consulting on employers' staffing policies was considerably slower. The intervention stage of the research was often halted for considerable periods, and in some cases suspended due to the time taken by employers to consult with our group running over the time I was funded to engage with the research. I have described this more in Chapter Eight. This also had implications for the continuity of the research process.

The slow pace characteristic of our consultation with employer organisations counter intuitively created an increased sense of continuity for several research participants. Where the consultation process, in which research participants and I were engaged, over ran the time I had available to engage in fieldwork, this opened the possibility for research participants to continue the consultation process themselves. At the time of writing up, both the consultancy groups and the steering group were set to continue with the consultation process with local employer organisations. The issues involved in engaging in political relations with organisations through consulting on an organisation's policy, though slow and cumbersome, ultimately led to a sense of continuity in the project following my departure from the field.

The ongoing political processes that surrounded the research project were to have both malign and benign effects on the research process. This affected the sense of research continuity during my *involvement* in the field as opposed to following my *departure* from the field. Here, I reflect on the insecurity that political processes created for participants in the field, which further introduced a sense of insecurity and threatened discontinuity in the research process. There was increasing insecurity introduced into CEPD meetings during my involvement with them. Whereas at the start of the research enterprise the committee's discussions enveloped quite broad topics, increasing amounts of time became devoted to discussing the raison d'être of the group. Further, changes in the internal structuring of the ES also placed one committee member (the CEPD secretary who was also a PACT manager) in a very uncertain, insecure position. With the reduction in the number of PACTs in Scotland, this left some PACT managers competing against one another for jobs. There were also concerns over PACT being under resourced with the larger regional boundaries they had to cover following this change. Fortunately, for the research project and the PACT manager concerned, she survived. More generally, there were times when we were uncertain as to whose job might become a casualty of the legislative changes. At times, participants in the research looked likely to leave the field through either having their responsibilities changed in their work in the ES, or through the threat posed by the DDA of the CEPD being disbanded. The latter fear was to be realised in 1997 and left me with a feeling of discontinuity. The political processes affecting those located in the field were ultimately to disband the group of individuals who had been so closely involved in the framing of the research question. Thus, the CEPD would not witness the intervention stage of the research or hear of the conclusions of the research (though I was able to continue contact with three key members of the CEPD, to whom I sent copies of the Code of Practice developed at the end of the project). It left me with a feeling of irony. The organisation that had posed the initial research question - why disabled people were being confronted with barriers at employment interviews - was to become a casualty of politically processes seeking to remove barriers to employment for disabled people.

10.5 Summary

In this chapter I have reflected on the personal, social, organisational, and political aspects of the research process. Each adds an additional layer of complexity and contextuality to the research material I have presented in Chapter Eight. Earlier in this thesis (Chapter Six) I described my disquiet at talking about the "data" that came from the methods I used. I was uncomfortable with thinking that I had data when I had taped an interview. Typing up the transcript from an interview still did not satisfy me that I had the "data". The reasons for this are contained implicitly in the reflections I have made in this chapter. As a subjective, social agent who is contextualised in organisational settings and politicised by personal values and beliefs, I came out of research settings with much more. Thus, I had more than a transcript from an interview, more than field notes from participant observation. In these settings I was gaining experiential awareness of the research topic set within multiple layers of meaning: from the personal across to the political. While participants were sharing or not sharing (as in the case with Sally), I was reacting both intellectually and emotionally. These were not feelings closeted within the confines of particular research interactions with participants, but were recurrent throughout the research process and, as such, intimately entwined in the course and content of the project.

The research was essentially a social activity. The methods I used were social in their nature (meeting with individual people and groups of people). As such, the material shared during such interpersonal interactions was set within the particular social relationships that participants and I nurtured. This not only led to an additional layer of meaning to this material, but had a direct influence over the type of material that could and would be shared and the extent to which I controlled, participants controlled or participants and I jointly controlled the direction of the research project. During the project, I would meet many different people in many different social settings. Further, the nature of the material explored was not only located in the experiences of individuals, but often within collectives of individuals. This led to both participants and I traversing different organisational settings. There were many implications to working with organisations as well as working with individuals and, again, this had a direct affect on the course and content of the project. Collectives of individuals develop group rules in order to act as a unified body. Organisations pivot upon policy and polity. Here participants and I found ourselves in the nexus of political activity. We engaged with organisations within the voluntary, corporate and statutory sector. The political relations of the research process would create boundaries within which our work had to be set and at times restricted the research process. The political relations also turned me full circle to reflect again upon my subjective involvement with the project. My values and beliefs made me a political agent in these settings, particularly in the intervention stage of the project. Further, in the intervention stage of the project, my political agency made me an agent of change in the field.

10.6 A quantitative reflection on the research methods: sharing power with participants

Soon into meeting with research participants, I began to reflect on my use of research methods. I was seeking some way to reflect on the research process that would suggest the extent and effect of using a Person-Centred and suspended structure approach. One of my central concerns was the distribution of power in the research process and I sought to create opportunities for participants to take greater control of the research process. I sought to democratise the research process. Besides the research approach I adopted, one practical way I sought to achieve a level of equality was to ensure positive research outcomes for participants, not just for myself. I offered low-income participants welfare benefit entitlement advice. This was one way of establishing a symbiotic research relationship. Thus, information would be exchanged from participant to researcher (ie. employment interview experiences) and this would be reciprocated through information being exchanged from the researcher back to participant (ie. welfare benefit advice). By the close of my first series of meetings with participants, I decided to have a closer look at what was taking place in my research interviews with participants. I wanted to see if I had been successful in establishing a symbiotic research relationship not only in outcome, but in the actual process of interviewing. I decided to supplement the qualitative reflections I was making throughout the project, which I describe in the earlier sections of this chapter, with a quantitative analysis of part of the research process.

I focused on the level of interactional symmetry I had established in my interviews. Though I do not believe this paints a full picture on issues of power and democracy in interviews, I believe it is a useful way to reflect on the equality of research roles that developed in this project. Adopting this focus asked me to reflect on the intricate interpersonal relationship that developed within each research interview. After consulting with Fiona McCall, a colleague at my university who had experience of analysing interpersonal interactions at such an intricate level, I decided to use a method of analysis known as Linell's *Initiative-Response* (IR) (Linell, Gustavsson and Juvonen, 1988). This form of analysis offered me an insight into the equality of conversational exchange in an interview through categorising the "conversational turns" taken by research participants and myself and then measuring the degree of symmetry of each of our contributions to the interview as a whole. Here I would convert the qualitative material I had gained from interviews (transcripts) into quantitative material (coding the material into a form that would convert into numbers) to explore an additional level of meaning in this material - an insight into the interview process. The question I asked myself was who, if anyone, appeared to control these interviews.

I began by analysing transcripts from interviews with four research participants. I had followed each of these interviews with a benefit advice interview. At the end of each individual interview and the start of each benefit advice interview, I would sometimes forget to turn off my tape recorder. Thus, at the end of each interview transcript I sometimes also had a record of the conversation participants and myself had during the benefit advice interview. I decided to transcribe these benefit advice conversations and include them in the IR analysis. I did so as I believed the benefit advice was not simply an adjunct to the research process, but made an important contribution to the research relationship that developed between participants and myself. An important difference to the individual interview was that in benefit advice interviews our interaction would focus on our use of a laptop computer. I used the computer to calculate a participant's benefit eligibility.

After I had analysed these transcripts, I became increasingly intrigued by what was happening in my interaction with participants during benefit advice interviews. I therefore sought an additional participant to take part in a benefit advice interview without a preceding individual interview. This was to give me additional material to reflect on and allowed me to offer benefit advice to a further participant in this project. The initial four participants were all disabled and in low-paid employment. The fifth participant was a disabled undergraduate at my university.

10.6.1 'Initiative-Response' analysis

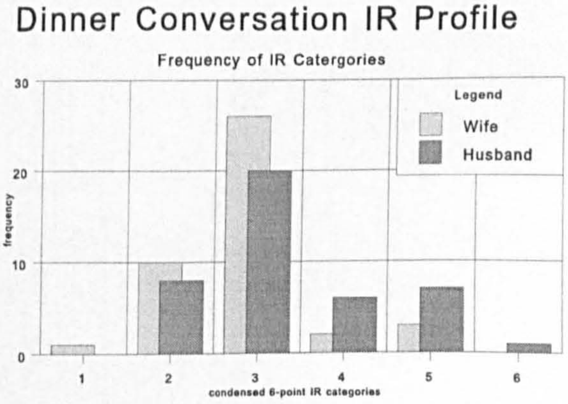
IR analysis, developed by Linell et al (1988), is an attempt to capture the conversational dominance and coherence in a verbal exchange between two people. It can, for example, be used to reflect on such interactions as between a doctor and a patient, a lawyer and a court witness or a radio chat show host and guest. Dominance in the dialogue refers to control of the "interactional floor" shared by the two discussants. Coherence refers to the fluidity of the interaction, ie. whether the conversation flows or whether it stops, starts and changes topics abruptly. IR analysis offered me a summary of each of my research interviews on a scale of interactional symmetry-asymmetry and offered me an insight into the extent to which a research participant and I were equally involved in a conversation.

IR's unit of analysis is the conversational contribution that makes up a "turn" in the dialogue. Each of these turns is given one of a possible eighteen codes (mathematical symbols). These codes (eg. <, >, =) stand for the type of response and/or initiative contained within that turn. These symbols have different scores ranging from one to six. The lower scores are given to weak or minimal responses (ie. short, one or two word replies to a question). The middle scores are given to responses that are more expanded (providing additional information than directly asked for by the other discussant's question). The higher scores are given to turns that contain strong initiatives (directly asking for information from the other discussant). I have summarised the meaning of the six IR categories in Table 10a. The frequency of these scores for each discussant offers an overall measure of her/his dominance in the dyad (ie. who asks the most questions, and who is the most directive in the conversation). This is called the *IR profile* and is represented in a bar chart showing the frequency of turns for each category. I have given two examples, taken from Linell's paper, in figures 10c-d. According to Linell, these two types of interaction sit at either end of the symmetrical/asymmetrical continuum, ie. they are either highly symmetrical or highly asymmetrical.

Table 10a Explanation of IR categories

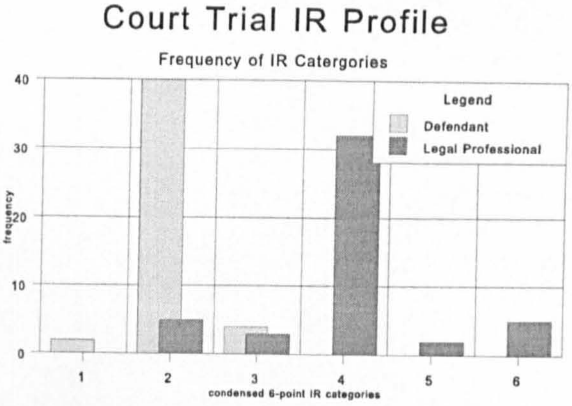
IR Category	Meaning
1 2	Short response to a question. Usually just a few words.
3 4	A fuller response to a question, giving more information than asked for.
5 6	Asking questions and directing the conversation.

Figure 10c Showing a symmetrical conversation



By summing each discussant's score and calculating the mean (the *IR index*) we get one measure of the extent a discussant controls or is controlled in the interaction. Control is defined as asking questions and directing the topics discussed in the conversation. The difference between the two IR indices (*IR difference*) gives a measure of one discussant's dominance over the other - the greater the difference, the greater the dominance and therefore level of asymmetry. In tables 10b-c I have calculated the IR index for the defendant and legal professional illustrated in figure 10d. The IR difference in this case would be 1.88 (4.02 - 2.14).

Figure 10d Showing an asymmetrical conversation



Linell also proposed four coefficients (*B,S,F* and *O*). These refer to the frequencies of particular codes as a percentage of all turns taken in a conversation.

Table 10b IR index and difference for legal professional

IR Category x	Freq. =	Total
1	0	0
2	4	8
3	2	6
4	32	128
5	1	5
6	5	30
Total	44	177

IR Index = 177 / 44 = 4.02

Table 10c IR index and difference for defendant

IR Category x	Freq. =	Total
1	1	1
2	40	80
3	3	9
4	0	0
5	0	0
6	0	0
Total	44	90

IR Index = 90 / 44 = 2.14

- The ***B* (balance)** coefficient is the number of expanded responses, ie. turns that respond to the content of the other discussant's adjacent turn, and adds further topics or information.
- The ***S* (solicitation)** coefficient is the number of strong initiatives, ie. a turn that directly asks a question to the other discussant.
- The ***F* (fragmentation)** coefficient is the number of unconnected or non locally connected turns, ie. when the turn does not respond to an adjacent turn but introduces a previous or new topic.
- The ***O* (obliqueness)** coefficient is the number of times a discussant avoids linking with the main content of the other discussant's adjacent turn, despite being locally connected, ie. ignoring the adjacent turn or challenging the form or function of the adjacent turn.

The coefficients are not mutually exclusive in that some of the 18 IR categories are represented in more than one of these coefficients. Below, I have included a section of Anne's transcript to illustrate the IR analysis.

Paul
Is that just with the heavy lifting? <>
Anne
I cannae do any heavy lifting. <
Paul
Right, so is it just that they help you out? <=>
Anne
I don't know, they just have a different attitude, you don't seem to be pressurised the same as what you are in a big factory. I'm talking about Beadle's and to me they've just no got that strictness that other places have got. I've worked for Smiths, Jones and Brown.<^
Paul
What made the other places that you used to work strict? <>

Legend: (<>) turn involving both response to main content of the previous discussant's adjacent turn and a strong initiative (question); (<) response to the discussant's adjacent turn involving no initiating properties; (<=>) response and strong initiative, the initiative linked to the discussant's own preceding turn; (<^) response and weak initiative - providing a response but not, in turn, demanding a response (does not ask a question).

10.6.2 My analysis of benefit advice interviews

I further used IR analysis to code each benefit advice interview. Here I supplemented the IR analysis with additional codings to take account of the presence of the laptop computer in the interview. Thus, I coded each turn according to the dependence of that turn on the use of the computer. I coded a turn as either dependent, partially dependent, or non dependent upon the computer. I used this additional coding as it would often be the computer that asked questions, responded with information and/or changed topics. I often felt like a mediator between the participant and the benefit advice computer programme. However, I was also aware questions generated by the computer were not always dominant in the interaction. The sequence of the computer questions was predetermined and highly structured and closed ended. The computer questions themselves could all be satisfied by minimal responses. However, I often mediated the computer question, paraphrased the original question (partially computer dependent) or raised my own additional topics or made comments on a response (non computer dependent). Similarly participants would give information superfluous or additional to the question asked on the computer screen (partially computer dependent), or raise topics unrelated to the computer's question (non computer dependent). The latter two types of interaction would not necessarily follow a pre organised sequence or require a minimal response set by the computer dependent turns. I used this additional coding scheme to allow analysis of these different interactions separately and to explore their effect on the developing relationship between participants and myself. The following section from Claire's benefit advice transcript is an example of how I applied both the IR coding and computer-dependence coding to the benefit advice transcripts. The symbol '💾💾' denotes computer dependence; '💾'denotes partial computer dependence; and no symbol indicates no computer dependence.

Paul
[presses key on computer and next questions comes up on screen] >💾💾
Claire
No. <💾💾
Paul
How old is your husband.. in years? >💾
Claire
[pause] 48. <💾
Paul
You had to think about that! <∧
Claire
I had to work it out, I couldnae work out if he was 47 or 48. <∧
Paul
[presses key on computer and next question comes up on screen] >💾💾
Claire
No. <💾💾

10.6.3 Results of my analysis

10.6.3.1 Individual interviews

The IR profiles (figures 10e-h) suggest I hold the dominant role in all four interviews. Most of my contributions in each interview contained strong initiatives while participants appeared to contribute weaker responses and fewer initiatives in our conversations. Overall, participants' profiles are negatively skewed - more heavily distributed towards the left-hand side of the graph. This is especially so in Category Three and marginally so in Category Two.

My profile is more positively skewed - a greater number of contributions distributed towards the right hand side of the graph. However, this pattern is less clear in my interviews with Bill and Denise. The difference in how participants and I contributed to each interview is most noticeable in the centre of each profile, between Categories Three and Four. I contribute a greater number of Category Four turns, and participants contribute a greater number of Category Three turns. Bill and Claire do not contribute any turns coded under Categories Five and Six, though Anne and Denise contribute a small number of turns in Category Six and Category Five respectively. What all this means is that overall I more often asked questions and controlled the interaction by taking the initiative in changing and/or maintaining a focus on the topics discussed. Further, throughout these interviews, I contributed a greater range of turns across the six categories. The range of contributions made to each interview by participants is much narrower. The profiles suggest participants were more restrictive than me in the range of contributions they made to each dyad.

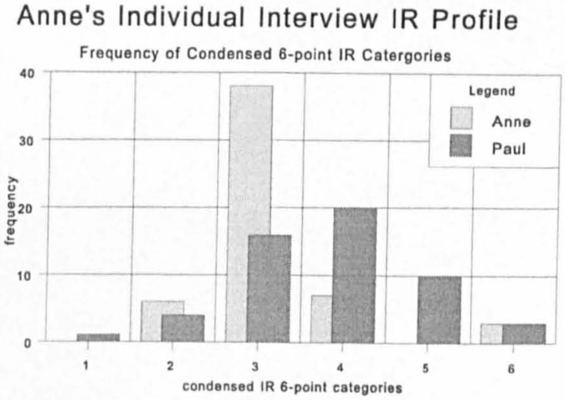


Figure 10e

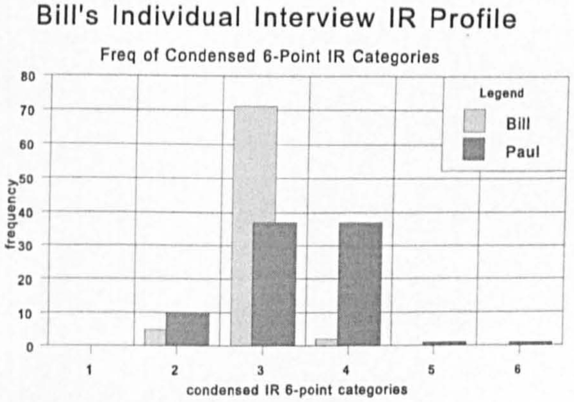


Figure 10f

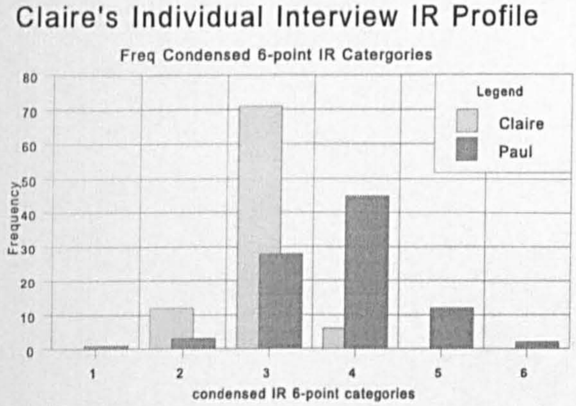


Figure 10g

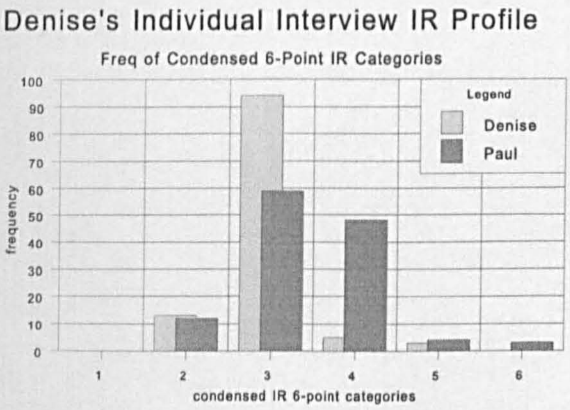


Figure 10h

Turning to the IR differences in table 10d, these were low for my interviews with Bill and Denise, moderate in my interview with Anne and moderately high in my interview with Claire. My analysis of the material would suggest that in three of these interviews participants and I had established an informal interaction. For example, two (Bill and Denise) were within the range Linell ascribes to an informal conversation between friends and one (Anne) within the range Linell ascribes to a conversation between a radio chat show host and her/his guest. The exception was my interview with Claire. In this interaction, an element of one discussant, namely myself, controlling the other discussant was evident. The higher IR index for myself (3.76) than for Claire (2.93) suggests it was me who was in control. The IR difference I calculated from my interaction with Claire was closer to a conversation Linell describes as between a doctor and a patient. Thus, there was an inequality in the contributions Claire and I made to the conversation. I consistently had a higher IR index than participants. This would suggest that in *all* interviews, I adopted the controlling role. Though, this control was marginal in two of the interviews, it was nonetheless a common pattern.

Dyad No.	**Discussants**	**IR Index**	**IR Dif.**	**Coefficients**			
				B	**S**	**F**	**O**
1	Anne	3.20	0.60	63	13	7	9
	Paul	3.80		26	57	24	4
2	Bill	2.96	0.34	86	1	1	6
	Paul	3.30		38	41	8	7
3	Claire	2.93	0.84	78	1	5	7
	Paul	3.76		29	55	26	24
4	Denise	3.00	0.44	74	6	3	3
	Paul	3.44		34	38	16	6

Table 10d IR differences and coefficients from four individual depth interviews

Explanatory note to table 10d

IR Index: mean of all IR scores (each turn is assigned a value of 1-6)

IR Dif.: difference between the two discussant's scores (interviewer's IR index score is subtracted from the interviewee's IR index score). Below is a scale taken from Linell et al. (1988) to aid comparison.

0.0	Balanced conversation	eg. informal conversation between friends
0.5 - 1.0	Unbalanced conversation	eg. radio chat programs
1.0 - 1.5	Interview	eg. doctor-patient interviews
1.5 - 2.0	Interrogation	eg. court trial

Coefficients: B - Balancing S - Solicitation F - Fragmentation O - Obliqueness

Through breaking the analysis down still further into IR coefficients, this inequality becomes more apparent. These coefficients suggest the nature of contributions made by research participants and myself were distributed quite differently. Most conspicuous is the dominance of balancing turns made by participants and soliciting turns made by myself. All participants contributed a greater number of balancing turns (expanded responses) than me. In contrast, the contributions I most often made during each interview were soliciting turns, though in my interviews with Bill and Denise, this was mixed with an almost equal number of balancing turns. Indeed, these were the two interviews that were most equal in respect to the IR difference. Thus, by far I would ask the most questions during interviews and participants would more often respond to questions than ask questions.

The coefficients for fragmented and oblique turns also give an indication as to who most often changed the direction of the interview through changing and swapping between topics during the conversation. In Anne, Claire and Denise's interviews I contributed a lot of fragmenting and a number of oblique turns. Anne contributed several soliciting turns, but across all participants, contributions were lower under the soliciting, fragmenting and oblique turns. In each of these interviews, participants contributed such turns only on a few occasions. Conspicuous to my interviews with Bill and Denise, I also contributed fewer such fragmenting turns. Thus, in these interviews, I would less often change the focus of the discussion. However, this in turn did not lead either Bill or Denise to take on this role. Indeed, they contribute fewer such turns than either Claire or Anne.

10.6.3.2 Benefit advice interviews

In the case of my interviews with Claire and Denise, I had transcripts available on our conversation during a benefit advice interview. I used IR analysis on these two pieces of transcript as well as the transcript from an additional participant, Erica, who I recruited specifically to explore the way we interacted in such a benefit advice interview. The IR profiles of the benefit advice interviews (figures 10i & 10j) show my interactions with Claire and Denise as asymmetrical. I contributed more to categories to the right-hand side of the profile, and Claire and Denise contribute more turns on the left-hand side of the profile. This suggests I was more dominant as my contributions more often solicited information and changed topics and participants more often responded with information and were less likely to change topics. The IR profile of Erica's benefit advice interview (figure 10k) suggests the dyad as a whole was more symmetrical than the previous two interviews, though again Erica contributes more to Categories Two and Three, and I contribute more to Category Four. Though overall frequencies are small, Erica does make more contributions to Category Six which suggests some of her contributions were stronger, ie. asking questions. From these profiles I appear the more dominant during benefit interviews with Claire and Denise. Thus, overall, both Claire and Denise's IR profiles indicate they were more passive, with most of her contributions characterised by weak responses. This difference is less pronounced in the IR profile of Erica's benefit advice interview, though I still appear the more dominant discussant overall.

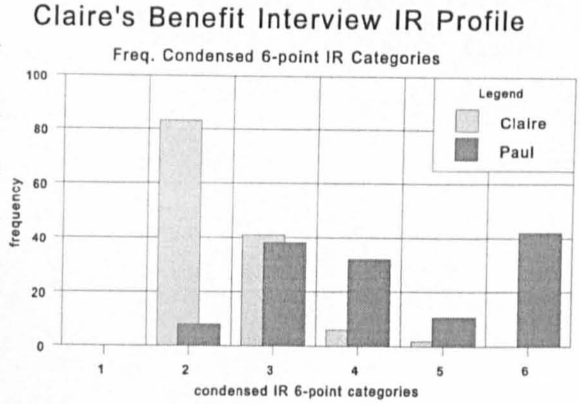


Figure 10i

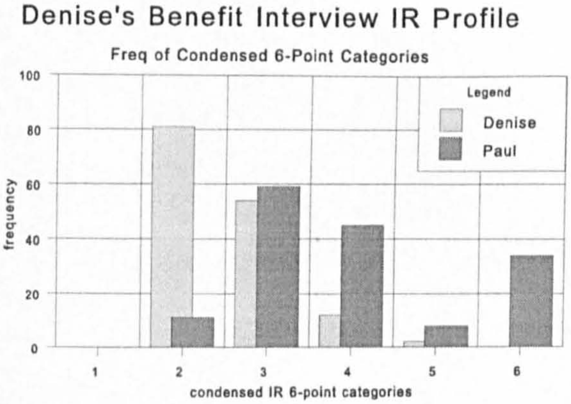


Figure 10j

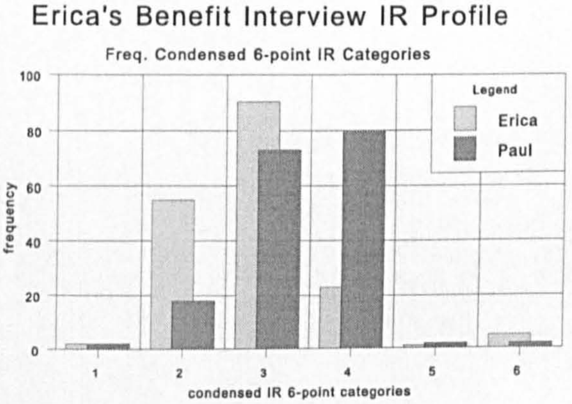


Figure 10k

As can be seen in table 10e, the IR differences between participants and myself in benefit advice interviews ranged from high, an IR difference Linell ascribes to an interrogation (1.86, Claire), to low, within the range of a balanced conversation such as an informal conversation between friends (0.16, Erica). The IR difference in my interview with Denise was high, an IR difference within the range Linell describes as a doctor-patient interview or a mild police interrogation (1.41, Denise). This suggests that in each of my interviews with Claire and Denise, I was the one who controlled the course and content of our conversations. It is not so clear that I was the one who controlled the course and content of my conversation with Erica, as the IR difference is particularly low. This would suggest that I may have marginally been in control, but that both of us generally controlled the conversation.

Dyad No.	Discussants	IR index	IR dif.	Coefficients			
				B	S	F	O
5	Claire	2.45	1.86	27	4	3	3
	Paul	4.31		28	59	44	4
6	Denise	2.56	1.41	32	6	4	4
	Paul	3.97		36	50	28	1
7	Erica	3.56	0.16	39	9	17	44
	Paul	3.40		36	49	2	2

Table 10e. Interviewer and interviewee interactions in three benefit advice interviews.

The coefficients in table 10e give a more detailed analysis of what was happening in the way participants and I interacted during this part of the interview. The coefficients from my benefit interviews with Claire and Denise suggest most of my contributions involved soliciting turns (s). Thus, I would be putting a lot of questions to participants during our conversation. However, I also contributed both balancing (b) and fragmenting (f) turns, the latter particularly being the case in my conversation with Claire. This meant that a lot of the time I would be responding to participants' questions, supplying participants with additional information and also I would quite often be changing topics. Both Claire and Denise appeared to contribute mostly balancing turns. Thus, their role in our conversation was mostly taken up with supplying me with information. The coefficients suggest neither Claire nor Denise asked many questions and rarely changed the topic of conversation. The pattern is noticeably different in Erica's benefit advice interview. Here, while I continued to contribute mostly soliciting and balancing turns, I contributed far fewer fragmenting turns. Further, Erica contributes noticeably more oblique as well as balancing turns and a degree of fragmenting turns. This suggests Erica changed the focus of conversation several times during the interview.

The above profiles and coefficients describe, as a whole, the conversational interaction during benefit advice interviews. The additional analysis I performed allowed me to further explore the nature of my interaction with each participant. I first turned to those parts of our conversations that were directly dependent upon the computer, ie. responding to questions and information generated by the computer benefits entitlement programme. Through separating such material out, and analysing those parts of the conversation that were directly dependent on the computer, I calculated the following IR profiles (figures 10 l-n). Compared to the IR profiles of the benefit interview as a whole, the asymmetry of these interactions was more exaggerated. The IR profiles suggest all three participants occupied a more passive role. Participants' turns were most frequently characterised by weak responses. My contributions were more often characterised by strong initiatives. Thus, I was asking a majority of the questions and the participant's role was most often confined to answering questions. However, the number of turns each of us contributed that were solely dependent upon the computer was quite small, especially in the case of Denise and Erica. This may exaggerate the patterns in these profiles.

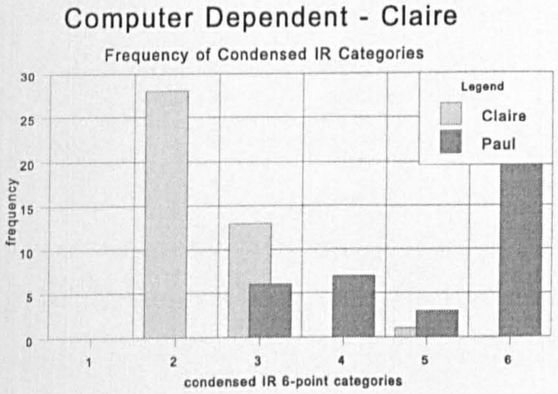


Figure 10l

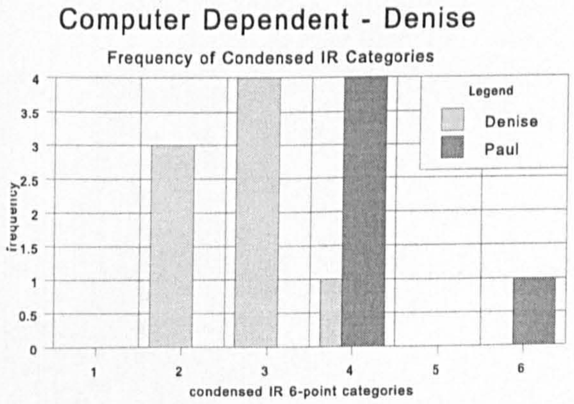


Figure 10m

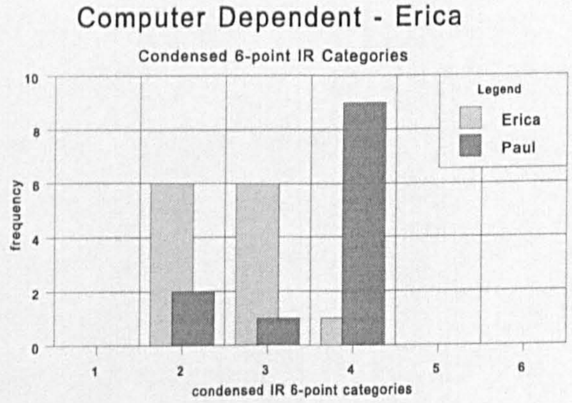


Figure 10n

Turning to the IR differences from these computer dependent turns in table 10f, the IR differences are 2.69 (Claire), 1.65 (Denise) and 0.97 (Erica). In Linell's terms these would reflect interactions comparable to those found in a "tough" interrogation (Claire), an interrogation (Denise) and a doctor-patient interview (Erica). In each case, I was the discussant in control of the conversation. When I was using the computer in my interview with Claire, I asked all the questions. I further fragmented much of the dialogue, often changing the topic of conversation. Claire's role was confined to contributing balancing turns - relating information to me. Denise, solicited information but seldom reciprocated information. I also fragmented much of the dialogue. Similarly with Erica, I spent most of the time asking questions. Denise and Erica did ask questions, but they more often contributed than solicited information.

Table 10f. Interviewer and interviewee computer dependent interactions in three benefit advice interviews.

Dyad No.	Discussants	IR index	IR dif.	Coefficients			
				B	S	F	O
5	Claire	2.39	2.69	29	0	2	2
	Paul	5.08		16	82	66	3
6	Denise	2.75	1.65	50	13	0	0
	Paul	4.40		0	100	20	0
7	Erica	2.61	0.97	46	8	0	8
	Paul	3.58		8	75	0	0

I then turned to those parts of our conversation that were only partially dependent upon the computer. Here the computer may have generated a question or provided information, but we would not be so attentive to it. The IR profiles of these parts of our conversation (figures 10o-q) are very different from those that were dependent upon the computer. My dominance in each of these interactions appears less though I continue to take the initiating role. However, the weakening of contributions I make is not mirrored by a strengthening in the contributions of each participant. For example, in Claire's IR profile, I contribute fewer turns to Category Six than I did during computer dependent interactions. However, Claire's contributions are still dominated by weak responses signified by Category Two. This is similarly the case with Denise and Erica. In these types of interaction I continued to be the discussant who initiated more and responded less.

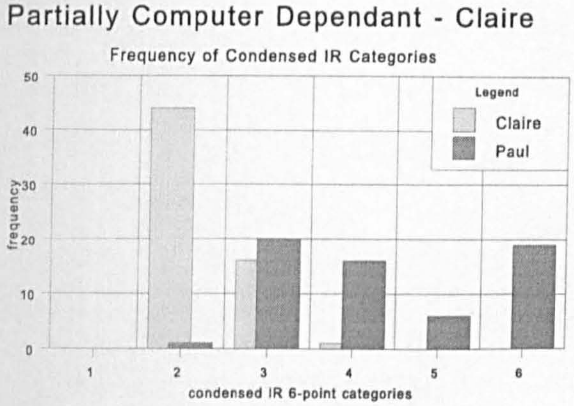


Figure 10o

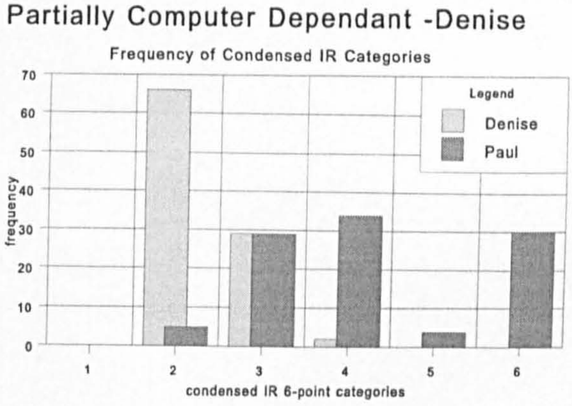


Figure 10p

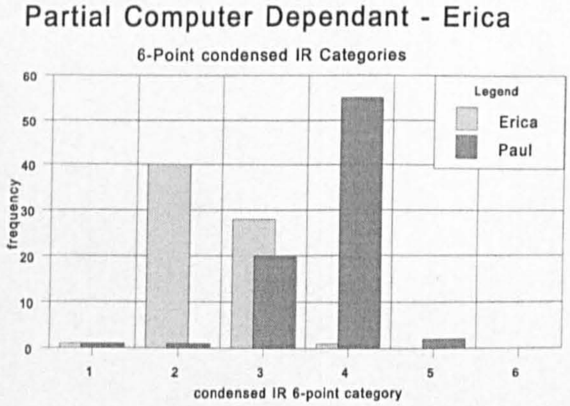


Figure 10q

Table 10g: Interviewer and interviewee partially computer dependent interactions in three benefit advice interviews.

Dyad No.	Discussants	IR index	IR dif.	Coefficients			
				B	S	F	O
5	Claire	2.29	2.06	25	2	0	2
	Paul	4.35		31	58	42	3
6	Denise	2.36	1.88	29	2	2	1
	Paul	4.24		29	61	35	1
7	Erica	2.41	1.30	39	0	1	1
	Paul	3.71		24	72	1	4

Turning to the IR differences and coefficients for these partially computer dependent interactions in table 10g, the IR differences are high, 2.06 and 1.88 for Claire and Denise respectively, though slightly lower (1.30) for Erica. Again these interactions range from what Linell describes as an interrogation to a doctor-patient interview. In these sections of conversation with Claire, Denise and Erica, there was the familiar pattern of my soliciting information and participants contributing information. With Claire and Denise I also fragmented the dialogue quite often, changing the topic of conversation, though this was not so with Erica. Overall, this suggests I continued to hold a dominant role during parts of our conversation. However, I did appear to contribute turns that balanced the conversation more often than I did when the interaction was more dependent upon the computer. I gave information, though I still more often asked than answered questions.

The whole picture changes when I turned to explore those parts of our conversation that did not involve us using the computer. Here the symmetry of profiles (figures 10r-t) between each participant and myself is pronounced. During each interview we appear to be contributing to the conversation in a similar way. Though the number of interactions for Claire is small, Denise's and particularly Erica's profiles contain a large number of interactions and show a definite symmetry. With each participant, our contributions were more similar than in any other interaction I analysed. We appeared to be interacting in a very similar way. Where I solicited information, participants also did so with fairly equal frequency. Further, participants and I would contribute similar amounts of turns that balanced the conversation by responding to each other's questions, mutually providing one

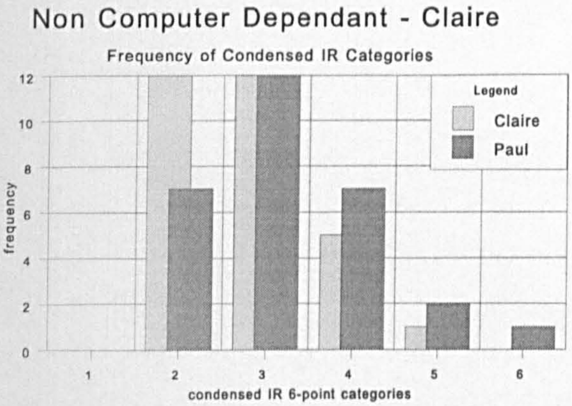


Figure 10r

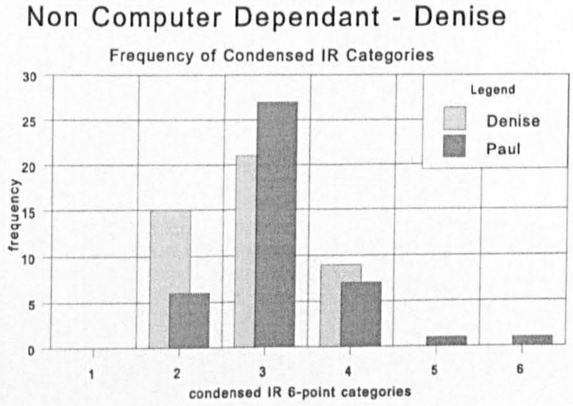


Figure 10s

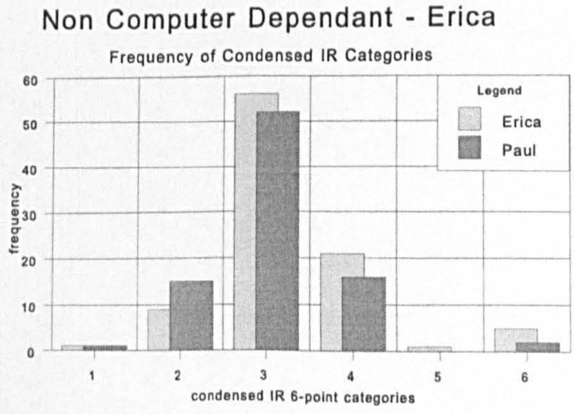


Figure 10t

another with information. These profiles suggest a degree of parity between the roles participants and I occupied when we were not interacting with the computer. This is particular borne out in the IR differences.

In table 10h, the IR differences are at their lowest than at any other point in my analysis of both individual and benefit advice interviews. All fall within those Linell ascribes to an informal chat between friends. Indeed, the IR difference between Erica and myself (-0.24) points in Erica's favour (signified by the negative value). This suggests she was partially more dominant in these interactions than me. Further, the coefficients are more symmetrical than any of the other coefficient tables I have so far presented. Participants and I more often shared information with each other than solicited information from one another, though this was less for with Claire. Also, a marked pattern in these coefficients is the increased proportion of participants' contributions that fragmented or were oblique to the topic we were discussing. This suggests participants were taking greater control over the course and content of our conversation. Rather than participants following my topic of conversation, they more often introduced topics of their own or initiated the return to previously discussed topics. Where we moved away from using the computer, participants appeared to take on greater control of the interaction. Each was more likely to ask questions and to change the focus of our conversation as well as sharing information with me. I appeared to share more information during these parts of our conversation and asked fewer questions.

Table 10h Interviewer and interviewee non computer dependent interactions in three benefit advice interviews.

Dyad No.	Discussants	IR index	IR dif.	Coefficients			
				B	S	F	O
5	Claire	2.83	0.20	34	14	7	7
	Paul	3.03		31	34	10	7
6	Denise	2.87	0.40	36	13	7	11
	Paul	3.27		59	23	14	0
7	Erica	3.29	-0.24	37	17	5	29
	Paul	3.05		51	20	3	7

10.6.4 Conclusions

During the individual depth interviews, I sought to promote symmetry between the roles of the interviewer and interviewee through adopting a research methodology that encouraged a democratic, egalitarian research relationship. The way I sought to do this was to adopt a Person-Centred and a suspended structure approach to my methods (see Chapter Six).

However, my IR analysis of four of my individual interviews with participants suggests I may not have been as successful as I had anticipated. The highest degree of symmetry I achieved in individual interviews was with Bill and Denise, though even here I was still dominant in the conversation. This analysis made me concerned over the higher than expected levels of asymmetry between participants and myself, especially so with Anne and Claire. From the IR analysis it appeared participants and I were taking on quite different roles during the interview and that these roles were far from equal.

To me, this was disappointingly incongruent with my intended research approach. I was particularly disappointed over my greater use of strong soliciting, fragmenting and oblique turns (ie. asking questions, opening up new topics, changing topics, avoiding or challenging questions and/or introducing new topics). I anticipated the egalitarian climate I sought to establish would have opened up the "interactional floor" for interviewees to solicit information from me and to have an increased opportunity to change and refocus the topics of discussion. My analysis suggested I may not have been as successful as I had hoped at this. To this extent inequality may still have been a feature of my research practice.

However, perhaps it is not surprising I adopted the dominant role. I sought to enter each participant's frame of reference and gain an understanding of her/his insights on the research topic. Here, the acts of soliciting information, returning to previous topics and pursuing themes for clarification may be important ways an interviewer reaches an understanding of the social world of the interviewee. I sought to adopt the role of *learner* and I thought of the interviewee's role as *expert*. It may therefore have been reasonable for the learner to ask the questions and for the expert to answer the questions. However, my concern addresses who *controls* the topics discussed during the interview. My analysis suggests I was more in control of the direction the conversation was taking. Perhaps I had not fully thought through the role of interviewees as experts. If participants fully occupied the role of experts in the interview, then I would have anticipated them to guide our conversation along the lines of their expertise. My analysis suggests this may not have happened to the extent I had hoped.

Less disappointing was the amount of balancing turns I contributed to each interview. My approach to research gave me the freedom to share my own thoughts and feelings with participants. My role in interviews was not confined to asking questions and giving prompts. I believe my use of a Person-Centred approach facilitated a more open research relationship. The high frequency of balancing turns in these conversations (expanded responses) made by participants and I suggests we both disclosed our experiences, thoughts and feelings throughout the interview - though additional qualitative analysis of the transcripts would be needed to support this. I believe in this respect there was a greater level of symmetry than I would have anticipated if I was confined to a structured "question and prompt" approach. However, I have nothing to compare my conversations with in respect to research practice. The comparisons I made were with those Linell cites, ie. conversations between friends, police interrogations etc. IR analysis has not, to my knowledge, been used in the way I have used it. I have yet to come across a researcher critically reflecting on the contributions s/he makes in research interviews in the systematic way I have sought to do. My analysis may in fact show that my interviews were considerably more symmetrical than more traditional forms of interviewing. My intuition is that this is the case, but it has to remain an intuition for now.

Further, my disappointment over the extent I changed topics, and avoided or challenged questions did not pervade all of the interviews to the same degree. For example, I did this considerably less with Bill than with Claire. I feel this to be a reflection of the unique relationships that formed in each interview. I believe each participant entered the research interview with quite different perceptions and expectations of their roles as interviewee and the importance of their own research agendas. I believe this could greatly have affected the interview as a whole. Part of my research approach involved me having an agenda that I would use *only after* the participant's own agenda had been met. Bill was a participant who had his own agenda. He was highly motivated concerning the research topic and an active member of a disability pressure group. He had views on the research topic that he wished to express. During our conversation, I changed topics less often than in other interviews. Similarly, Denise was motivated concerning the research topic. She had performed her own research on disability and had issues she wished to raise during the interview. Arguably these two participants often enacted a role of *exporting* their knowledge and experience to me. I believe they each had their own ideas on the relevance of their experiences to the research topic and perceived their own agendas to have bearing on the interview. To this extent they were more active in setting the research agenda. The approach I adopted offered them room to do this. I do not feel Anne and

Claire addressed their own agendas so frequently and believe they may have perceived my agenda as more relevant to the interview. Arguably, they felt their role was to supply their knowledge and experience which I would *import* from them through the sequence of questions I would ask and topics I would raise during the interview. To this extent, they may have been passive in setting the research agenda. From this analysis I therefore began to feel that the degree to which my research approach was effective at establishing a degree of symmetry in the research relationship may have varied according to the role expectations and perceptions of individual participants. With Claire, for example, symmetry was difficult to establish. This is a speculative suggestion as I have no material on participants' subjective views on what happened in these interviews to support these suggestions.

10.6.5 Reflecting on the asymmetry/symmetry of benefit advice interviews

I was the more dominant discussant during benefit advice interviews. I had anticipated this as many of my contributions would be determined by the questions presented on the benefit entitlement computer programme. I was therefore less disappointed at the results of my analysis of this part of the research process. Looking at the benefit advice interviews as a whole, the interviewee occupied a far from equal role to that of the interviewer, though this was very much less so for Erica. However, when I looked at those interactions that were not dependent upon the computer's schedule of questions there was a high degree of symmetry between the role of interviewer and interviewee. Across all three participants, the level of this symmetry when we were not using the computer was greater than that I found in individual interviews. I was still partially dominant in the conversations I had with Claire and Denise in this part of the benefit advice interview, but in Erica's interview, she was partially more dominant than me.

I uncovered this symmetry in benefit advice interviews more through luck than planning. The presence of the computer in the interview led to the occasional absence of my voice in the transcript. This is evident in the section of transcript I used earlier as an example of my computer dependency coding. This happened when an interviewee responded to a question displayed on the computer screen rather than to a question coming from me. I feel it may be useful to think of the computer as a third discussant in the interaction. For me this would seem a useful perspective to adopt given my vocal absence in sections of these interview transcripts, there was something else involved in the interaction. At times my role became somewhat artefactual. I mediated between the participant and the computer - to enter the data and to add clarification to questions when participants asked me to do so. The dynamics during the benefit interview felt to me a triad between participant, computer and myself. Recognising the dyadic/triadic distinction in these interactions led me to invoke a coding of computer dependency that ultimately suggested the more symmetrical non computer dependent interactions. I believe there were a number of possible reasons linked to my research approach for the symmetry I found in these types of interaction.

My agenda for the benefit advice interview was largely dictated by the Lisson Grove programme. Aside from this, the only rules that guided me were those of my general research approach. One aspect of my approach prompted me to make myself more transparent to research participants. On occasion, this called me to digress from the computer programme script and contribute my own thoughts, feelings and experiences. This gave participants the opportunity to engage with material shared by me. From my benefit advice interview with Claire, I believe she began to engage with such material during the non computer dependent interactions. This was suggested by the soliciting, fragmenting and oblique contributions she made to these parts of our conversation. Here Claire was asking me questions and, in doing so, changing the focus of our discussion. Therefore, the space opened up by my research approach during non computer dependent interactions may have offered participants the opportunity to interact with me in this way.

There are other possible reasons for the greater parity between our roles in these sections of the interview. I may have reacted against the directive questioning prompted by the computer. The computer programme presented a long sequence of questions requiring a minimal response from the participant (eg. how long have you lived in the UK?). During each interview, I was sensitive to inequalities in the research relationship. Indeed, my research approach asked me to redress this imbalance. As I have said above, I anticipated the benefit advice interviews to be highly directive. This may have focused my attention more sharply on seeking greater parity between each research participant and myself. This may have encouraged me to occasionally turn my attention away from the sequence of questions generated by the computer and actively seek a more egalitarian exchange with participants. In particular, I feel this may have been a reason why the symmetry between Erica and myself was so high. I had completed IR analysis on the previous individual interviews prior to my benefit interview with Erica and I was becoming increasingly aware of the type of contributions I was making in each of these interviews. In my benefit interview with Erica, I may have been more focused on sharing information and avoiding asking too many questions. I may have been in a more informed position to put in practice my research methodology. Engaging in this form of analysis may have better equipped me to be more egalitarian in research relationships with participants later in the research project.

Further, the nature of the questions asked by the computer programme may have encouraged both participants and I to engage in a more natural type of interaction - natural considering how briefly we had known each other. For example, the computer programme asked highly personal questions concerning the participant's health, wealth and living arrangements. The situation often arose where I, as a male interviewer, had to ask a female interviewee if she was pregnant (a question asked by the benefits programme). As a male interviewer, I found this situation socially uncomfortable. I would not have asked such a question of someone who was essentially a stranger under any other circumstance. Also, I was sensitive over asking an interviewee about their savings and their level of income. Again, these were questions I was not comfortable in asking someone I had not known for long. Indeed, it is a question I am uncomfortable asking people I have known for longer. The informal conversations that opened up between participants and myself during benefit interviews - the times we turned our attention away from the questions asked by the computer programme - may have been used by both participants and I to ease tension and embarrassment in what may have been an awkward interpersonal encounter.

There may have been other reasons for this type of symmetry in our benefit advice interviews. In these interviews, the locus of expertise arguably shifted. This was a practical rather than a conceptual shift. In individual interviews I thought of myself as a novice and participants as experts. Though I encouraged this re-thinking of our roles, there was no guarantee that participants would similarly make this conceptual shift. Some participants may have held to the idea that I, as a researcher, held a degree of expertise on the research topic. This may have been so even during the early days of the research project when I was more naive concerning the research topic. It is not always clear in individual interviews that participants felt their thoughts, feelings and experiences were as valuable to the project as I thought they were. At the beginning of a participant's involvement in the project it may not have been apparent to them how their knowledge would contribute to the research. This was unlike benefit advice interviews. Here was a more practical than conceptual shift in expertise. During the benefit advice interviews, expertise was vested in the participant who had the information necessary to compute benefit entitlement. Without the information participants possessed on their personal circumstances (financial, housing and living circumstances) I could not have computed their entitlement to benefits. Thus, this expertise was immediate and practical and this would be demonstrated by successfully calculating a participant's benefit entitlement case with the information they shared with me. However, there were exceptions to this as not all questions were easy for participants to answer, such as those on their disability as I describe in Chapter Eight. The complexity of social security legislation and my own brief entry into the field of welfare benefits may have helped make my shift from expert to novice more "real". I was not an expert on the welfare benefit system and I told each participant this during the benefit interview. This may have encouraged participants to contribute their experiences of welfare benefits during our interviews. For example, frequently discussed with all participants were their experiences of applying for benefits. Whilst I sought to address the locus of expertise generally in my research approach, I feel the shift from the expertise of the researcher to the expertise of the participant was very much apparent in benefit interviews. My own lack of experience in calculating benefit eligibility during the early days of the research project may have further enhanced the relationship that developed between participants and myself. In this way I feel the collaborative nature of my research approach was enhanced with the use of the computer benefit programme.

However, this interpretation of the benefit advice interaction is, perhaps, based on my over focusing on the successful degree of symmetry achieved during the part of the interview where participants and I turned our attention away from the computer. This deflects attention away from the directive and inequitable nature of the research interaction as a whole, ie. the interview as a whole was characterised by my soliciting information and directing the topics discussed and participants contributing information and following the topics discussed. When I consider our interactions that were dependent upon the computer, this may have been experienced by interviewees as dehumanising. I would need to ask interviewees about this. As it stands, for me this is an uncomfortable and incongruent aspect of a strategy I originally adopted in order to reinstate equality in the research relationship through establishing a bilateral exchange of information in the research process

The final conclusion I wish to draw concerns the particular interaction I engaged in with Erica. Here, the factor of time and/or fatigue may have been a possible reason for the difference in symmetry I found in Erica's benefit interview, the noticeably greater level of symmetry that we were able to achieve. In the benefit advice interviews with Claire and Denise, they had previously spent time discussing the research topic with me. Both participants had many opportunities to express their thoughts, feelings and experiences. By the time of the benefit advice interview, participants and I may have felt less urgency in exploring the research topic. We had already discussed the topic for over an hour. With Erica, she had not had the previous opportunity to express her experiences, thoughts and feelings on the research topic though Erica knew the nature of the research I was more generally involved in. With the absence of a research agenda other than calculating her benefit entitlement, she may have used the interview to address additional issues related to the research topic that were of concern to her. Indeed, there was a greater amount of times when our conversation focused away from using the computer during her benefit advice interview than in my interviews with Claire and Denise. The use of my research approach, the suspension of my research agenda and the influence of the possibly dehumanising and directive effect of using the computer may have contributed to the nature of our interaction when we were not focused on using the computer. Indeed, Erica became the dominant discussant during these sections of our conversation. Further, Erica, as with Bill and Denise, was highly motivated concerning research on disability. She had her own agenda she wished to discuss. I believe my research approach during the benefit advice interview gave her the space to do this.

10.6.6 Implications of using IR analysis

I found IR analysis to offer a particularly useful insight into the dynamics of my research interactions with participants. It allowed me to be increasingly reflexive over the egalitarian research relationships I sought to develop with participants. However, the analysis captures only a fragment of the interactional nature of these research encounters - my concerns over establishing interactional symmetry. This is only one measure of symmetry in a research interview. I omitted to collect qualitative material on these interactions - my enquiry would have been considerably improved if I had included my own and participant's subjective appraisal of each research interview. This leaves many of my conclusions speculative. I am further aware the analysis I have adopted assumes the act of asking questions is dominating and that of answering questions submitting. The conceptual leap from talking about interactional dominance and talking about interactional power appeared to me to be a small one and one I was tempted to make. However, I tread cautiously on this matter as I feel the implicit value judgement of dominance/submission made within Linell's IR analysis may distort the actual relations of dominance and power in my interactions with participants. The danger, I feel, is that this form of analysis de-contextualises the research setting. An interviewee who gives only short, unexpanded responses to questions may appear to be in a non egalitarian, disempowered interaction, not having the role of asking the questions, or being denied the opportunity to give expanded responses. However, the context of the interview may furnish a quite different explanation. If a participant was wishing to exert "power" in a research setting, s/he could do so very effectively by giving minimal responses to a researcher's questions that do not adequately provide the researcher with sufficient material to engage with. Dominance essentially involves manipulation, but we not only manipulate through asking questions, we can manipulate by being selective over the material we chose to disclose. In the court room setting which Linell uses as an example of an interaction where one party (the prosecutor) is dominant over the other party (the plaintiff), answering multiple questions with minimal responses may be a tactic the plaintiff uses to dominate the prosecutor ie. giving the prosecutor insufficient information to support or develop their argument. This is particularly highlighted by the following analogy. If the minimal response recorded in a conversation interaction read "I'll plead the fourth amendment" and our interviewees were American Senators and the interview setting was a US court room, my conception of whom was exerting power over whom would not be quite so clear. However, I did not seek to offer a holistic picture of equity in my research interviews. I wished to offer a particular insight to aid interest and promote reflection on some of the issues involved in searching for egalitarian research practices.

A further point I feel needs addressing is my use of a Person-Centred approach. I sought to put this into practice in my methods, including the depth interviews and benefit advice interviews. The Person-Centred nature of my approach is one that often takes time to nurture and develop - in my research settings I had little more than two hours with participants and I met some participants only once. This is very different from counselling interviews or an educational environment where a client or learner may be seen on several occasions. This may have led to the lack of success I achieved in creating symmetry in research relationships. I further concede that I was not trained in Person-Centred interviewing, and despite my own reflexivity concerning my research practice, which I felt was congruent with such an approach, I may have relied on the rhetoric of the approach whilst not remaining fully faithful to its practice. This may be a reflection on my reliance on my intellectual training in qualitative methods without having an equivalent level of empathic training in counselling skills. However, the extension of my analysis to the extra benefit interview with Erica suggests to me that the process of engaging in this type of analysis may well be a useful technique to finding ways of engaging with participants that may promote equality of roles, such as in my analysis of my non computer dependent interactions with participants. Further this analysis helped to sharpen my awareness of inequitable research relationships and increased my passion to redress this in the project.

Finally, I would caution other researchers over the use of computers to establish a bilateral exchange of information such as that I sought in my benefit advice interviews. Aside from the asymmetrical relationship that may be created in a researcher-participant-computer triad, I must acknowledge that by taking part in the benefit interview, participants were acquiescing highly personal and sensitive information to the researcher. Through conducting many such interviews I have accumulated a database on a large number of people's health, income, family and housing circumstances. It is tempting for me to use this information in my research, I have a highly credible (participants are unlikely to be dishonest in answering questions as it would result in inaccurate benefit entitlement information) data set. My forgetfulness to turn my tape recorder off at the end of an individual interview meant I had this information both on computer disc and audio tape. I will not seek to use this information, but concede that there is such a temptation and that were I to give in to this temptation I would have returned participants to a unequal research role - my method of feeding information back to participants would have become a further method of collecting information on participants.

To conclude, I may have been more effective in diluting asymmetrical computer-researcher-participant triads with the presence of an increasingly symmetrical researcher-participant dyad through adopting my research approach. I may have been less successful at making the research interview dyad more symmetrical. However, through using IR analysis, I adopted a systematic focus on the potential for inequitable research relations to grow. While I have addressed these inequalities in this chapter, throughout the course of this project I sought opportunities where such inequalities could be redressed. I particularly maintained this focus through the relationships that developed between participants and myself which I described earlier in this chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

REFLECTING BACKWARDS AND ANTICIPATING FORWARDS

As I look back on this project, I feel there is much that remains unresolved. A focus of such feelings is on the nature of legislative change that has occurred during the time I was engaged in the field. As I write up my reflections, the climate in the labour market remains very much more reactive than proactive towards the employment rights of disabled people. The climate today is characterised less by protection of disabled people's rights and more by calls for litigation against discriminating employers once discrimination has taken place. If this continues discrimination will, by definition, have to continue. The field continues to be retrogressive rather than progressive, to augment rather than prevent. Anti discrimination legislation is in place in the UK, but despite it having received Royal Assent almost three years ago, it has had a muted effect on employers' recruitment and retention policies and the rights of disabled people remain more a grey than a black and white area. This may be reaping rewards for those who profit from the marginalised status disabled people have in society, those who have been referred to as the 'Denizens' of the disability industry. For example, the confusion over anti-discrimination legislation in the US, during the early days of the American's with Disabilities Act, meant there was an increased call for consultants to advise employers on their legal position with respect to employing disabled people. In the US several consultancy agencies, both official and unofficial, made considerable profits from such work (Pritchett, 1991). Disabled people staff few of the consultancy groups that exist. All this goes on while disabled people continue to be discriminated against in the workforce on such a wide scale. Legislation may be providing an opportunity to redress discrimination for a limited few rather than address the problem of discrimination for the many. Without forceful, proactive interventions it looks likely this will continue into the next millennium.

Legislation was a particular focus of this project. While I was engaged with disabled people at an individual level, through my access to individual experiences of disabled research participants, I was also oriented towards the implications of such material for policy intervention. I could easily have balked from the idea of engaging in policy intervention, and

I feel that engaging in individual interventions would have been easier. Indeed, for me the outcomes of the research project are harder to track in relation to its effect on policy than it is to track its effects on individuals who participated in the research, though in no way do I feel my understanding of the latter is complete. I dare say that seeking to intervene directly at policy level is an awesome prospect for psychologists in particular and social scientists in general. For the former, our training has only ever been on how to intervene at the level of the individual. For the latter, researchers have continuously felt frustrated at failing in their attempts to get policy makers to listen to their results and their research reportings.

Recently, Steele and Wallat (1997) cited the work of Lawlor as they reflected upon the positioning of academic practice toward the development of social policy. They set out the task for academics as one of writing 'metanarratives' on what policy makers do and report on the consequences of policy makers actions in order to make clear '... the underlying assumptions, [and] help resolve uncertainty and polarisation in highly charged situations, and create a "tractable" policy debate where none existed previously' (Lawlor, 1996:115). However, I feel this is unsatisfactory. This is the all too familiar view that policy makers do and researchers tell one another what policy makers have done. Many of us as researchers, and many of those we research with have a sufficiently grounded experiential learning on social issues for us to inform policy directly. What we lack is the political position, power and will to do so. Calls for a closer examination of the role of academic work in the area of policy formulation are becoming increasingly common (eg. Wallat & Piazza, 1991; Steele & Wallat, 1997). Concerning disability research in particular, Hahn is critical of political science for adopting a theoretical perspective that maintains the status quo and does little to challenge the oppression experienced by disabled people (Hahn, 1993). This is further an issue taken up by Zarb who adds 'sticks and stones may break my bones, but research reports will never harm me' (Zarb, 1992:132). Zarb talks of the impotence of disability research that is kept to the confines of universities. There it can be tolerated and there it is unlikely to threaten the status quo of a disabling society.

Rappaport (1992) challenges the view that research can drive policy. Instead he views it as more realistic that policy makers are more likely to make decisions based on socio-political realities and economic self interest than on empirical research. Policies come in and then research is done, not the other way around. The review of employment interview research shows that the existence of empirical evidence is not sufficient to effect policy change within employer organisations. Employers continued using interviews as their main employee recruitment device despite the large accumulation of research that showed employment interviews had a very poor success rate for recruiting employees. The few times employer organisations have "listened" to psychology was with regard to both Maslow's and Herzberg's theories of work motivation. Both were adopted before any empirical evidence had been gained to support these theories, and they were also retained in the face of later empirical evidence that either could find no support for or repudiated these theories (Lévy-Leboyer, 1988). Both theories were useful to support employer practices that paid workers low wages as these theories claimed money was not the primary motivation for why people worked. These are two rare exceptions to the more usual status of psychological research - a status that is impotent in regard to effecting policy development and change. This state of affairs exists for a reason.

> Psychologists are not as committed to applying the results of their research as they should be: their conclusions do not always bring clear policy implications; and they fail to propose specific paths of action to reach aims defined in too abstract a way. Furthermore, researchers do not always actively promote the use of their findings, and even if clients need quick information, researchers insist on proof and counterproof before arriving at a conclusion.
>
> (Lévy-Leboyer, 1988:779)

Lévy-Leboyer later adds:

> Although psychologists complain about the reluctance to apply their research results and to accept their authority, they themselves forget to apply what they should know about resistance to changes in attitudes and behavior. Applying research results involves more than giving the truth and proving it; researchers must also develop a persuasion and training process and keep the client's perception of the problem in mind throughout the process.
>
> (Lévy-Leboyer, 1988:784)

Reflecting back on this project and reflecting forwards on the future of research in this area, my worries concern the lack of attention paid to how political and organisational interventions can be effected.

Where the focus of this project became organisational interventions, participants and I became frustrated. Intervening at the level of organisations, however, was an important focus for us to maintain. To sustain a discourse, dominant in psychology, of attending to individual disabled people, when the discrimination they experience is created by institutional practices (re: Barnes, 1991) would not only be misguided but irresponsible. For example, Morris (1992a) suggests we should direct our attention to the oppressors rather than the oppressed and Oliver (1992) asks we focus our scrutiny towards the corporate actors rather than the victims of corporate actions. Oliver concedes this will be difficult to fund, suggesting that such research is likely to be funded by researchers taking money to study one thing, and once the research has begun, to change the research focus so that it moves from the victims to the victimiser, though the ethics of doing this are fraught with problems. However, just because this type of research may be difficult to fund and may require us to think creatively about how we can get funding for such work, that is no reason to not seek to engage with it. Becker (1963) asked us more than three decades ago whose side we were on. Here, Oliver asks it again in 1992 in relation to disability research. More generally Liazos raised the question of why social scientists have developed a fascination for only the 'deviants' who are the powerless rather than the 'deviants' who are the powerful. People living in the margins of poverty, unemployed people and people who occupy a devalued status in our society all come under our scrutiny with the light turned away from corporate corruption.

> ...we must see that *covert institutional violence* is much more destructive than overt individual violence. ...they kill, maim, and destroy many more lives than do violent individuals... Violence is committed daily by the Government, very often by lack of action. The same system that enriches business farmers with billions of dollars through farm subsidies cannot be bothered to appropriate a few millions to deal with lead poisoning in the slums.
>
> (Liazos, 1972:111-112 *author's emphasis*)

I believe this thesis shows whose side I was on. If we maintain that a strength of psychology is its focus on the psychological well-being of the individual (though many divisions of psychology appear to have lost this focus), then I feel it is a field that is worth investing our energy in. However, if it continues to "treat" individuals who experience psychological distress rather than prevent such distress happening to individuals, then we are guilty of becoming the 'Denizens of Distress'. There is the very real danger that we are more culpable than the 'Denizens of Disability' that other authors have so passionately warned us of. Morris (1992a) asks of non disabled researchers working in the disability field that they reflect on the fact they are making a living out of disabled people and suggests they ask themselves whether/how they can conduct their research in a way that empowers disabled people. As psychologists, we must take seriously the parallel suggestion that we are making a living out of other people's psychological distress, disabled and non disabled people alike. If we continue to patch up damaged, disabled psyches while doing nothing to stop the corporate and statutory policies that create damaged, disabled psyches we are profiting more widely from working within an unjust society. I would maintain that at no point in this project have I lost sight of the primary focus of psychology on the psychological well-being of the individual. Indeed, I have sought to engage with psychology in a way that takes such a focus with the level of seriousness that it deserves, to effect change where such change will have most effect. Psychology has for too long sought to intervene at the level of the individual while remaining blinkered to more macro causes of distress in society. To ignore wider macro issues would not have been faithful to the subject matter.

We still have much to learn about how to intervene at this level. Were the number of studies that seek to facilitate change at the level of the individual (manipulating "subjects" in contrived social science laboratory settings) to be matched with studies that sought to intervene at policy level, we may have more material to reflect on and learn from (see: Heller, 1986 for an insightful essay on the 'use and abuse' of social science). Indeed, this would increase the opportunities for research to effect policy. The more times we try, the more opportunities we have to influence policy makers in the direction we wish. I have much sympathy with Parker & Baldwin (1992) who wrote a reflexive paper that joined with this growing call for research to target policy makers more effectively. They particularly focused on the disability research arena. I would further argue we should not be content to seek change as part of the research outcome, ie. the optimistic expectation that our research reportings will be read by and will influence policy makers in the direction we intend. Rather, policy change should become a prioritised part of the research process. Action Research and Participatory Action Research have opened opportunities for us, as researchers, to engage in just such activities.

Where I mention earlier the difficulty in engaging with an intervention at such a level, and the frustration research participants and I experienced as a result, we will tolerate such feelings and hope others will tolerate such feelings also. A view Sandy, a research participant, shared with me (which I mention in Chapter Eight) inspires me on this point. Sandy felt the more disabled people who both applied for employment and attended employment interviews the greater the opportunities there were to break down disabling barriers. He felt the unsatisfactory outcomes experienced by the first few disabled job applicants, ie. through the discrimination they would encounter, would be worth it if it were to ease the way for disabled employment applicants that followed. Though this is a rather idealistic view that disabled people can overcome discrimination through a process of attrition, it is useful as it helps disabled people to sustain activities that are as frustrating as seeking to secure employment as a disabled person. It further helps me to sustain activities that seek to effect policy change in my intended direction as a social science researcher. When I say I can tolerate the intervention in this project not satisfying research participants' or my expectations, I do not mean that we are left content, but that this experience will not put us off trying again and should not put others off either.

A focus of this project has been on process. Many of the varied and important outcomes of this project have been a result of my focus on process. Watts, Trickett and Birman affirm a renewed emphasis on process in research:

> This means less concern with what reality ultimately gets constructed and more concern with the construction process. To turn an old slogan on its head, "the means justify the ends"... A process orientation shifts attention from questions of philosophy to questions of procedure and participants: with who, and in what context, should the process of concept development occur? In adopting a process orientation, the creation of settings and norms becomes a primary concern.
> (Watts, et al. 1994:456)

In this project, a focus on disability issues led me into a process driven empirical enquiry. With participants, individually and collectively, I gave this meaning through the attention I paid to the research relationships that participants and I developed. My focus was on nurturing emancipatory, egalitarian relationships with disabled participants. Power inequalities that develop between researchers and participants are so often overlooked. This becomes particularly worrisome when participants are members of disadvantaged groups as these are the research relationships that are potentially the most inequitable. Morris (1992a) criticises non disabled researchers who tackle disability research questions for not grounding themselves in their position as a non disabled person in the research relationship and for not fully recognising the unequal relationship that may exist in the research process between a non disabled researcher and a disabled research participant. Further, she describes how feminist research on disability not only brought disabled women in as "subject matter" but ultimately questioned the relevance of the whole research process to the experiences of both disabled women and men. Such attention to unequal research relationships requires considerable thought. Oliver (1992) asks that research relationships be redressed, and not left in the hands of the experts (non disabled researchers) who will continue to ask their research questions of their disabled participants. 'Such an idea is the product of a society which has a positivistic consciousness and a hierarchical social structure which accords experts an elite role. Agenda setting, whether it be in politics, policy-making or service provision, is part of a process of struggle and this is equally true of agenda setting in disability research' (Oliver, 1992:102). Oliver asks researchers whether they are prepared to join with disabled people and fully make use of disabled people's expertise or whether they are going to continue researching through oppressive practice. Shakespeare also talks of seeking to establish equity in research relationships with research participants but is not confident that he attains it: 'I have the academic voice and authority; I have the education and the language which contributes to the acceptability of what I write' (Shakespeare, 1996:116). He further feels emancipatory research is perhaps idealistic and may in fact be damaging. Here he refers to the critics who cite such researchers as having their axe to grind and chasing political goals through using scientific discourse (Shakespeare, 1996). But, I feel he too easily sits with the status quo in his contentment to develop theory for theory's sake (which he implicitly admits to later in his paper) rather than any concern for positive action and instrumentality in the field. In this project I have taken what for Shakespeare would perhaps be a leap of faith and sought to redress such power inequalities.

Additional to focusing on developing egalitarian research relationships, I further sought to get closer to participants than conventional research approaches allow. Where we are working with participants who are members of oppressed groups in society, who have a devalued social status, this may bring us, as researchers, in contact with people who have developed a different culture and a quite different world view from our own. This is where the possible irony did not escape me of engaging in research on the experience of being disabled in employment interviews involving participants being disabled in a research interview. I sought to prevent this from happening in this project. If we are to work with participants at such an intimate level and, more so, work alongside participants as research collaborators and co-researchers, we need to break down barriers that may exist between us. Jones & Pullen (1992) have discussed with great insight the issues that arose when a hearing and a deaf researcher began working together. My own reaction was to adopt a Person-Centred and suspended structure approach during my research interactions with participants, and I believe this combination of approaches led to opportunities to surmount social barriers that may otherwise have distanced disabled participants from myself as a disability researcher. Ultimately, however, these relationships were broken at the end of the research process as I withdrew from the field. The issue of withdrawing from a research project where relationships of trust, openness and intimacy are developed between the researcher and participants is problematic, both emotionally and ethically. The trust that can develop between a researcher and a participant would be compromised if the research relationship was to end without comment or thought at the end of the project. Researchers have the responsibility to draw each participant's attention early on to the future of this relationship following completion of the research. This becomes particularly the case with participants who are living socially impoverished lives, which can often be the case for people who live on the margins of society with devalued and stigmatised identities. It can also be a painful process for researcher to go through if at the final point of contact with a participant with whom s/he has developed a close working relationship with that they show no signs of sadness that their working relationship with the researcher has come to an end. Emotionally, this has the potential of being a particular difficult time and both participants and researchers should address this by talking through such issues with care and consideration. Researchers bungee jumping in and out of participant's lives may be disruptive and upsetting for both parties.

As well as seeking to get closer to participants, I also sought to occupy a greater variety of research roles than a traditional researcher is usually expected to occupy. Baker-Shenk & Kyle (1990) describe the different levels at which researchers engage with their research topic and their research participants as ranging from an aloof to an involved stance. I sought to adopt more of an involved stance. This suggests that we are not only close to participants but that we are active in our involvement with them. This was tied to the action orientation I sought, and was a role I often occupied when involved in individual interventions which I have described in Chapter Eight. In this thesis, I have shown how my own efforts have sought to bring equality into research relationships and described the multiple roles it is possible to sustain through adopting such a focus when we, as researchers, are in the field.

The issue of disability research becoming disabling needs serious consideration. If we take it with the full consideration it deserves, it asks many things of us. It asks that we must make our work accessible. Many of us in academic settings have forgotten the heritage behind our "clever" ways of speaking. In the face of growing levels of literacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, modernism was created which in effect protected the political status quo by excluding the masses from cultural participation through the use of archaic and complex language of the modern sciences and of modern art (re: Casling, 1994). Thus, the very language we use as social scientists may exclude and disable research participants. Shakespeare's concern that emancipatory research may be idealist acknowledged that he had the language of 'authority' but this did not lead him to consider whether there were times he should seek to use the language of the masses rather than the language of the elite. All too often the people in whose name we do our research, disabled people, unemployed people, never actually hear about the end result of that research (Minkes, et al. 1995). If they do, it is often communicated through an impenetrable language, through "techno-babble". In disability research, a solution might be to create opportunities for disabled people to speak for themselves without having to be mediated by the interpretations of researchers. An excellent example of this is a paper published in the *American Psychologist* where a participant with a learning difficulty was given space to tell his own story (Bogdan & Taylor, 1976). Further, a book review published in *Social Action* (1993) was a collaborative paper written with people with learning difficulties. It was presented as a series of thirty-two line drawings with captions. However, after I showed this latter paper to colleagues in *People First* (a self-advocacy movement for people with learning difficulties) they were suspicious that it had been written solely by academics and some felt the language patronising. This is not to say this was indeed the case with that article, but it points to the common view of disabled people that relatively little that is written *about* them is written *by* them. If we are concerned to get this right, we need to work more openly, honestly and extensively with disabled people as research collaborators and co-authors rather as research respondents.

To return to the point I made earlier about the need to break down barriers in research settings when non disabled researchers are involved with disabled participants, there is another solution. We could discourage non disabled researchers and encourage disabled researchers and disabled people more widely to engage in disability research. This is a suggestion voiced within the disability movement and other marginsalised groups. Increasingly, oppressed groups are telling researchers to 'fuck off' (Jenkins, 1971). Finkelstein has asked disabled people to do like wise to any researcher who will not include them more fully in their research. At the 1992 Researching Disability Conference in the UK, non disabled researchers were told by disabled people that they had no legitimacy in conducting disability research (Shakespeare, 1993). This debate has resurfaced recently (Duckett, 1998). However, there are important reasons to avoid privileging disabled researchers purely by virtue of their disabled status. Having a disabled researcher working in the field is no guarantee that they will become engaged in non oppressive research practice. I was painfully reminded of this when I witnessed the social divisions between different disabled participants in this project. Some participants held, what I felt, were prejudiced attitudes towards fellow disabled participants whose impairment differed from theirs. Less exclusionary tactics and more reflexive calls ask that we question the legitimacy of the research practice of both disabled and non disabled researchers rather than make a blanket judgement against all non disabled researchers. Here it is suggested that if non disabled researchers and disabled researchers are to survive in the field of disability, they would do well to reflect on whether they are engaged in oppressive practices. They are reminded that, for those involved in research practices that are oppressive to disabled people, before too long disabled research participants are going to fight back. Disability writers like Davis believe that the privileged position of non disabled researchers in the field of disability research will soon be undermined. Such researchers who continue to work in ways that support the status quo of a disabling society will face the challenge of an increasingly powerful disability movement and have the security of their careers challenged more in the 1990s than they have been in the 1980s. I believe this threat is slowly being realised as disability researchers are having their ethical and moral positioning towards disability critically examined by disability activists. The considerable controversy stirred up by the residents of the Cheshire home over Miller and Gwynne's (1972) research tainted both authors' work and reputation in the disability field. Certainly on my conscience throughout this project were questions over the legitimacy of how I positioned myself as a non disabled researcher researching into disability issues. I have gained comfort from the discourse of inclusion that avoids making a blanket discrimination against non disabled researchers working in the field, but only against those working in oppressive ways. It accepts there is room for non disabled researchers in the field, though I am certainly not without self-interest in supporting such a view.

> The crucial point to be made is that these developments can only be facilitated by establishing a partnership between researchers and disabled people, for neither can do it alone. Disabled people do not (as yet) have the knowledge or skill to develop an appropriate research epistemology and methodology… and researchers do not (and cannot ever have) sufficient knowledge or experience of disability in order to ground their researches on an adequate experiential base.
>
> (Oliver, 1994b:65)

There is also a wider agenda where researchers are being asked to be more accountable to their research participants. Research proposals made to the Department of Health and to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation both require involvement of service users in the development of those proposals. Such practices are opening more room for disabled people to become involved in the research that is being conducted into their lives (Minkes, et al. 1995). This may lead to research being conducted that is more relevant to the lives of disabled people. There is still far too much research that is irrelevant to the oppression experienced by disabled people. For example, Minkes et al. point to a paper they found particularly offensive, a paper which claimed to teach people with learning difficulties an appreciation of aesthetic beauty through flower arranging (Jung-Ae & Hur, 1992). Disability research needs to become relevant to the lives of disabled people. A particularly appropriate starting place would be to ask disabled people which issues are the most important and the ones in most need of research and what the aims of our research should be.

Many of the concerns I have addressed, including the values I sought most passionately to engage with (emancipation and inclusion) are captured in the general theme of *empowerment.* Empowerment has been a clarion call of people working in emancipatory research and areas of community and preventive psychology. However, we must caution ourselves in how we think of empowerment in relation to oppressed groups. Focusing on disabled groups provides a particularly clear example of why this is so. Disabled people have been empowering themselves for years, through their own organisations and collectively through the disability movement.

> Disabled people have been quietly doing it [empowerment] for years but it has fallen to professionals to give such activities a name, to create organisations to promote it, to write books about it and to organise conferences on it which are usually so expensive that they then have to beg for bursaries so that a few disempowered disabled people can attend. Empowerment is not a gift that one group (the powerful) can give to another (the powerless); it is a process of struggle and the focus of that struggle in the past ten years has been the disabled people's movement.
>
> (Oliver, 1991c:161)

My initial aim was to remove barriers to employment for disabled people but, this aim soon became problematic as I engaged with the field of research. Where this research looked at barriers facing disabled people seeking employment, and the action research orientation sought to remove such barriers, I have been asked to seriously question the issue of whether employment is desirable for many disabled people. This was suggested in material I have presented on unemployment in Chapter Eight. It became clear that opening opportunities for disabled people to participate in the labour market may have been detrimental to many disabled participants. The nature of many employment contracts and working conditions is so hostile at the present time that unemployment may be psychologically less unhealthy than employment. However, this is a dangerous discourse to sustain as it could be used to justify discrimination against disabled people in the labour market. Employment is rightly described as an important aspect of an individual's active social and economic participation in society as employment has many positive outcomes for people. However, it is increasingly becoming recognised that underemployment and/or unsatisfactory employment may be as or even more damaging to a person's psychosocial well-being than unemployment. This begs us to consider the question not whether disabled people should have equal access to employment but, what is the nature of that employment, and if this is underemployment, is this a desirable outcome for participants? For Jack, a research participant in this project, gaining employment caused him considerable distress. During the course of this research, the material participants shared with me on disability and employment was situated in a particularly hostile labour market. As Floyd reminds us when we turn our attention to the employment rights of disabled people: '...it is important not to lose sight of the fact that this should not only mean that disabled people have jobs but that those jobs are as rewarding, in both a financial and a psychological sense, as those of other people' (Floyd, 1991:210).

The nature of this project also required me to reflect in depth on epistemological and methodological matters.

> If disability research is about researching oppression, and I would argue that it is, then researchers should not be professing 'mythical independence' to disabled people, but joining with them in their struggles to confront and overcome this oppression. Researchers should be espousing commitment not value freedom, engagement not objectivity, and solidarity not independence. There is no independent haven or middle ground when researching oppression: academics and researchers can only be with the oppressors or with the oppressed.
>
> (Barnes, 1996:110)

As I have said, I have sought to engage in emancipatory research that was faithful to the research topic and the values I brought to the research topic. This asked that I strip bare my whole epistemological and methodological approach and rethink both how and what I was researching. This led me to reflect on my vision of community psychology and develop this vision into a community psychological approach that was tailored to this project. If I had not done so, I feel I may have risked paying lip-service to emancipatory aims without being faithful to such aims throughout the inner structure of my research approach. Through the epistemology and methodology I developed, I sought to embrace and rejoice in difference and diversity. In a Western European ideology both are more often thought of with derision and associated with negativity. This has been endemic to the way disability has been constructed in Westernised societies (re: Hahn, 1988a). However, in valuing difference and diversity through the approach I have adopted, I am aware that for some this may not sit harmoniously with the political orientation of much of this thesis, and my focus on intervening at the level of polity and policy. Focusing on diversity and difference may be incongruent to the political aspirations of the disability movement which seeks to unite disabled people in a common goal. Part of the problem with the disability movement centres on the problems of representing the diversity of interests of disabled people and how difference or disability can be used as a focus for political change. For a further discussion of this see Riddell (1996). In this project I have sought to combine a focus both on the individual and the collective by seeking entry into the idiosyncratic experiences of the individual and giving this meaning through the interventions such material suggests at the level of policy. More generally, I hold to the view that even the things that are similar between people, are all different (Jones, 1994).

> ... the urgent task for research, and indeed researchers, is to create an epistemology and methodology which takes as its starting-point the central idea that disability is socially created.
>
> (Oliver, 1994b:65)

Of the social sciences, psychology has probably been the most prolific in its research on disability though much of it has tended to focus on the medical approach to the phenomenon and there is little that has focused on the Social Model of conceptualising disability as a minority group issue in society (Hahn, 1985b). The Social Model has been central to my project, particularly in the intervention phase, but it also had an impact on how and what I researched. The model has had important implications for how I researched on the subject of disability (re: Hahn, 1987), though the model asked me to adopt a focus that I was already prepared to adopt through working from a community psychology perspective. The model required that I focus on the socio-economic and institutional barriers that disabled people face rather than focus on the capacities or incapacities of individuals. This is very much the theme to community psychology that I have described earlier. I have described myself as a 'community psychologist in and amid action' and I feel this made my work in the field of disability and my link to the Social Model of disability so much easier. I would not say that a community psychology approach is the only one that is useful. Rather, my vision of community psychology is one that encourages eclecticism in ways of approaching research topics. This is particularly needed in the field of disability.

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APPENDICES

Contents

APPENDIX ONE (A)

The letter of invitation used in recruiting the first group of participants.

Paul S. Duckett
Department of Psychology
Cottrell Building
University of Stirling
FK9 4LA
Phone: (01786) 466839 [office hours]
Fax: (01786) 467641 [office hours]
E-mail: psd1@stirling.ac.uk
Date:
Your Ref: PHD-001\TOOLS\SAMPLE01\LETTER01

Dear ______________,

I am presently involved in research into the employment experiences and general job-market concerns of people who have a disability. The research is funded by a body that is independent from the Employment Service and similar government agencies. I am based at the University of Stirling. The overall aims of the research are to highlight and then to reduce barriers to employment confronted by people with disabilities who are seeking employment. I wish to hear the job interview experiences of disabled people, but also of non-disabled people.

If you are interested in hearing more about the research with the possibility of becoming involved, I would be grateful if you could fill in the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided. If you would prefer to contact me direct rather than use the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to write or phone.

The research will involve me listening to your job interview experiences. We can do this through you having an informal chat with me, either on your own or as part of a small group. Or, you may have ideas of a more convenient way of communicating your experiences to me. We can sort such matters out once we are in contact. You will not be committing yourself to the project through contacting me, as you will be free to withdraw your help at any time.

Thanks for taking the time to read this letter.

Paul S. Duckett

APPENDIX ONE (B)

The accompanying questionnaire to the letter of invitation for the first group of participants

Independent Research on Job Interview Experiences of People who have a Disability

Researcher:	Paul S. Duckett
Affiliated to:	Psychology Department Stirling University
Funded by:	The Economic and Social Research Council, UK
Supervisor:	Dr. David Fryer

Questionnaire for Potential Research Participants

I have designed this questionnaire to identify people interested in participating in research on the job interview experiences of people with disabilities. I wish to hear both from people with and without disabilities.

Assurance of Confidentiality

I will treat the information you supply in this questionnaire confidentially. Only myself (the researcher) and my supervisor will have access to the information.

How to Complete the Questionnaire

Please tick the appropriate box when prompted "☐" or write the answer when prompted "_________"

SECTION ONE

This first section is to help me find out whether you have had any job interview experiences and about your present employment status.

Are you presently employed or unemployed?

☐ unemployed ☐ employed
☐part-time ☐full-time

Have you had any experience of a job interview?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, were you employed or unemployed before your most recent job interview?

☐ unemployed ☐ employed
☐part-time ☐full-time

SECTION TWO

These questions are to help me find out who you are and how I can contact you. In completing this section you are not committing yourself to the research project. At anytime during the research you will be free to withdraw your participation.

How old are you? _____ yrs

Are you male or female? ☐ Male ☐ Female

Do you consider yourself as having a disability?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, could you please describe to me this disability (also, what does your doctor call it)?

____

____

____

How long have you had this disability?

___ yrs ____ months or ☐ From birth

Are you interested in hearing more about this research project? [Please tick a box].

☐YES ☐NO

Your Contact Address

Name:*Title* ____ ***First Name*** ______________

Surname _________________

Address:____

____

Telephone: ( ) ______

SECTION THREE

What incentives are there for participating in this research?

If you are a participant who is unemployed, I can offer you individual benefit entitlement advice. In the past, this has actually, upon a few occasions, identified benefits that some participants were entitled to but were not claiming. In such cases, the participant's income actually increased as a result of acting on this independent benefit advice.

If you are a participant who is in employment, you will also be offered benefit entitlement advice. In the past, some participants who were in employment also found themselves to be eligible for benefits. Through acting on this information, they were able to increase their weekly income.

Additionally, whether you are either unemployed or employed, disabled or non disabled, your involvement in the research may ultimately benefit people who have disabilities and who are seeking employment. The knowledge that your involvement in the research may make a positive impact upon other people's lives could be an incentive for you to participate in the research. I will offer you information on the progress of the research when I contact you.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have indicated that you wish to receive more information about this research, I will contact you soon.

Paul S. Duckett
[researcher]

APPENDIX ONE (C)

An example of a telephone script used when recruiting the first group of participants

Typical Phone Script for Disabled Participant

'My name is ...'

'I'm from the University of ...'

Check it is convenient for the participant to talk. If not, ask for a suitable time so I may call again.

Refer to the returned questionnaire and my previous letter of invitation, or if initial contact, describe the purpose of the research and the methods I will use.

Confirm that it is still all right to meet, or, if initial contact, ask if the participant is interested, or would like more time to consider the idea, ie. to be sent more information through the post.

Give more detail on the particular method they are interested in or briefly detail all methods if this is the initial contact with the participant. Examples of such detail are given below.

Focus Group	The idea is that a small group of people meet for a chat, focusing on a particular topic, ie. their experiences of job interviews. Mention that participants often find these types of group interesting and enjoyable and that I run them very informally. Say that I would organise a place for everyone to meet and have teas and coffees ready. Mention there would be about four or five other people there and that the purpose is to share our experiences of job interviews.
Interview	Mention that these informal chats will focus on the participant's experiences, thoughts and feelings of job interviews. Say that we would normally meet just once, but that there would be nothing to stop us meeting on more occasions if the participant would like to become further involved in the research.
Other Alternatives	For example, the participant may prefer to write down or record on audio tape their experiences as a story, diary or a series of short notes. If this is the initial contact, with no prior correspondence being sent, offer the possibility of other ways of becoming involved.

Offer the provision of benefit advice, if this seems appropriate. Reassure the participant that in this respect I am working independently of the Employment Service or Benefits Agency. Reiterate that this is offered to everyone who takes part and is free and confidential. Remind the participant that even if they are in employment, they may be entitled to benefits. Also state that this service is offered to the participant's friends and family as well.

Reassure the person that all information will be treated confidentially.

Be aware that the participant may have difficulties in the interview. Ask if there are any particular access or communication requirements or other issues I should be aware of.

Negotiate a provisional time and place to meet that is convenient for the participant.

APPENDIX ONE (D)

Desciptions of individual, focus group & benefit interviews sent with letter of invitation

Research into the Job Interview Experiences of Disabled People

I will view each participant involved in this project as "expert" on her/his own thoughts, feelings and experiences. As such, I will not privilege my own understanding of the research project over theirs. Therefore, each participant will have the opportunity to guide the course and content of either the individual or focus group interviews they become involved in.

Individual-Depth Interview Description

(Duration - 1hr) You will be interviewed one-to-one by the researcher. You will have the opportunity to discuss your recent experiences of a job interview. The interviewer will not have a set of predetermined questions to ask. Instead, the direction the interview takes will very much be in your hands. It is your expertise that the researcher is seeking.

De-briefing sheet given at the end of an individual-depth interview

What happens after the interview?

A secretary from the psychology department will transcribe the tape of our conversation. I'll not include your name or any of your personal details with the tape. This information will be kept confidential to myself and my research supervisor, David Fryer. After the tape has been transcribed, I shall analyse it. This means that I will identify the main themes that came through during our conversation. I will then compare these themes with those from transcripts of other conversations that I have had with disabled and non disabled people throughout Central Region. If you are interested, I will supply you with a copy of the results of this analysis

Focus Group Interview Description

(Duration - 1½hrs) Your interview will be in a group with 5-9 other participants. The researcher will adopt the role of group moderator. As well as expressing your own recent experiences of job interview, you will have the opportunity to hear the experiences of other group members.

De-breifing sheet given at the end of a focus group interview

What happens after the Focus Group interview?

A secretary from the psychology department will transcribe the tape of our conversation. I'll not include your name or any of your personal details with the tape. This information will be kept confidential to myself and my research supervisor, David Fryer. After the tape has been transcribed, I shall analyse it. This means that I will identify the main themes that came through during our conversation. I will then compare these themes with those from transcripts of other conversations that I have had with disabled and non disabled people throughout Central Region. If you are interested, I will supply you with a copy of the results of this analysis in the form of a short report. The report may be useful to you in showing you how you have contributed to the research.

Benefit Entitlement Advice

We will work on a one-to-one basis with a computer programme that will calculate you benefit entitlement advice. The advice can be sought on any area of the benefit system that you have questions about. Following the benfit advice, I can continue to offer you benefit entitlement information, and you can get in touch anytime you have a query. For example if you are considering a change in your employment or household circumstances and you would like to see what effect this will have on your benefit entitlement. This will be made available to you throughout the time I am involved in the research (until 1997).

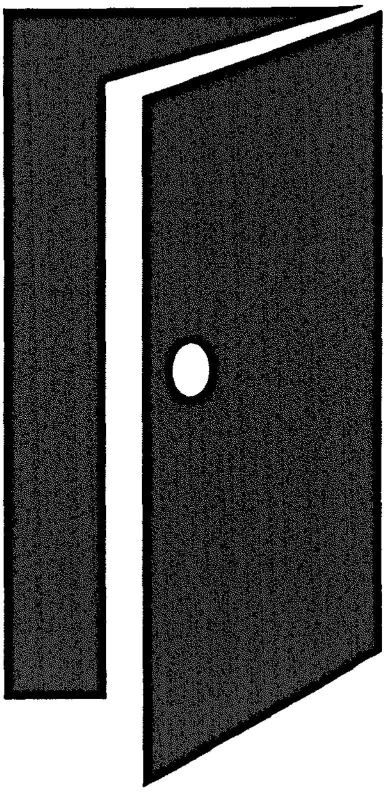
APPENDIX ONE (E)

Posters displayed at Training Centre for Unemployed People

BENEFIT ADVICE SURGERY

Today

SEMINAR ROOM



1:30PM TIL
4:00PM

FREE
AND
CONFIDENTIAL

RESEARCH INTO EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

FUNDED BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

GROUP MEETING TO DISCUSS TRAINEES' EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

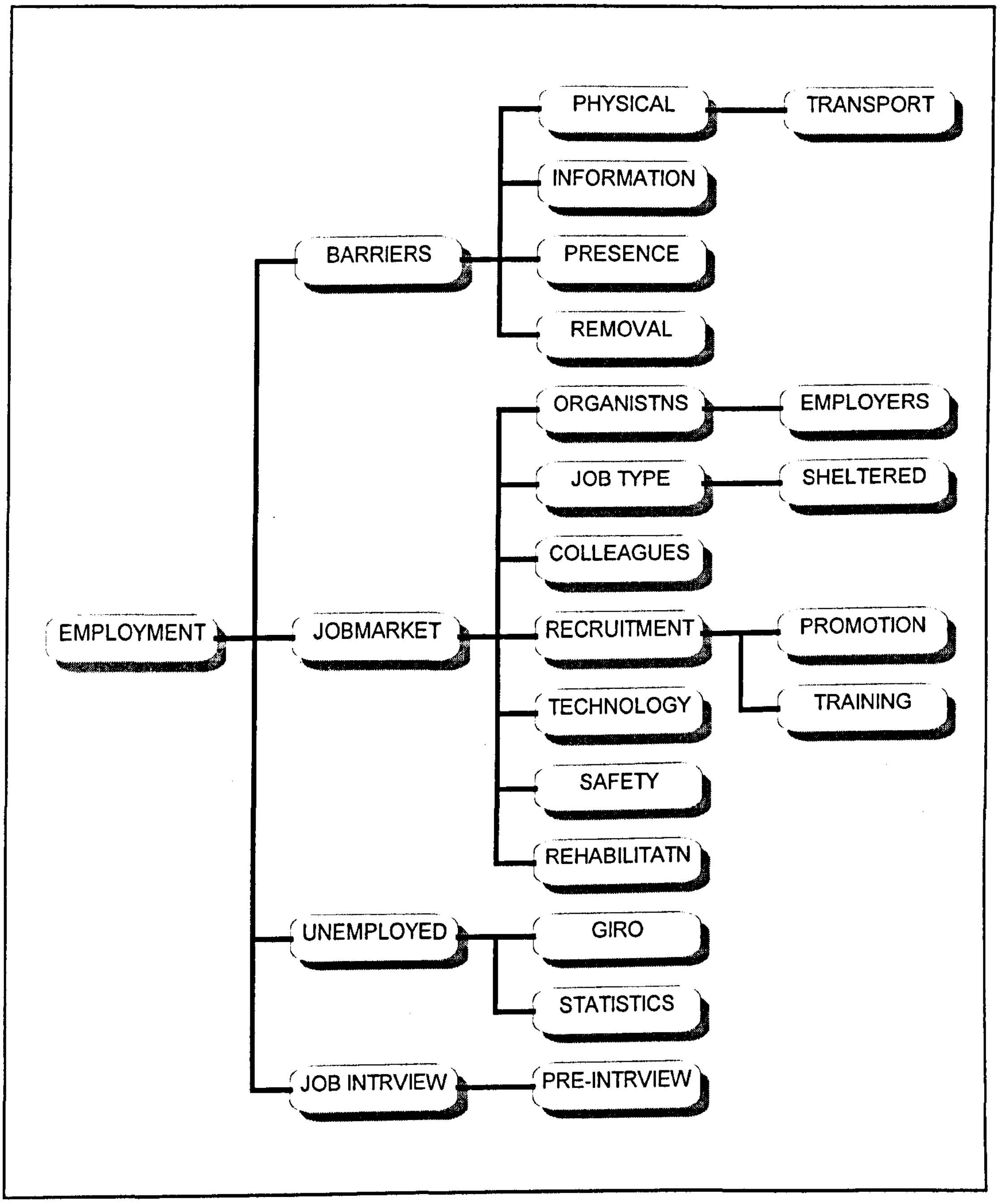
Today

SEMINAR ROOM

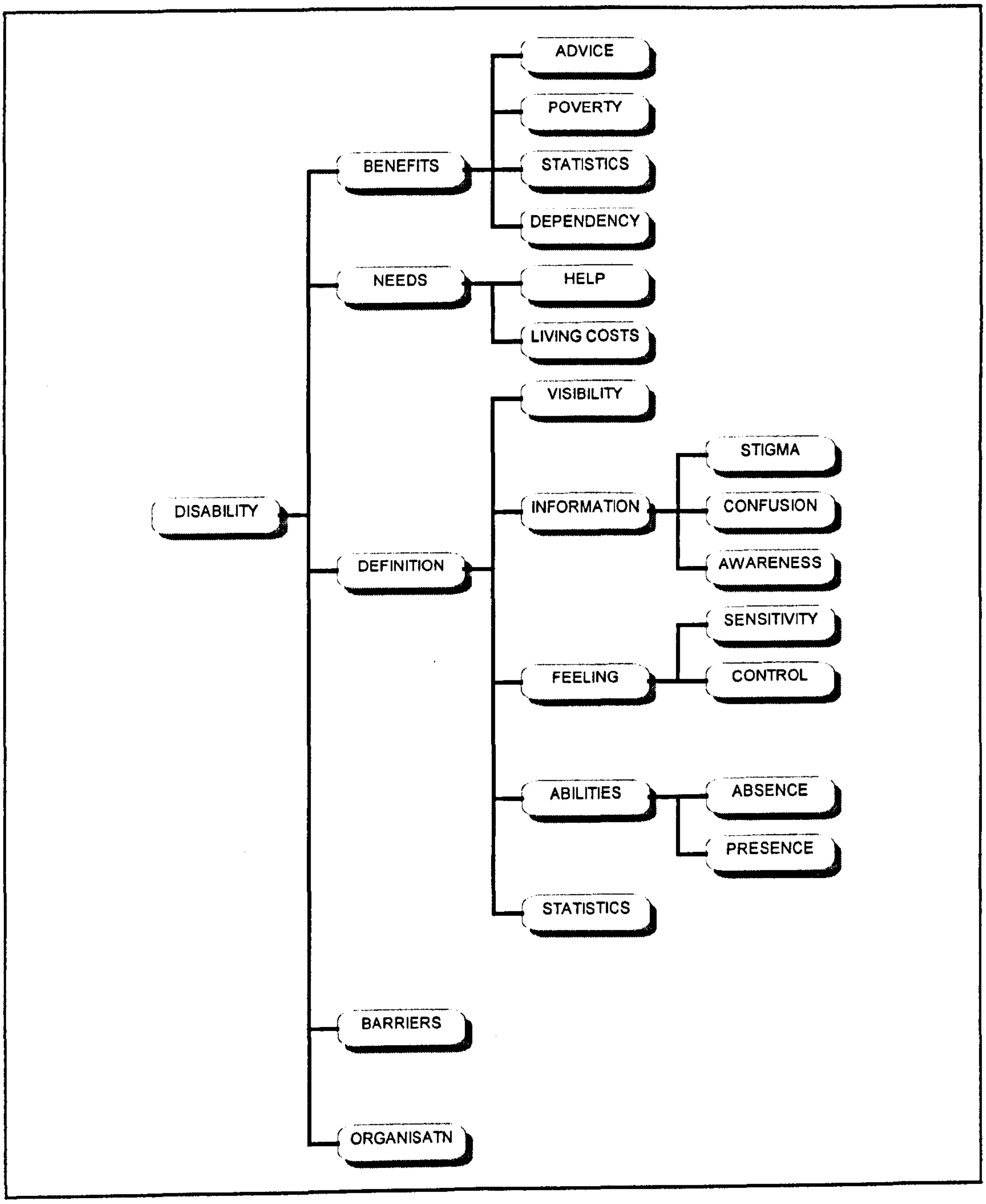
2:00PM ONWARDS

APPENDIX TWO (A)

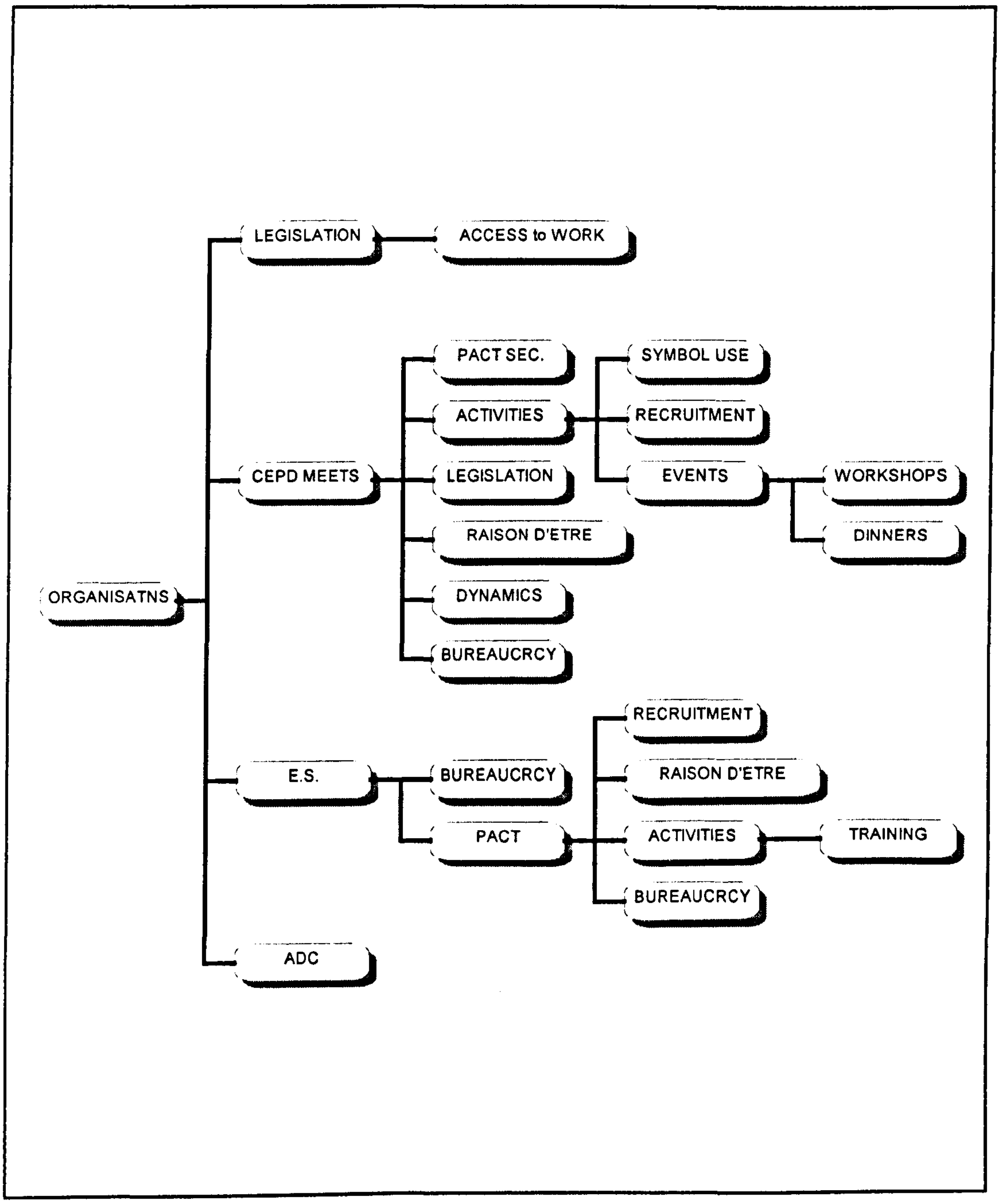
Code tree of sub themes under the theme of employment.



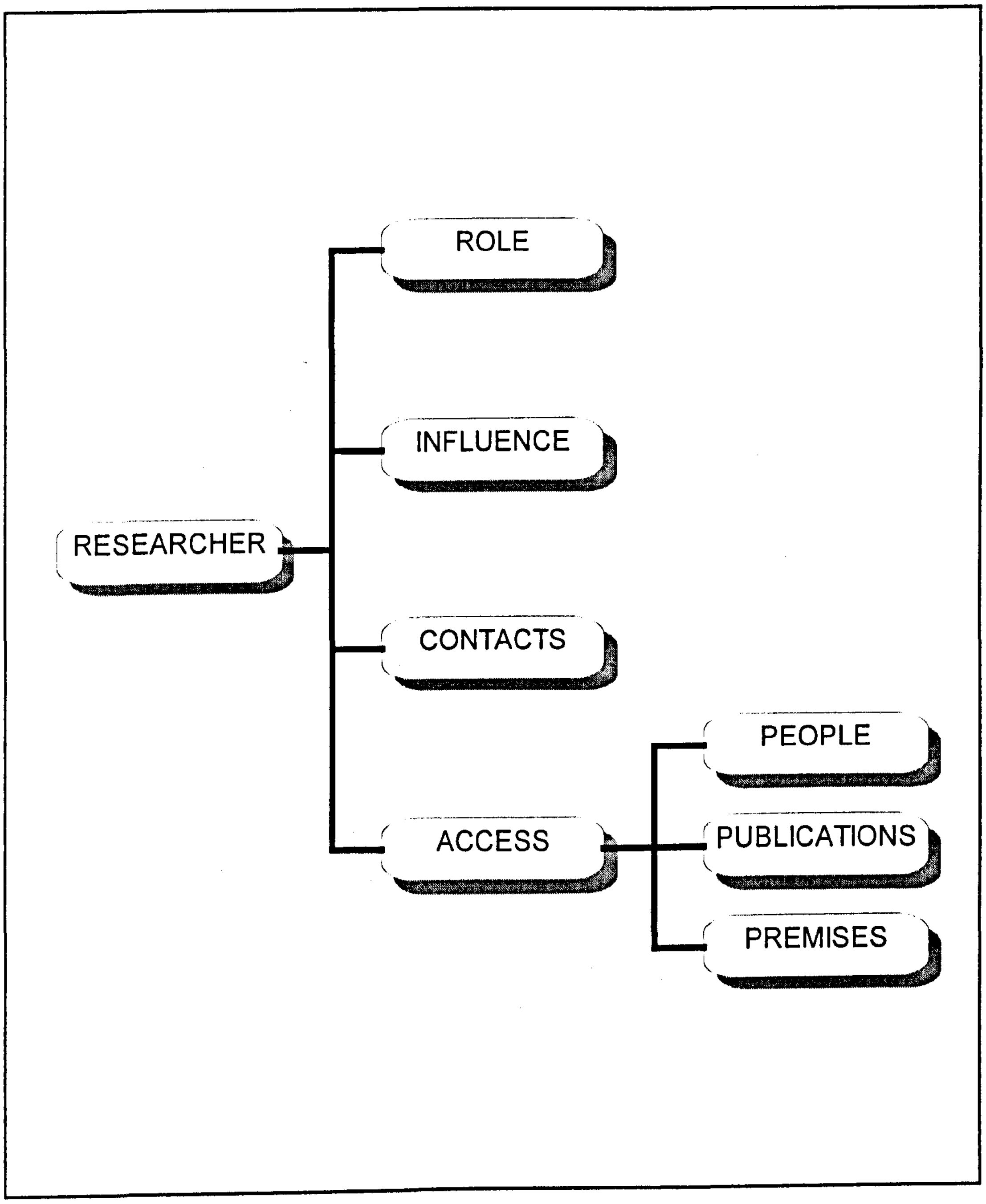
Code tree of sub themes under the theme of disability.



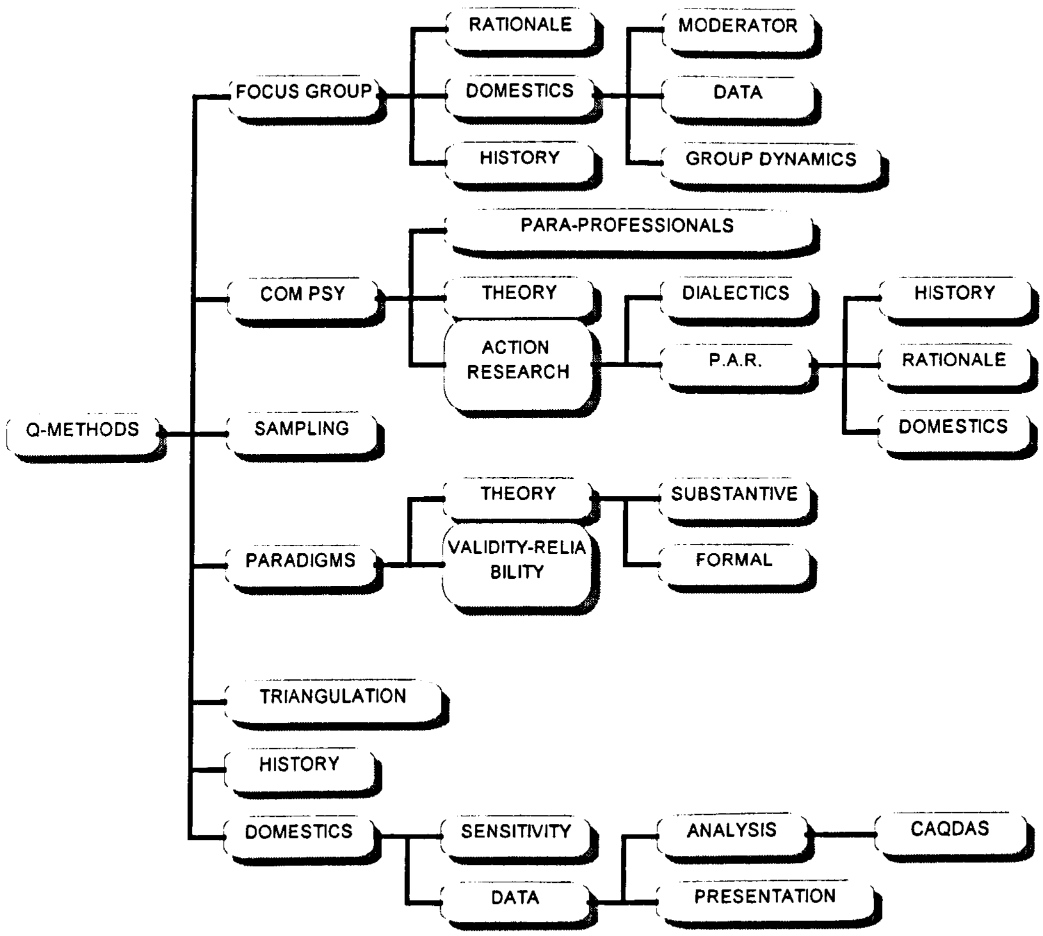
Code tree of sub themes under the theme of organisations



Code tree of sub themes under the theme of researcher

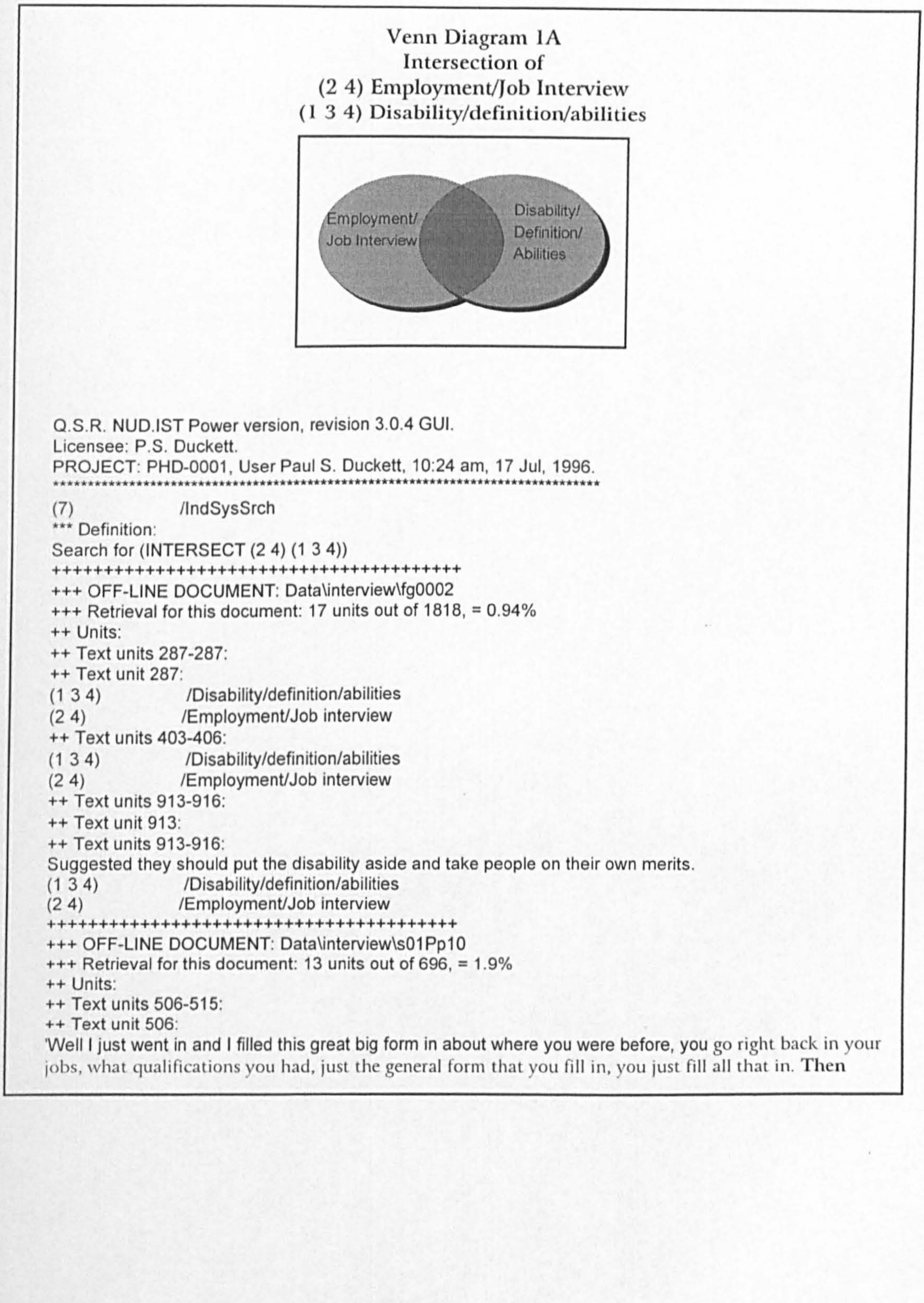


Code tree of sub themes under the theme of method



APPENDIX TWO (B)

An example of a report containing a Venn Diagram and NUD*IST print out



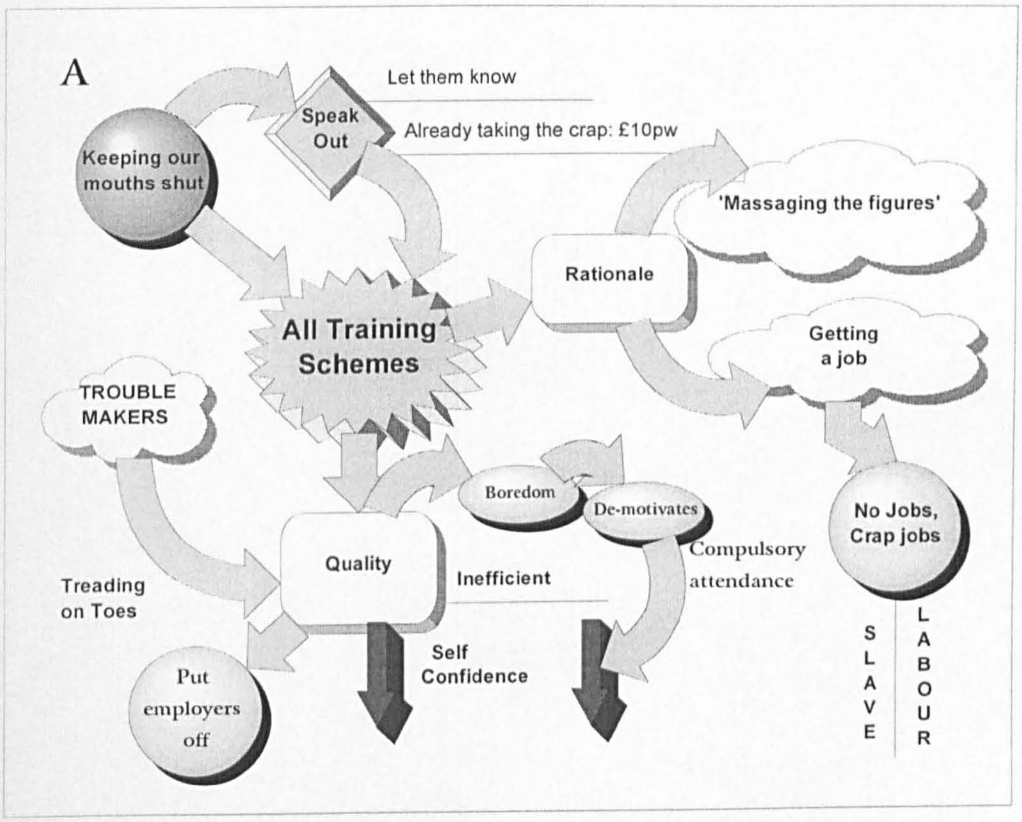
Venn Diagram 1A
Intersection of
(2 4) Employment/Job Interview
(1 3 4) Disability/definition/abilities

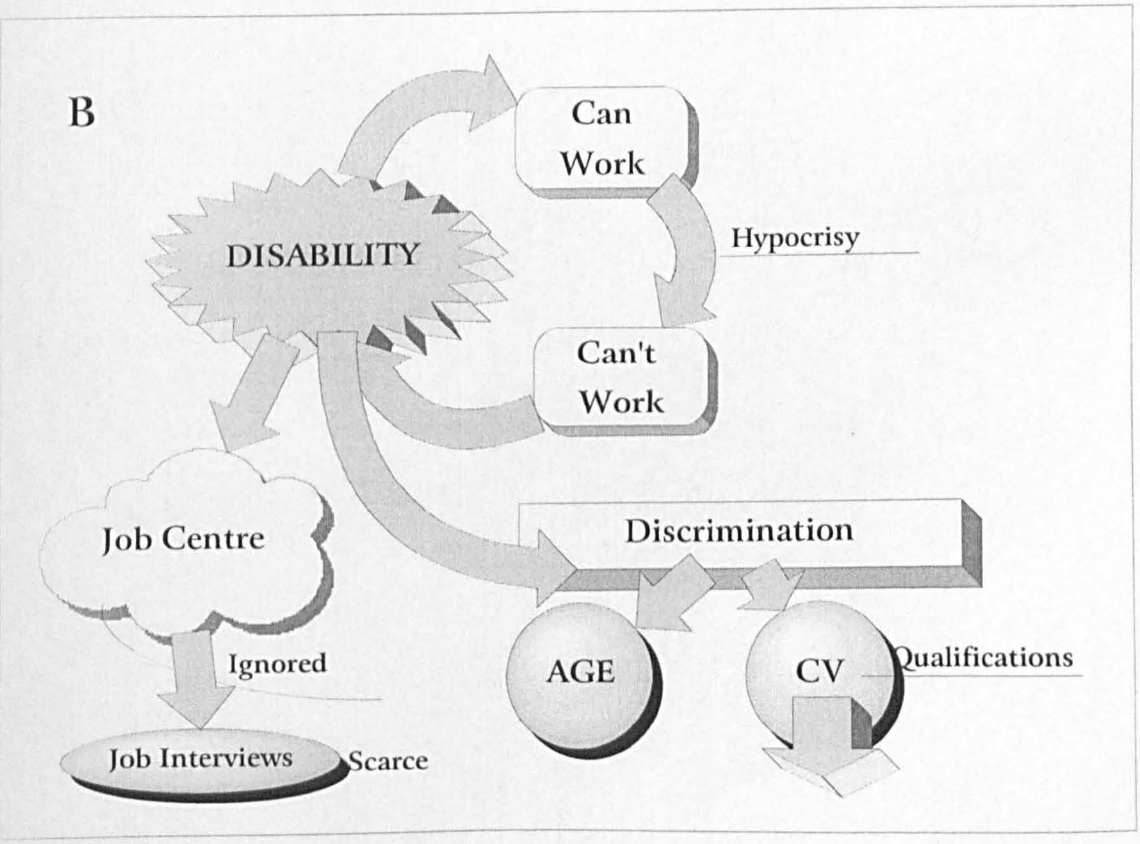
```
Q.S.R. NUD.IST Power version, revision 3.0.4 GUI.
Licensee: P.S. Duckett.
PROJECT: PHD-0001, User Paul S. Duckett, 10:24 am, 17 Jul, 1996.
*******************************************************************************
(7)               /IndSysSrch
*** Definition:
Search for (INTERSECT (2 4) (1 3 4))
+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
+++ OFF-LINE DOCUMENT: Data\interview\fg0002
+++ Retrieval for this document: 17 units out of 1818, = 0.94%
++ Units:
++ Text units 287-287:
++ Text unit 287:
(1 3 4)           /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)             /Employment/Job interview
++ Text units 403-406:
(1 3 4)           /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)             /Employment/Job interview
++ Text units 913-916:
++ Text unit 913:
++ Text units 913-916:
Suggested they should put the disability aside and take people on their own merits.
(1 3 4)           /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)             /Employment/Job interview
+++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
+++ OFF-LINE DOCUMENT: Data\interview\s01Pp10
+++ Retrieval for this document: 13 units out of 696, = 1.9%
++ Units:
++ Text units 506-515:
++ Text unit 506:
'Well I just went in and I filled this great big form in about where you were before, you go right back in your
jobs, what qualifications you had, just the general form that you fill in, you just fill all that in. Then
```

```
Then they take you into the factory and the supervisor comes and she shows you what's to be done and they try
you out on a machine. They just asked me to start right away. I suppose maybe somebody coming in and they'll
maybe get one a wee bit better and so they'll tell them they'll letter them or what, rather, you know, than say
you've not got the job, sort of think. They'll come in and they'll maybe pick the best one, sort of thing. The likes
of me I just went in and I could do what they were doing and they just asked me if I could start and that was
it, was I interested and could I start and that was it.'        (S01Pp10)
(1 3 4)            /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)              /Employment/Job interview

++ Text unit 515:
(1 3 4)            /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)              /Employment/Job interview

++ Text units 552-554:
++ Text unit 552:
(1 3 4)            /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)              /Employment/Job interview

++ Text unit 553:
'I just went in for a  day to see how I got on withthem and that was it. Cradlecare, it was much the same, I went
down, sat at a machine, did a wee machine test and they says start on Monday.'          (S01Pp10)
(1 3 4)            /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)              /Employment/Job interview

++ Text unit 554:
(1 3 4)            /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)              /Employment/Job interview
(2 4 1)            /Employment/Job interview/pre
(7)                /IndSysSrch

++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++++
+++ OFF-LINE DOCUMENT: Data\interview\s01Pp30
+++ Retrieval for this document: 11 units out of 852, = 1.3%
++ Units:
++ Text units 315-316:
'Uha, it was fine. You had to do a test, a typing test and a telephone test.' (S01Pp30)
++ Text unit 315:
(1 3 4)            /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)              /Employment/Job interview
(7)                /IndSysSrch

++ Text unit 316:
(1 3 4)            /Disability/definition/abilities
(2 4)              /Employment/Job interview
```

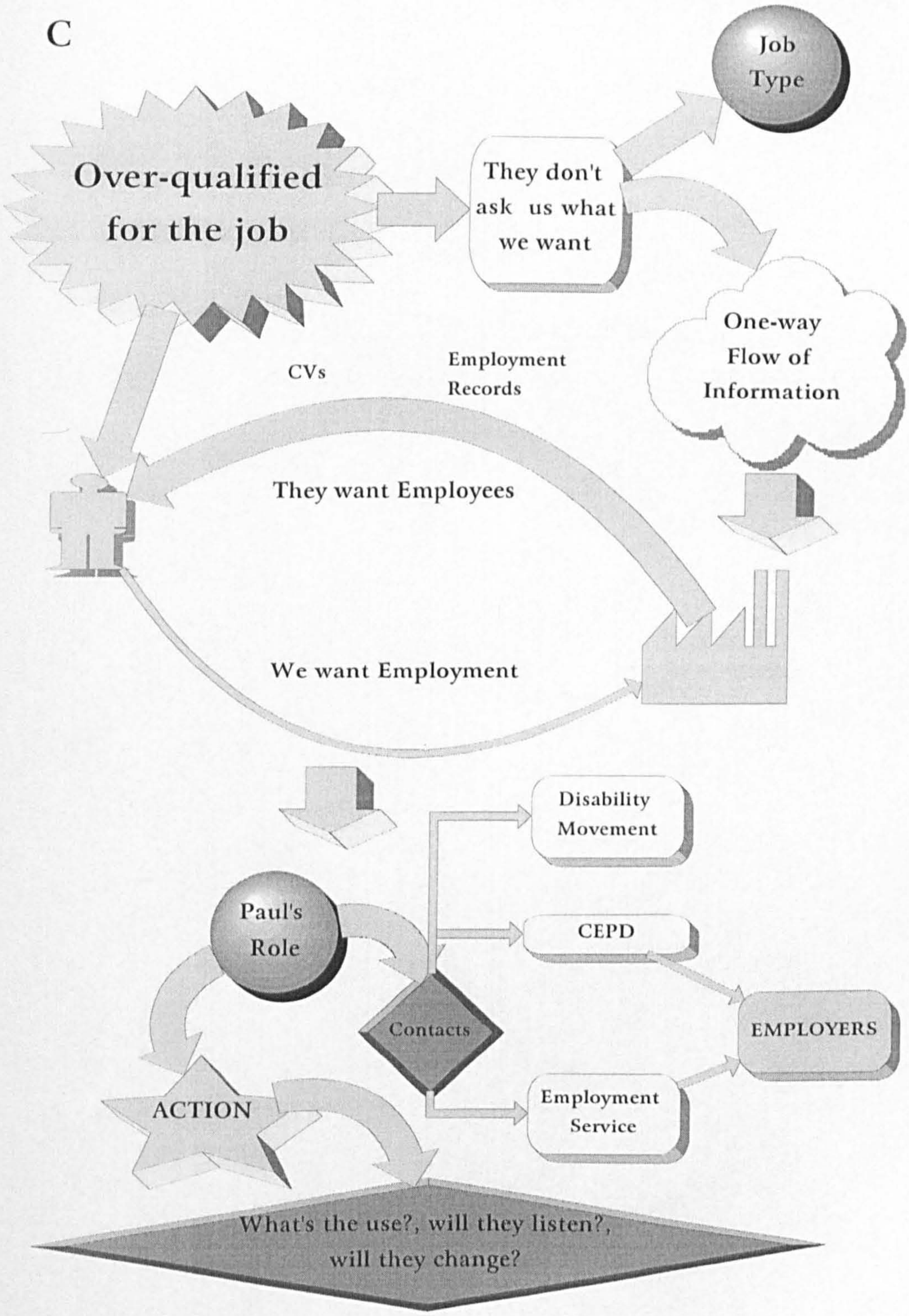
APPENDIX TWO (C)

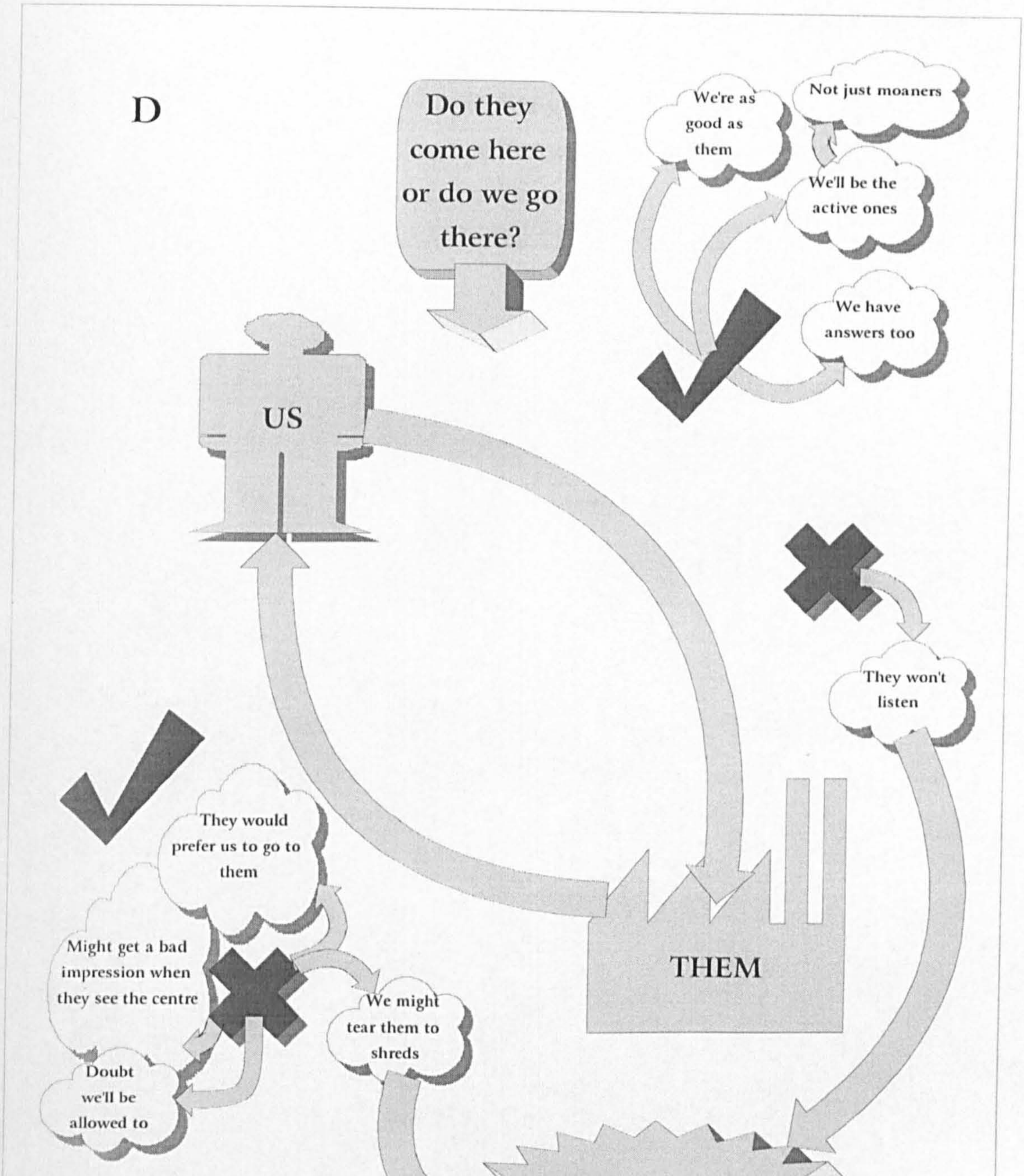
A series of six cognitive maps constructed during focus groups at a training centre for unemployed people



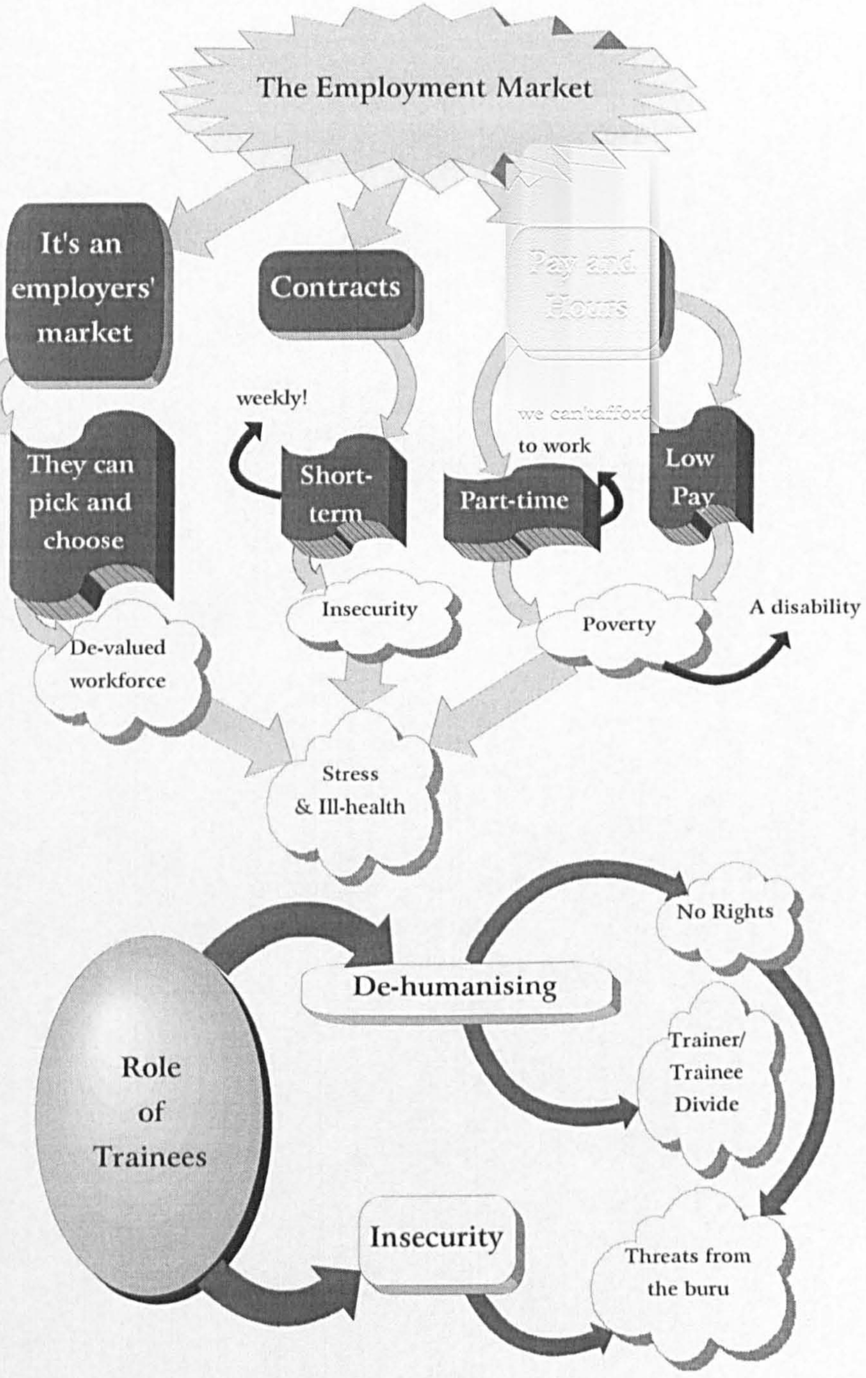


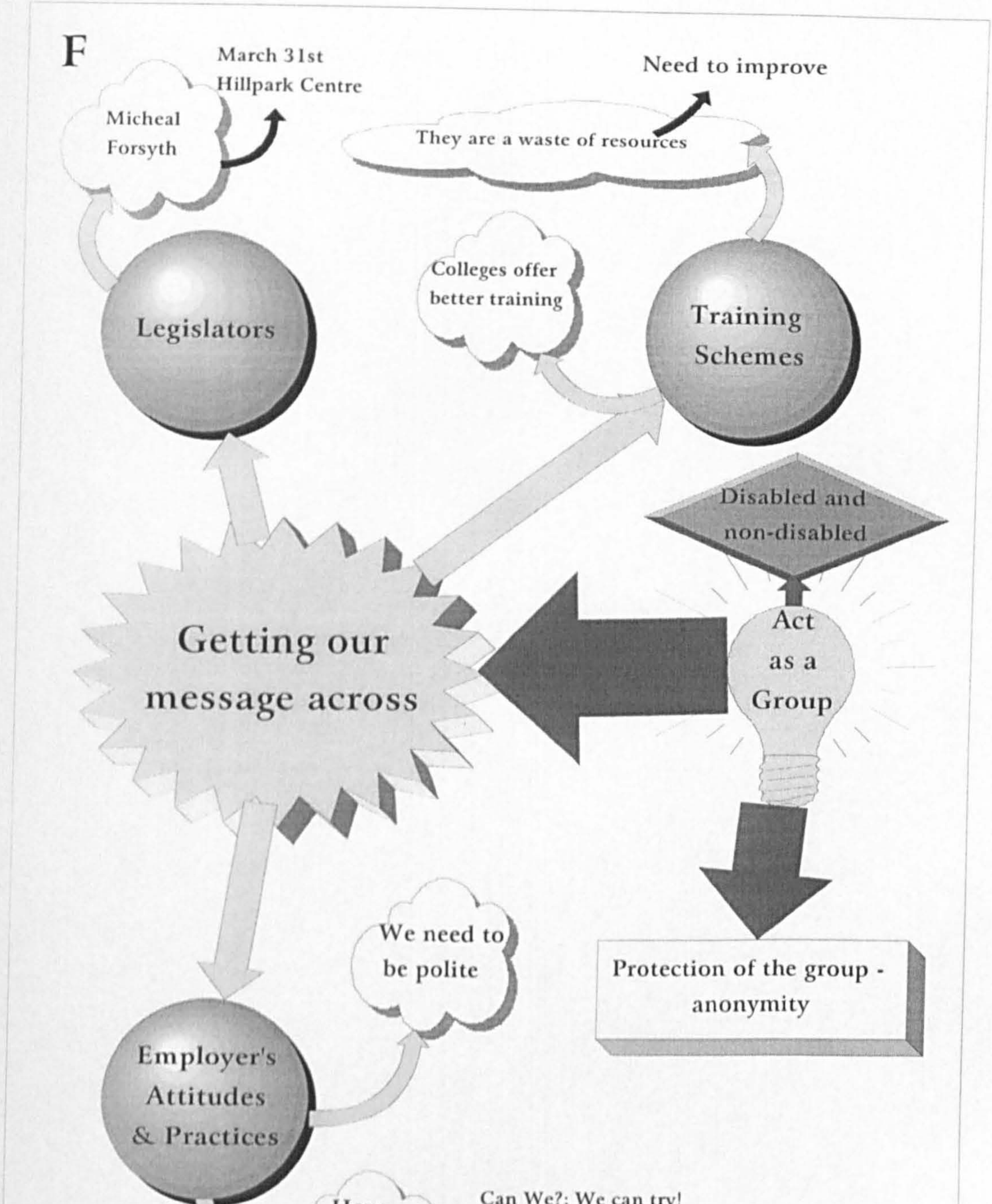
C


Job Type
Over-qualified for the job
They don't ask us what we want
One-way Flow of Information
CVs
Employment Records
They want Employees
We want Employment
Disability Movement
Paul's Role
CEPD
Contacts
EMPLOYERS
ACTION
Employment Service
What's the use?, will they listen?, will they change?


D
Do they come here or do we go there?
We're as good as them
Not just moaners
We'll be the active ones
We have answers too
US
They won't listen
They would prefer us to go to them
Might get a bad impression when they see the centre
Doubt we'll be allowed to
We might tear them to shreds
THEM
The Employment Market

E


The Employment Market
It's an employers' market
Contracts
Pay and Hours
They can pick and choose
weekly!
Short-term
we can't afford to work
Part-time
Low Pay
De-valued workforce
Insecurity
Poverty
A disability
Stress & Ill-health
Role of Trainees
De-humanising
No Rights
Trainer/ Trainee Divide
Insecurity
Threats from the buru


F
Micheal Forsyth
March 31st Hillpark Centre
They are a waste of resources
Need to improve
Legislators
Colleges offer better training
Training Schemes
Disabled and non-disabled
Getting our message across
Act as a Group
Protection of the group - anonymity
We need to be polite
Employer's Attitudes & Practices
How to influence them?
Can We?; We can try!

APPENDIX THREE (A)

Code of Practice (Anonymous version) used in the intervention

CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

A Policy and Practice Guide for xxxxx

April 1997

Authenticated by a Falkirk Council
Funded Consultancy and Steering
Group on Disability and Employment

Edited by
Paul S. Duckett
University of Stirling

CODE OF PRACTICE ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Contents

SECTION ONE

SECTION TWO

SECTION THREE

SECTION FOUR

SECTION FIVE

SECTION SIX

SECTION SEVEN

11 Acknowledgements

This document would not have been possible without the time and effort invested by the Disability and Employment Consultancy and Steering Groups funded by Falkirk Council. Further thanks must go to Gillian Douglas for her work in supporting the funding application, and to the Central Scotland Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities who initiated the research project in 1994. Much of this work builds on the original booklet produced by the Northern Office Group, and their names are acknowledged in the appendices. Any mistakes in this document remain the responsibility of the editor alone.

SECTION ONE
How to Use this Booklet

The aim

The aim of this document is to provide a framework for implementing the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) that limits its negative and irrelevant aspects. It should be used as a complement to the government's *Code of Practice: For the elimination of discrimination in the field of employment against disabled persons or persons who have had a disability* (1996).[1] This document addresses some of the discontentment over the new legislation voiced by and on behalf of disabled people. The ideas in the document originated from two sources. The main structure of this document has been adapted from the 'Policy and Practice Guide for Local Government' (1996) written by the Northern Officer Group and validated by the Disability Research Unit at the School of Sociology & Social Policy, University of Leeds. Additional detail and a localised focus have come from a three-year research project on "Difficulties Faced by Disabled People at Employment Interviews". The principal researcher (Paul Duckett) was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK). The intervention programme was funded by Falkirk Council. This project was based in Central Region from the period 1994 to 1997.

This document is not the final word on the meaning of the Act for disabled people, as policy is continually changing and most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) remains yet to be informed by case law. It will therefore be important to add and amend to the contents of this document over the coming years. You should use it as living resource informed by many individuals' (employees and employers, service users and providers) experiences of disability and employment. The policy examples we have included were chosen because they illustrate the scope of the legislation - they are not meant to be comprehensive.

As you may need to be selective in your choice of ideas in order to fit the culture, politics and resources of your own organisation, or to keep up with changes in the legislation, you are free to amend the text and/or to reproduce it verbatim. All that we ask is that you do not compromise the Social Model of Disability. Further, we would ask you to credit both the Northern Officer Group (NOG) and the Steering and Consultancy Groups funded by Falkirk Council and the ESRC funded principal researcher whenever you use text from this document.

---

[1] Published by HMSO and copies available from HMSO Publications Cenre, PO Box 276, London, SW8 5DT priced at £9.95 per copy.

Obtaining copies on disc

There is no copyright, so you are free to use the text of this document in your own work. Floppy disks will enable you to export text from the booklet into your own documents. The format of this document may be disabling for people with visual impairments. Therefore, you may wish for an additional 'plain text' copy of this document. This document was originally created with WordPerfect 6.0a on a PC; but, we could probably convert the files into a suitable Apple Macintosh format for you. Please indicate your preferred format and send a 3.5 inch high density blank disk and a Stamped Addressed Envelope to the address given below. This is also the contact point for general enquiries about the document.

Paul Duckett, Psychology Department, Stirling University, Stirling, FK9 4LA Tel (01786) 466839

Copies of the original booklet published by the NOG may similarly be available from:

Alden Chadwick, Equality Unit, Sheffield City Council, Room 131, Town Hall, Sheffield, S1 2HH Tel (0114) 2735408

Large print, braille and tape formats

Large Print and Braille and Tape formats of the original NOG document are free and available from:

John Britton, Braille and Large Print Service, Central Library, Calverley Street, Leeds, LS1 3AB Tel (0113) 2477999

SECTION TWO
The Social Model of Disability

Development of the social model of disability

In the early 1970s, disabled people used their personal experience of disability and institutional life to show that it wasn't their impairments that caused the "problem", but the way in which society failed to make any allowances for their differences. This way of thinking about, analysing and discussing disability became known as "The Social Model of Disability". It explains disablement as the result of any behaviours or barriers that prevent people with impairments choosing to play an active role in society. It stands in contrast to the "Medical Model" of disability that has been the dominant model upon which, to date, most policy development and service provision has been based. The "Medical Model" locates the problem with the person and sees impairment and disability as the same thing. The text boxes below show the different questions that result from operationalising a medical model and a social model of disability. These examples are taken from Abberley (1992).[2]

Questions informed by the Medical Model of Disability	**Questions informed by the Social Model of Disability**
(1) What complaint causes you difficulty in holding, gripping or turning things?	1a) What defects in the design of everyday equipment, like jars, bottles and lids, cause you difficulty in holding, gripping or turning them?
(2) Do you have a scar, blemish or deformity that limits your daily activities?	2a) Do people's reactions to any scar, blemish or deformity you have, limit your daily activity?
(3) Have you attended a special school because of a long-term health problem or disability?	3a) Have you attended a special school because of your education authority's policy of sending people with your long-term health problem or disability to such places?
(4) Does your health problem/disability affect your work in any way at present?	4a) Do you have problems at work as a result of the physical environment or the attitudes of others?

The social model does not wish to deny the existence of impairments and physiological differences - far from it; rather it addresses them without attaching value judgments such as "normality" and shifts the emphasis towards those aspects of our world that can be changed. Therefore, we believe that using the social model will help you to implement the DDA more effectively.

---

[2] Abberley, P. (1992a). Counting us out: a discussion of the OPCS disability surveys. *Disability, Handicap & Society*, 7(2), 139-55.

The DDA's definition of disability

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical coordination
- continence
- ability to lift or carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- speech
- hearing
- eyesight (unless correctable by spectacles)
- memory or ability to concentrate or learn or understand
- perception of the risk of danger

The DDA says the inability to carry out activities is caused by an impairment or impairments. For example, you are not mobile because you have a spinal injury. This understanding of disability is said to be a medical model of disability because the causes of disability are attributed only to medical conditions.

The Act specifies that a person has a disability if she or he has a physical or a mental impairment that has a substantial and long term effect on her/his ability to carry out normal day to day activities if it affects one or more of the items listed in the text box above.

The social model is not limited by such a narrow description of activities. It takes the wider view that the ability to undertake such activities is dependent upon social intervention. It can show that the limitation of activity is not caused by impairments but is a consequence of social organisation - hence the phrase "social model". For example, your ears don't work and you cannot hear (impairment): but you cannot participate in meetings because you have not been provided with a British Sign Language Interpreter (you are disabled by a failure of social organisation).

Definitions of Disability and Discrimination

Because the medical model uses impairment to account for disability, other words, such as "discrimination", must be used to address the fact that many people with impairments are not getting jobs and are prevented from participating in politics, social events and the life of the community in general. But, saying that "disability" (the inability to participate) is caused by impairments means that people with impairments will always be seen as inferior, second rate or inherently flawed. In this way, discrimination becomes something done to "limited" people who cannot carry out "normal" activities.

The social model does not need a separate notion of discrimination because the model already focuses on those aspects of society that disable people; discrimination and disability become the same thing. For example, because an employer will not provide sufficient training and support for a person with learning difficulties, the employer is discriminating against and disabling that individual. It is not the learning difficulty that is disabling, but the action or inaction of the employer.

In summary, the social model says a person is disabled if the world at large will not allow for their physical or mental differences.

Consequences of using the medical model

There are three consequences that flow from using a medical model of disability. First, because the medical model says a person is disabled if her/his impairment has an effect on her/his "activities", it does not consider the many social factors that may also have an affect on "day-to-day activities". For example, although impairment can have an adverse affect on a person's walking, other social factors, such as the design of transport systems, will also have an equal if not greater adverse affect on their mobility.

Secondly, the medical model puts a value judgment on activities. For example, by saying that it is "normal" to hear, speak or see, the Act is stating, by omission, that activities such as using British Sign Language, Text Phones and Braille are abnormal.

Thirdly, the medical model allows a spurious distinction to be made between those things that state, financial and industrial organisations will be held responsible for and those things that they will not be held responsible for. For example, such organisations will be responsible for individual prejudicial behaviour; or minor architectural barriers, or slight rigidities in job design. The implications for this limited responsibility are drawn out in the text box below.

Under a medical model, financial and industrial organisations will not be held responsible for:

- The systematic exclusion of disabled people from mainstream education (Barnes, 1991:28-61);
- The systematic undermining of disabled individuals in hospitals and residential homes (Hunt, 1966:153-154);
- The way in which social pressures drive some disabled people to commit suicide. (Morris, 1992:2); and,
- The manufacture of disablement itself (Swain et al. 1993).

Reasonable Adjustments: confusing the Social and Medical Models of Disability

By introducing the idea of "reasonable adjustment" and thus legislating for changes to (or "adjustments" to) social practices and built environments, the DDA does acknowledge the disabling aspects of social organisation. However, because the Act also claims that disability is caused by impairment and because it does not point out the disabling effects of social practices and built environments, it encourages disabled peoples' legitimate requests for adjustments to be thought of as unrealistic demands to accommodate the abnormal.

Alternatively, use of the social model of disability will mean adjustments to reduce the disabling effects of society can become subject to comprehensive analysis, discussion and the setting of realistic priorities.

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SECTION THREE
The Disability Discrimination Act

History and background to the legislation

The DDA is an important piece of legislation. It introduces new rights for disabled people and places duties on employers and suppliers of goods and services.

The Disability Alliance estimated there to be over 15 million disabled people in the UK. That is the equivalent of one in four of the population.

The Act represents a Governmental response to a campaign by disabled people for equality spanning nearly three decades. The first attempt to introduce civil rights legislation was made by Lord Ashley in 1982 and there have been fourteen attempts since. The most recent was the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill introduced by Harry Barnes MP in 1994. In the same session the Government introduced its own legislation, the Disability Discrimination Bill, and ensured that the Civil Rights Bill failed due to lack of time. For much of 1994 and 1995 the two Bills were moving through the legislative process together, provoking considerable debate and argument on the way.

The DDA has had, therefore, a controversial and high profile political history. It remains controversial within the disabled people's movement as simultaneously a source of severe disappointment and guarded optimism. Further, the TUC has been highly critical of the Act. The main problems are summarised in the text box below.

Problems with the DDA

- Educational services are excluded from the main provisions of the Act.
- It is informed by an essentially negative, individualised and medical understanding of disability.
- The employment provisions do not apply to 96% of firms - those firms that have less than 20 employees (Col 14, Hansard 24 January 1995).
- It makes discrimination against disabled people lawful in certain circumstances.
- Those sections of the Act that relate to public transport will have limited impact.
- There is no enforcement commission to take up and prosecute individual cases and monitor the overall effect of the Act.

As the statute itself merely establishes the broad framework, detailed clarification of the legislation must wait until it is operationalised through case law. Regulations and Codes of Practice have been issued, though clear details of the implications of the Act will only become apparent when the relevant sections are interpreted by industrial tribunals or the courts. Therefore, what follows should not be seen as a comprehensive technical interpretation of the legislation. However, this document offers a review of the broad legislative principles and as such we believe it will provide you with a valuable tool for implementing the Act.

Overview of the Act

Rights

The Act creates the following "rights" for anyone defined as a "disabled person":

- not to be discriminated against in employment;
- not to be discriminated against in the provision of goods, facilities and services; and
- not to be discriminated against in the selling or letting of land and property.

It must be noted that these are not universal rights, as various exemptions will apply. For example, only certain degrees of impairment will qualify individual disabled people for rights and certain types of organisations will be exempted from any legal obligations.

This document will concentrate on the employment provisions of the Act, though it is important that you are familiar with other provisions in the Act to ensure none of your policies or practices contravene the Act (see Section Seven for sources of useful information and organisations).

Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944

Many key sections of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 have been repealed. Among these are:

- **Repeal of 'Green Card' registration and the register of disabled persons will become redundant**
- **Repeal of 3% quota for firms/organisations that employ 20 or more employees**
- **Repeal of the designated employment scheme also known as 'reserved occupations'**

Regulations and Codes of Practice

Duties not to discriminate on grounds of disability do not rely just on the Act itself but are complemented by guidance (including Codes of Practice on employment) and regulations.[3] Regulations have been made regarding:

- The definition of terms like "disability", "impairment", "long-term effects", "severe disfigurement", "normal day-to-day activities", "effect of medication" etc.
- What is to be "justified discrimination in employment" and the extent of the duty on employers to make adjustments.

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[3] See Section Seven on Useful Information and Contacts for Employers.

Definition of a 'Disabled Person'

A social model of disability

We have shown in Section Two that the definition of a disabled person given in the Act is essentially a medical model of disability. It is important to bear in mind that this medical model is not the only, nor indeed the most useful, way of defining disability. We suggest a social model of disability would be more useful when it comes to implementing the Act.

To summarise, the social model states people with impairments are disabled by society. It specifies that a person is disabled if she or he has a physical or mental impairment and if she or he is prevented from taking an active role in society. Examples of disabling elements in society for disabled people are given in the text box opposite.

- lack of access to the built environment
- poor employment prospects
- lack of access to information
- the imposition of negative or patronising images
- reduced social contact

Note: when devising ways to implement the Act it is useful to remember:

That when the Act talks of "disability" it is referring to impairment and functional limitation.

That when the Act mentions "discrimination" and "barriers" this roughly equates with the social model understanding of disability.

However, for the sake of clarity the rest of this section uses the medical model language of the Act. Readers may find it useful to refer to this section from time to time to remind themselves of the crucial differences between the social and medical models of disability.

Discrimination in employment

Discrimination

It will be unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a disabled person:

- In recruitment and selection arrangements.
- In the terms on which employment is offered.
- By refusing to offer, or deliberately not offering, employment.
- In the terms of employment offered to an employee.
- In the opportunities offered to an employee for promotion, transfer, training or receiving any other benefit.
- By refusing to offer the employee, or deliberately not offering her/him any such opportunity.
- By dismissing the disabled person, or subjecting her/him to any other disadvantage.

An employer will be said to discriminate against a disabled person if, for a reason that relates to the person's disability, she/he treats her/him less favourably than other non disabled employees and the treatment cannot be justified. The word "relates" seems to provide a basis for challenging indirect discrimination. For example, if a person is blind and uses a dog, the definition would cover an employer's behaviour towards the person because of her/his need to be accompanied by the dog - which is a reason relating to her/his disability but not the same as her/his disability.

Justification

The definition of discrimination given in the Act is different from that in the Race and Sex discrimination legislation, since the scope for justified discrimination is far greater. There is no absolute prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of disability as such. Instead, some forms of discrimination will be allowable if reasons for it can be given, that is, if it is "justified" in terms of the Act. To be justified a reason must be "substantial and material". An example of justification would be if the "adjustments" to work practices required for the employment of a disabled person were not considered "reasonable".

Reasonable Adjustments

The duty to make "adjustments" has been borrowed from the "reasonable accommodation" idea contained in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (US).

"Reasonable Adjustment" is the centerpiece of the Disability Discrimination Act and clearly differentiates it from other equality legislation.

In social model terms, this new duty can be described as an instruction to remove barriers that disable people with impairments. Under the DDA, employers will be acting unlawfully if they do not make **reasonable adjustments** to prevent physical features of their premises or equipment or any arrangement in the physical and social environment from causing substantial disadvantage to a disabled employee or disabled applicant for employment.

Take recruitment and selection, first an employer has to figure out if the reason for not giving a disabled applicant the job is related to disabling barriers within her/his organisation, or if it is because the applicant does not have the requisite skills or experience regardless of any disabling barriers. If the reason is related to disabling barriers then the employer will have to work out if the adverse effect of the barriers could be removed by adjustments and if the adjustments are in fact "reasonable".

If disabling barriers can be eliminated by a reasonable adjustment and the employer fails to make that adjustment, they will be guilty of treating the disabled applicant less favourably than non disabled applicants. The duty to make adjustments is not triggered unless disabling barriers in the work environment place "the disabled person concerned at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled". The problem for policy makers is that the precise meaning of the term "substantial" is not clear. Whether a disadvantage is substantial will ultimately be the decision of an industrial tribunal.

The following are examples of actions listed in the Act that an employer may have to take in relation to a disabled person in order to make a reasonable adjustment:

- Making adjustments to premises (for example, widening doors or installing visible fire alarms, though regulations may limit this obligation where Building Regulations have been complied with).
- Allocating some of the disabled person's duties to another person.
- Transferring her/him to fill an existing vacancy (a moderately common practice in well developed Retention and Redeployment policies).
- Altering her/his working hours (for example, adjusting the core times of a flexi-time scheme).
- Assigning her/him to a different place of work (for example, same job, different office).
- Allowing her/him to be absent during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment.
- Giving or arranging training (presumably specific training on issues such as working with a personal assistant).
- Acquiring or modifying equipment.
- Modifying instructions or reference manuals.
- Modifying procedures for testing or assessment.
- Providing a reader or interpreter.
- Providing supervision (for example, providing additional support and training for a person with learning difficulties).

Not all barriers are physical. Attitudinal barriers can be as, if not more, disabling. Therefore, as well as making the workplace physically accessible, employers must break down attitudinal barriers and help sensitise their workers to the needs of disabled employees.

In deciding if it is reasonable to require an employer to undertake a particular action, the following factors will be taken into account by Industrial Tribunals:

- The step must significantly reduce the disadvantage the disabled person in question would otherwise face.
- The step must be practicable for the employer in these specific circumstances.
- The financial and other costs and the degree of disruption to the employer must be reasonable, given the organisation's resources.

Whether a cost will be reasonable will, to some extent, depend upon what the employer would otherwise spend in the circumstances. For example, if an employer would expect to spend some money on a non disabled new recruit, it would be reasonable to expect her/him to spend the same amount on a disabled recruit.

- The financial and other resources available to the employer - more flexibility will be expected of larger organisations; more expensive adjustments will be expected of richer organisations.
- The availability to the employer of financial and other assistance (for example, the "Access to Work" scheme, "Supported Employment" or assistance from charities)

Although the Act says cost will be a factor when considering whether an adjustment is reasonable, the Government has said it does "not intend to put a financial ceiling" on such costs and the government's Code of Practice mentions that many changes can be made for no cost or very little cost [re: Section Four - countering arguments based on costs of adjustment]. Ultimately, only a lawyer can give authoritative advice about whether an adjustment is "reasonable" under the DDA.

An employer will be discriminating if she/he fails to comply with the duty to make adjustments and cannot show that the failure to comply is justified in terms of the above framework.

In a strict legal sense with recruitment and selection, an employer will not have to make any reasonable adjustments unless the applicant concerned has told the employer that she/he is applying for a job. Thus, there is no automatic right to a reasonable adjustment, rather, it should be seen as a part of the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of disability. For example, an individual cannot demand the removal of disabling barriers unless those barriers have a direct disabling effect on that individual. This means employers do not have to make any "reasonable adjustment" until a specified employee or applicant requires an adjustment due to the particular nature of her/his disability, though it is good practice to make premises and equipment as accessible as possible.

Though there is no legal obligation on an employer to be proactive in the sense of catering for all hypothetical disabled applicants, experience tells us that if procedures and practices are not in place for providing an accessible Recruitment and Selection process, organisations will find even the most modest of reasonable adjustments (eg. getting a British Sign Language interpreter or a wheelchair accessible interview room) will prove difficult, and delays could severely disrupt the whole recruitment schedule.

As soon as an employer knows an applicant has a particular impairment, the onus is on the employer to provide an accessible recruitment process - it is not up to the disabled applicant to request *reasonable adjustments*.

Positive action and positive discrimination in employment

It is useful to consider the distinction between **Positive Action** and **Positive Discrimination**. Positive Action describes an employer's actions that remove disabling barriers so that disabled people can compete equally for employment with non disabled people. Positive Discrimination, however, privileges, under certain circumstances, disabled people over non disabled people irrespective of individual merit. Examples of Positive Discrimination are priority interview schemes (where disabled applicants go through the selection process before non disabled applicants are considered), or ring fencing vacancies for disabled people only. According to Government Ministers, these practices will be unlawful for some organisations when the Employment sections of the DDA came into force in late 1996.

Positive Discrimination will become illegal for organisations that come under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This Act says that appointment to employment must be on "merit". Until the advent of the DDA, there was an exemption clause in the 1989 Act wherein local government authorities who were below the 3% quota could appoint suitably qualified disabled applicants in place of better qualified non disabled applicants. But, with the repeal of the quota provisions the exemption clause is repealed too.

xxxxx is not affected by the Local Government and Housing act 1989 and can therefore use positive discrimination measures. Though it would be legal to do so, we believe that organisations should concentrate on positive action and avoid positive discrimination.

In our view we would strongly recommend you avoid all measures of positive discrimination, and instead focus on positive action and on the individual merit of each candidate.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Employment, James Paice, suggested the following positive action measures as permissible for *all* organisations under the remit of the DDA:

- Guaranteeing interviews for suitably qualified disabled applicants.

  We strongly recommend this be a voluntary scheme offered to disabled applicants, but with a view to phasing out such a scheme once your organisation has effective Disability Policy in place. **If you *need* to have a Guarantee Interview Scheme, this indicates your organisation's policies are probably disabling.**

- Positive training (ie. training courses to bring disabled people to the same level of skill and qualification as non-disabled people in a similar position).

- Positive advertising (that is, placing adverts which "welcome applications from disabled people").

Also, it is not clear yet whether the setting of direct experience of disability as a selection criterion for disability related jobs, such as access officers or social workers working with disabled service users, will be permissible. At this stage we believe experience of disability (combined with a knowledge of the social context of that disability) is a quality worthy of merit and must be included in employee specifications.

Enforcement of the employment section

The government has placed emphasis on the use of arrangements within individual employer organisations to resolve disagreements arising under the DDA. The first option for a disabled person who believes she/he has been discriminated against will be the employer's grievance procedure. If the disagreement is not resolved internally, the disabled person is expected to use the Industrial Tribunal (IT) system. The Act anticipates there will be an attempt to reach a conciliated settlement between the two parties before going to an IT. In this respect an Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) officer will be asked to seek conciliation between the two parties.

A complaint of discrimination may be presented to an IT generally within three months of treatment complained of and disabled employees will have recourse to the law regardless of their length of service. If an IT finds discrimination has taken place it can:

- Make a declaration of rights: that is, a disabled person who has won a case against an employer will be entitled to a formal declaration as to her/his respective rights and the employer's duties.

  This is the most likely outcome where the complainant has suffered no measurable loss or where there is a point of legal principle at stake.
- Order compensation: that may also include compensation for injury to feelings.
- Make a recommendation or recommendations: to obviate or reduce the adverse (discriminatory) effects faced by the complainant.

If an IT makes a recommendation and an employer fails (without reasonable justification) to comply with it, the IT can then order compensation or increase this if it has already ordered it. Besides compensation for injury to feelings (which is likely to be limited to a prescribed maximum), the potential compensation award will be unlimited.

The Act will make provision for disabled people to use a prescribed questionnaire procedure to obtain evidence of reasons for treatment. Questionnaires can be provided and employers will have a legal duty to fill them in and give details relevant to the case. Answers will be admissible in evidence to an IT.

When a case of discrimination has been alleged, the disabled complainant is not required to prove that discrimination took place. The onus is on the employer to prove they did not discriminate on the basis of disability.

No legal aid will be available to disabled complainants for tribunal cases. However, limited advice may be obtained under the "green form" scheme where one or two hours of free legal advice can be given. Also, Law Centres and the Citizens Advice Bureau could support people at IT. Further, Trade Union legal departments or national disability organisations are likely to provide a legal service to complainants.

Advisory Bodies

The lack of an enforcement agency (similar to the Commission for Racial Equality or the Equal Opportunities Commission) is a major concern of organisations of disabled people. This omission puts the onus on disabled individuals or groups of disabled people to take up cases of discrimination. The Act established a new National Disability Council (NDC) to advise the Government on measures to eliminate or reduce discrimination against disabled people and to advise on how the Act is working. The NDC has, at present, 18 appointed members who are considered by the Government to have specialist knowledge or experience of disabled people and/or who are representatives of business or of professional bodies. Over 60 per cent of the members are disabled or are the parents or carers of disabled people.

The National Disability Council will not advise the Government on the employment provisions, this task will fall to a non statutory Scottish Disability Consulting Group. Posts on this group have been advertised, and the group is still in its early days of development at the time of writing.

SECTION FOUR
Developing Disability Policy

Introduction

Section Four on Developing Disability Policy outlines some policy implications of the DDA. It lists the key tasks we believe xxxxx should carry out if it is to implement the Act effectively. Each "Action Point" will be developed below.

Action Points

- **Ensure that strategic plans are in place to coordinate the provision of "reasonable adjustments".**
- **Agree a short "Direction Statement" at the outset to ensure coordination of the various decision making processes.**
- **Adopt the social model of disability to provide a framework for practical policies.**
- **Formally identify the knowledge required for effective policy making.**
- **Formally identify the aims and objects of your consultation with disabled people and the different sorts of knowledge you need to meet them.**
- **Formally identify the resources you will require to facilitate meaningful consultation with organisations of disabled people.**
- **Recognise that disabled people are by definition different, and establish methods to systematically identify and monitor the potentially disabling consequences of your organisation's policies.**

A strategic approach

When the Act is in force and awareness spreads, claims for "reasonable adjustments" will not arrive one at a time. For example, though it may be relatively easy to provide one British Sign Language interpreter for one Deaf applicant on any one day, problems will arise when perhaps two Deaf applicants have interviews on the same day, and, at the same time, and a deaf service user requires an interpreter for a public meeting.

Problems of dealing with a multiplicity of individual claims for adjustments will stem from the Act's focus on individual rights rather than on changing disabling elements of social organisation. For example, the duty to make "adjustments" at work is owed to individual disabled employees as and when the need arises; there is no general duty to make existing work environments accessible as such. However, there is an answer to these problems and it lies in the Act itself.

If xxxxxx has a strategic plan for addressing the removal of disabling barriers and individual requests for adjustments do not coincide with the aims of the plan, then the xxxxxx may have a defence. For example, it could legitimately argue, using the appropriate section of the Act, that the "financial costs and the degree of disruption" to the xxxxxx of carrying out adjustments contrary to their strategic plan would not be "reasonable". The crucial point is, however, that the xxxxxx's strategic plan is credible. It must be properly informed by the experience and knowledge of both groups of disabled people and staff within the organisation, and it must have appropriate financial and political support.

A direction for policy

Policy making

When developing policies to implement the DDA, give some thought to the policy making process itself. For example, it is often supposed that disability issues can be identified and separated from other organisational matters with decisions then being made by an easily identifiable group of people. In the real world, policy making is a long term process. Change occurs gradually by amending existing policies and practices through a series of interrelated decisions made by a number of separate working groups, committees and so on. Also, existing policies and practices may have the effect of closing off some options and encouraging others.

Developing a "Direction Statement"

We suggest your xxxxxx develop a clear "Direction Statement" at the outset to coordinate its various decision making processes. Such a statement should be a public document that includes:

- Descriptions of the xxxxxx's understanding of disability, and of its strategy to become a "barrier free" organisation.
- An outline of the process(es) by which change will be implemented.
- An indication of the skills, knowledge and experience the xxxxxx intends to employ.

Perhaps such a Direction Statement could be added to, or replace, current disability equality statements. The key thing is not to let it become moribund - it must be open to regular review and amendment.

Defining disabled people

Summary of the social model of disability

As the Act encourages organisations to make "reasonable adjustments" to the built environment, service delivery and work practices, it will be useful to think of disability as a social, not a medical issue. For the sake of simplicity, the two models of disability discussed in Section Two can be summarised as follows:

MEDICAL MODEL:- **A person with an impairment is disabled by that impairment.**

SOCIAL MODEL:- **People with impairments are disabled by social, attitudinal and/or physical barriers.**

Definition of a disabled person

The DDA uses a medical model and relies on complex measurements of impairment and functional limitation to determine who can and who cannot seek the protection of the law. Whilst this may be considered appropriate for political and legislative purposes, it is of little practical use to disabled people or to employers faced with the task of implementing the Act. Therefore, it is strongly advised that the social model be adopted by your policy makers.

A manager will not really need to know the extent to which a person's impairment has an adverse effect on their walking, hearing, seeing and thinking etc. All a manager need know is if there are barriers that prevent the employee from working to the best of her/his abilities. A manager cannot be expected to do anything about impairments (s/he cannot cure them or make them go a way), but they will be expected to make reasonable adjustments to remove disabling barriers. Employers should not waste time developing elaborate and potentially embarrassing methods of measuring impairment to establish who is or is not a disabled person in terms of the Act.

It is our belief that a good employer can ignore the definition of disability given in the Act without any detriment to her/his organisation.

Once a manager has determined, in consultation with an individual, if and how organisational barriers disable her or him, then that individual should be recognised as a disabled person. Their personnel file may formally record this. This approach allows people to self-define themselves, rather than the employer classifying and stereotyping them as having physiological or psychological abnormalities. We would suggest that employers ask for assistance from their local Placement Assessment and Counselling Team in the Employment Service prior to and during this process of assessment.

Countering arguments against the social model

Employers may argue that they need to prove an individual has an impairment because that individual may falsely claim to have an impairment to achieve some personal benefit (for example, the removal of some unfavoured tasks from a job description; or, the provision of a designated car parking bay). In short, an individual may claim that as s/he has an impairment s/he has a right to have adjustments made.

The answer to this lies not in proving the existence of an impairment but in identifying the disabling aspect(s) of the job or workplace. As we have shown, an impairment in itself does not disable people and therefore cannot require adjustments to be made. Rather, adjustments will only have to be made if the person with the impairment is disabled by some identifiable aspect(s) of their job or workplace and if the requested adjustments would remove such disabling effects. (This is referred to in the Act as the extent to which making the adjustment "would prevent the effect in question". In social model terms, it will be difficult for a non disabled person to convincingly argue for adjustments to be made if they have no direct experience of the specific disabling effects of those aspects of their job or workplace and no direct experience of similar disabling effects in other areas of their job or workplace or in other contexts.

When disabling barriers are identified in this way, individual requests for adjustments can be addressed using your xxxxxx's strategic plan for the removal of disabling barriers.

Similarly, employers may argue they need to know the "severity" of an individual's impairment to determine whether they have to make an adjustment. But, as above, we would suggest this is an unwise approach. The degree or extent of impairment is not the issue; the issue is the relationship between the person with the impairment and the social and physical environment.

The "level" or "severity" of disability does not stem from an impairment but from the extent to which the difference it creates is accommodated.

For example, on the one hand a person with "minor" impairment, say, a skin blemish, will be very severely disabled if she or he is prevented from carrying out their job because of harassment. On the other hand, a person with a "major" impairment, such as a spinal injury, will not be disabled if they work in a fully accessible environment in which the required job performance measures are adjusted to take into account their physical requirements.

Countering arguments against the cost of adjustments

A common myth in the arena of disability and employment is that accommodating workplaces for disabled employees will be costly. This is an unsubstantiated claim. An example, taken from the United States where they have had anti-discrimination legislation in place since 1990, may be useful to examine at this point.

Pizza Hut (division of PepsiCo), an international consumer products company, employ 300,000 people worldwide. Early in 1990s, the organisation made plans to increase their number of disabled employees. Through a programme of positive action they recouped $9.3 million in three years through savings in turnover costs alone. The turnover rate among non disabled employees was 200%, while for disabled employees it was 19%.[4]

Aside from statistical evidence across many different countries and

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[4] Reported in Macklin, M. (1992). How to Comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act. *Business and Health*, Vol.10, August, 55-57.

different employer organisations that show disabled employees to be more loyal employees, disabled people also generally have fewer days off sick and fewer days absence for reasons other than illness.[5] Further, disabled people are equally as productive as non disabled employees and consistently hold a better safety record and do not increase an employer's compensation liability.[6]

Organisations can derive many benefits from barrier-free working environments. As the skilled workforce shrinks, competition for skilled workers becomes fierce. One way to attract a competitive workforce is to eliminate physical and social barriers that unnecessarily narrow the pool of prospective employees. By including disabled people in your recruitment pool, you are reaching a far wider skills and experienced based workforce.

Accommodating employees with disabilities doesn't have to be expensive. An allegation of discrimination almost always is.

Managers may cite increased costs as a drawback to the hiring or retention of disabled employees. Arguments concerning the unreasonable expense of adjusting the work environment and fears of increased insurance costs are simply unsubstantiated. According to a study done for the US Department of Labour, half the accommodations needed to make offices more accessible cost little or no money at all, and another 30 per cent can be accomplished for £50 - £250.[7]

Who should be involved in the policy making process?

Knowledge of disabling barriers

As a result of political action by groups of disabled people, the onus is shifting from disabled people having to adjust to society, towards society adjusting to disabled people. This change could usefully be reinforced by directing the focus of "reasonable adjustments" at organisational structures and practices rather than at disabled individuals. To identify disabling barriers and develop a long term strategy for removing them, the following factors should be considered:

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[5] Birkett, K. (1988). *Getting on with Disabilities: an employer's guide.* London: Institute of Personnel Management.

[6] Kettle, M. (1982). *Employer's Guide to Disabilities.* London: RADAR.

[7] Reported in Johnson, S.E. (1992). Create a barrier-free work environment. *HR Focus*, July, 15.

- The political commitment to develop a strategy.
- The financial and human resources available.
- The method and extent to which employment practices will need to be adjusted.

These are organisational issues that will involve officers from all areas of the organisation; they are not the sole responsibility of specialist disability officers.

A mix of expertise

One way of identifying who should be involved in developing and implementing a strategy for removing disabling barriers is to identify the knowledge and experience required. Broadly speaking there are three types of knowledge on disability available to your organisation:

- Personal knowledge - gained from having an impairment and experiencing disabling barriers.
- Moral/Political knowledge of disability - an understanding of how and to what extent people with impairments are disabled by social organisation; and an understanding of the political processes required to bring about equality.
- Professional/Technical knowledge - an understanding of those aspects of social organisation that can disable people with impairments. For example, managers may have a knowledge of disabling policies and the practical alternatives that can be employed to remove or reduce the disabling effects of such policies. Architects and engineers may have the knowledge to remove physical disabling barriers in the built environment - once they have been identified by disabled people.

It is crucial to ensure all three types of knowledge are represented in any policy making forum. Of course, in reality the different types of knowledge are not in neat packages. For instance, a disabled manager may possess both personal and professional/technical knowledge.

However, once the people with the requisite knowledge have been identified, you need to ensure clear communication between all those involved. One way of achieving such communication is to ensure everyone is using the same model of disability - that they are all talking about the same thing.

How to involve disabled people

The question is no longer "should we involve disabled people in the policy making process?" - but "how do we involve, who do we involve, and when do we involve disabled people in the process?" If you have existing staff who are disabled, you could avoid the cost of employing external consultants by involving your own disabled staff in the policy making process.

Mistakes to avoid

In the past, the desire of some organisations to involve disabled people has taken precedence over the practical realities. There have been instances where lengthy and complex documents were sent out to groups of disabled people for their comments, where the recipients did not have the opportunity to understand how the policies fitted into their lives. There have been consultation exercises where those consulted have wanted to change the whole basis of the approach but because the bulk of the work had already been done they were not given the opportunity. Consultation exercises have taken place that have imposed untenable time restrictions on the involvement of disability groups - it has not been uncommon for organisations to ask a group to consult on policy documents that require feedback within a week. Such consultation exercises fail to take account of the timetable requirements of the organisations they involve, many of whom meet monthly. Also, there have been many instances of disabled employees being asked to comment on policies, not because they were directly or indirectly interested in those particular policies but, simply because they were token disabled people.[8]

To avoid these problems, identify the aims and objectives of your consultation and list the broad areas of experience and knowledge you will need before you decide which disabled people you approach. When considering who to involve you must recognise that:

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[8] For further discussion of these points refer to Bewley, C., and Glendinning, C. (1994). Representing the views of disabled people in community care planning. *Disability and Society*, 9, 3, 301-314., and Beresford, P., and Campbell, J. (1994). Disabled people. service users, user involvement and representation. *Disability and Society*, 9, 3, 315-325.

- Having an impairment does not automatically bring with it knowledge of the social model of disability. Also the range of physical, sensory and intellectual impairments is vast and consequently individual personal experience on its own will only cover some elements of disabling social barriers.
- Equally, having an impairment does not automatically give someone an affinity with other disabled people or an ambition to work on disability policies.

Proper consultation needs resources

The key principle of any effective consultation is that it cannot happen without resources; and therefore all requests made by your organisation for assistance from groups of disabled people should be accompanied by offers of appropriate support. For example, general invitations to open public meetings should be accompanied by offers of free accessible transport and British Sign Language interpreters; and, organisations of disabled people asked to undertake detailed policy work should be reimbursed for the time spent and materials used.

Stages of consultation

Whom you choose to consult with depends to some extent on when you intend to consult. Consultation can be broken down into the following three stages.

Stage One

At the very beginning of the process, you will need to decide which areas of your organisation's work need a new policy or a policy revision. At this stage, gut feelings and personal experience of the organisation will be the determining factors, and therefore, consultation with as many groups of disabled people as possible will be desirable.

NOTE: Groups of disabled people are those groups controlled by disabled people; not those groups controlled by non disabled people *for* disabled people.

Stage Two

Once a policy area has been decided upon, it then becomes a more technical issue, and you will need to identify clearly the knowledge and skills required.

While we accept that being disabled is not an essential requirement for each and every policy maker, we believe it is essential to have some disabled policy makers. Groups of disabled people both outside and inside the organisation can assist with this because they will have a collective general experience of many disabling environments and may have a great deal of professional/technical knowledge of potential solutions.

Stage Three

Finally, to evaluate the scheme you need to go back to the broad spectrum of employees to get their views.

Do your policies disable people?

Many organisations will be aware of certain disabling barriers; for example, they will be aware that steps disable wheelchair users; that a reliance on printed materials disables blind people; that complicated instructions disable people with learning difficulties and that stereotypes disable people with impairments generally. However, if the legislation is to be implemented to best affect, attention must be paid to the more covert and indirect disabling assumptions that underpin many policies and practices.

Organisations usually standardise the ways in which employees work. Managers can then be reasonably certain that things happen in an appropriate, legal and equitable way - that people with similar needs and obligations are treated in the same or similar ways.

Policies do this by:

- apportioning responsibilities
- providing information
- establishing eligibility criteria for employee benefits

Broadly speaking, policies are there to guide managers' actions in meeting employees' expectations. The problem is that policies often assume all employees have similar needs; that they have the same physiological functions; use the same communication and transport systems; and are able to work at the same speed and operate within the same time scales.

Policies focusing on capability assume a person's output will reflect the amount of effort they put in. Although a useful yardstick, this "common sense" assumption has never been reconstructed to account for the effort a disabled person needs to put in to overcome a disabling environment (an environment composed of social, attitudinal or physical barriers or any combination of the three). It is assumed that the way the working day is structured will accommodate everyone, but this is not always the case for disabled people. For example, flexi scheme bandwidths and core times do not take into account the extra time it can take some disabled people to get ready for work in the morning, particularly those who depend upon other people to give assistance with getting dressed etc. Many policies assume people can hear, see and speak to each other using traditional communication methods like meetings, letters and telephones. For example, complaint procedures often expect people to put their complaint in writing.

A single instance of the imposition of such norms and standards may be fairly insignificant - and they have often been circumvented in practice both by managers attempting to integrate disabled people and disabled people themselves negotiating their own solutions. Nevertheless, it is clear the DDA will mean employers will have to recognise that disabled people are by definition different, and to systematically identify and monitor the potentially disabling consequences of their policies.

SECTION FIVE

Recruitment and Selection

Introduction

This section is designed to illustrate how you can apply elements of the DDA in practice using the social model of disability.

Accommodating difference in a systematic way

As we have shown in Section Three, the duty to make "adjustments" is owed to individual disabled people as and when the need arises. Thus, there is no general duty to make adjustments. However, as we have shown in Section Four, to protect the rights of individual disabled people in an effective and efficient manner, your organisation will need to have a strategic plan for the removal of disabling barriers. Therefore, when considering Recruitment and Selection in the context of the DDA, you will need to arrive at a balance between accommodating the specific requirements of individual disabled people and your organisation's corporate strategy for implementing the Act. In short, you must seek to accommodate difference in a systematic way.

Advice and Guidance

As a minimum measure, an employer should produce guidance for officers involved in recruitment on: the DDA; the social model of disability; and where to find advice and assistance. The organisation should also aim to analyse Disability Equality Training needs, either as part of recruitment and selection training or in the context of the full range of policy issues.

Flexibility in the recruitment process

Reasonable Adjustments

Many employers have been using standardised recruitment practices based on measuring candidates against fixed criteria for some time. Generally, the duties and tasks of a Job are reviewed, a Job Description is produced and finally a Person Specification is developed to record the skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications required. All candidates are then measured against those criteria to assess suitability.

The DDA requires a more flexible approach. The tasks of a given job, how they are performed and by whom, are deemed to be "adjustable". The Act requires an employer to make "reasonable adjustments" to working arrangements or environments to remove or reduce disabling barriers. The following are examples of actions listed in the Act that an employer may have to take:

- Making adjustments to premises (for example, widening doors or installing visible fire alarms, though regulations may limit this obligation where Building Regulations have been complied with).
- Allocating some of the disabled person's duties to another person.
- Transferring her/him to fill an existing vacancy (a moderately common practice in well developed Retention and Redeployment policies).
- Altering her/his working hours.
- Assigning her/him to a different place of work (For example, same job, different office).
- Allowing her/him to be absent during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment.
- Giving or arranging training (presumably, specific training on issues such as working with a personal assistant).
- Acquiring or modifying equipment.
- Modifying instructions or reference manuals (for example, by making them more accessible by either changing the format to braille or tape or by rewriting them in plain language).
- Modifying procedures for testing or assessment.
- Providing a reader or interpreter.
- Providing supervision (for example, providing extra support for a person with learning difficulties at work).

Access to Work

This scheme is a way of supporting employers in making reasonable adjustments for disabled employees. Under this Government scheme, the Employment Service makes contributions to the costs of help or adjustments a disabled employee needs. This money is available via job centres, for people in or seeking work. It could be used to fund a variety of things. For example:

- Equipment
- A support worker
- An adaptation to the building, for example, the provision of an accessible toilet (Note: if your Authority will get any general benefit for other users of the building from such adaptation, you will be required to part fund the initiative)
- Assistance towards the cost of travelling to work or adapting a vehicle

You should consult you local PACT office for more advice.

Supported Employment

The Supported Employment Scheme can be seen as an "output" adjustment. That is, the scheme allows an employer to be reimbursed for a given percentage of a disabled employee's reduced output; where such reduced output is a result of the impossibility of removing disabling barriers.

Job analysis, job description and employee specification

Job analysis

Although in a strict legal sense the provisions of the Act only come in once an individual has indicated she or he wishes to be considered for a particular post, it is crucial to bare in mind the possibility of adjustment right from the very beginning of the recruitment and selection process. One way of doing this is to analyse the job closely before drawing up a job description and employee specification to ensure they do not contain unnecessary tasks and skills requirements.

For example, if a particular job has in the past included as a task "driving from location x to location y", when analysed it may be discovered that it is possible for the task to be effectively carried out via public transport. Therefore the task could be described as "travelling from location x to location y". If such options are not considered at this stage, the inclusion of driving as task and skill requirements may unnecessarily preclude blind or partially sighted people from applying for the vacancy when the post is advertised. However, it is impossible to identify at the job analysis stage which aspects of the job may disable a post holder with an impairment, as the relationship between impairment and job will be specific to the individual concerned.

Job description and employee specification

Though adjustments can be made to each and every aspect of job descriptions and employee specifications, it is vitally important to describe the job and the skills knowledge and experience required as accurately as possible, for it is only by knowing what the job is in the first place that the cost and practicality of adjustments can be measured.

Medical criteria

Do not introduce selection criteria such as "must be in good health". Health is not an issue to be considered when devising employee specifications. Your organisation should have separate procedures for meeting any medical requirements imposed by Health and Safety legislation. Remember, in most jobs technique is more important than strength where lifting, climbing and other "physical" activities are involved. Consequently, all such "physical" requirements are, in fact, practical skills. When devising skills criteria of this type, be precise and state exactly what will be required of the post holder. This will prepare the ground for considering reasonable adjustments. Further, medical checks should only be given once a conditional job offer has been made, and then, medical checks should not be given solely because a person has a disability but should be of the type given to all you prospective employees.

In short, consider carefully how jobs are analysed and described and how skills knowledge and experience are expressed. Above all - be prepared to consider reasonable adjustments at any stage in the recruitment process.

Advertising

Aim to advertise all vacancies as widely as possible. Restricting vacancies unnecessarily will inevitably reduce the ability of disabled people to take advantage of the opportunity.

Advertisements must not suggest that a non disabled person is preferred. Additionally, we would advise you not advertise for disabled people only or offer priority interviews (unless experience of disability is a genuine requirement of the post, for example, in the case of an Access Officer's job. Though, as stated earlier, being disabled does not ensure that a person has knowledge of the social model of disability).

Some employers target disabled people and raise the profile of their policies by using the disability press. For example, "***Disability Now***" (a monthly publication) often carries vacancies, especially where direct personal experience of disability would be an advantage. Many employers also seek to encourage applications from disabled people by using positive statements on advertisements. For example, "***Disabled people are particularly invited to apply as they are under represented in this area of work.***" However, some employers believe that the additional money spent on targeted advertising and "equal opportunities statements" could be better spent on providing standard recruitment advertisements and information in accessible formats, such as tape and braille.

Application forms and information for candidates

Applicants with impairments must not be disabled by inaccessible recruitment information when applying for vacancies. To avoid this, it will be necessary to prepare application forms and other information such as job descriptions in appropriate formats and to provide a Text Phone link for hearing impaired people. Further, applications forms should be written in lay language and in a user friendly style.

Application forms that contain "psychometric style" questioning are often a source of irritation for both disabled and non disabled applicants. They can, however, be particularly distressing for applicants with cognitive impairments.

When faced with what are perceived as 'trick questions', applicants are more likely to second guess an answer they suspect the employer prefers and thus give less authentic biodata to the employer. We therefore recommend that the purpose of each question be open or made explicit and that you avoid psychometric style questioning such as "Name a hobby and then say what you think that hobby says about you".

Alternative formats

To encourage people to apply for vacancies, your application forms should be in plain language. Large print, Braille or Tape versions should also be made available. (You can arrange to have your forms converted into different formats and your local organisations of blind or partially sighted people should be able to advise you on the best service available.) You may also find that a local organisation, such as a regional council, has an in-house service you could use. Remember, if you provide alternative formats you must also be able to receive information in those formats.

Using a Minicom or TypeTalk

Aim to install a Minicom (a device that transmits text rather than speech) to enable deaf people to apply for your vacancies. Alternatively, register with **TypeTalk**. This is a national telephone relay service, that connects deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired Minicom users with hearing telephone users via a national switchboard. The operator receives the text message and conveys this to the hearing person and vice versa. It is free to register and by using TypeTalk you do not need a Minicom in the recruitment office.

Identifying Disabled People

Your application form should have a separate Equal Opportunities tear-off section that asks "Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person". Applicants should be instructed that this section of the application form is for Equal Opportunities monitoring purposes alone, and will not be used in the employment selection procedure. In addition, you should also ask a further question "***If you have any specific requirements to enable you to attend an interview, please detail them and we will make the necessary arrangements for example, a loop system, a sign language interpreter, wheelchair access***". You should at no point on the main application form, ask about an applicant's disability.

Information about your xxxxxx's commitment to ensure disabled people receive fair treatment and that adjustments will be considered should also be included in information sent to applicants.

Shortlisting

The Act requires "reasonable adjustments" to be made. Therefore, it will be unlawful not to shortlist an otherwise suitable candidate because s/he may be prevented from carrying out the full range of duties by disabling barriers. For example, if one of the tasks given in an administrative Job Description requires the post holder to work with files stored in a basement area with only stepped access, it may not be unreasonable for those duties to be carried out by another officer if the potential applicant was a wheelchair user.

Interviewing

Access

Invitations to interview should give details about access to the interview venue. As a minimum, you should invite the applicant to contact you if they have any specific requirements. You must ensure that disabled candidates are not substantially disadvantaged by any interview arrangements. You should give consideration to the accessibility of the interview venue, for example, is there a loop system for hearing aid users? Will there by a problem with sunlight or traffic noise?, etc.

If your organisation has not already got an access policy, consideration should be given to this rather than responding to ad hoc requests.

Questions

To avoid disabling candidates with impairments you must not discuss a person's impairment during the selection process via questions such as "...can you tell me how you control your diabetes?" Questions should be concerned only with the job and the candidate's skills and experience required to carry out the tasks.

It is possible, however, that a candidate may be aware of disabling barriers in the work place and will want to explore reasonable adjustments to the job. In these circumstances, it will be reasonable to discuss alternative ways of doing the job, but it will be wise to emphasise that the selection decision will not be influenced by the extent of the adjustments.

We would strongly urge that at no stage in the preselection process should an employer ask questions related to disability. Questions related to disability should only be asked once a conditional job offer has been made. It is at this stage that the employer and job applicant should negotiate reasonable accommodations that may be required in order for the job applicant to fulfill the essential functions of the job.

Occupational/Psychometric Testing

Any tests used must be applied by employees accredited by the British Psychological Society and they must be Nationally recognised tests checked for validity and bias. Any tests used must actually test the specific skills required by the post. However, the use of psychometric testing will, we believe, be an increasingly grey area due to DDA legislation.

Attempts were made during the passage of the DDA to make pre employment medical examinations unlawful. However, these amendments were rejected and the Government held to their view that employers should be free to use whatever recruitment procedures best meet their needs, including medical testing and asking applicants about disability. However, health screens, examinations and, we believe, some forms of psychometric testing, might fall foul of the Act because:

> **'Medical examinations, inquiries, questions or screening would undoubtedly constitute 'arrangements' made for the purpose of determining who should be offered employment within s 4(1)(a) [ref. to section of the DDA]. If the effect of such arrangements was to amount to less favourable treatment of a disabled person for a reason related to disability, the employer would have to show that treatment was justifiable. Even if all applicants and employees were medically examined, the effect might be to discriminate indirectly against disabled persons if the employer uses the evidence gleaned from the examination without further individualised inquiries as in the ability to do the job (including reasonable adjustments).'**
>
> **(Doyle, 1996, p.54)**[9]

Recently in the US, employers have become increasingly cautious over using psychometric testing. Many psychometric tests fall somewhere between tests of pathology and tests of personality traits. As such, by using these tests without a great deal of reflexivity, you may be inadvertently screening out disabled applicants.[10] We would advise caution in the use of these tests and would recommend that if you do use such tests, that the results do not take precedence over the employment decisions finally made.

Ideally, you should only administer psychometric tests after a conditional job offer has been made.

If a disabled person is on the short list and you use occupational or psychometric tests in your selection procedure, you must check they will be able to participate fully in the test and that they will not be disabled by the test format, for example, spoken instructions may disadvantage a hearing impaired person. A written test may disable a blind person. You must adjust the tests to enable all candidates to participate. Or, find an alternative method of assessment that does not disable candidates with impairments.

Under no circumstances should you target disabled candidates for specific tests regarding their impairments or functional limitations.

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[9] Doyle, B. (1996). *Disability Discrimination: The new law.* London: Jordans.

[10] Reported by Tori DeAngelis, Monitor staff at the American Psychological Association, 1996.

Making a selection decision

When a disabled applicant successfully meets the skills, knowledge and experience criteria specified in the employee specification, a formal job offer should be made. The offer should be conditional upon your organisation's ability to make the necessary adjustments if these are required.

Feedback to applicants

It is important that you endeavour to prioritise feedback to all applicants interviewed. You should send each interviewee, as soon as is practical, a brief summary of reasons for their success or lack of success in their job application. As well as being a responsible and respectful course of action to take towards all your prospective employees, it may lessen the chance of having discrimination accusations made against you - if your reasons for rejecting a candidate appear reasonable to that candidate.

We would further recommend you avoid telling unsuccessful job applicants that their name will be kept 'on file'. This practice often leaves applicants in an unpleasant state of 'employment limbo', and further complicates their future job searches.

Disability Equality Training

Any positive action initiatives introduced should be accompanied by Disability Equality Training to ensure they are not undermined by negative attitudes and actions. Such disability training must be carried out by suitably qualified disabled trainers and should include training for management and staff.

Monitoring

To ensure your organisation is not disabling people and to gather data to assist in future policy development, you should introduce monitoring arrangements. You should use the data from the Equal Opportunities section of the application form as a base from which to undertake a full analysis of recruitment activity to assess areas where your organisation could remove disabling barriers and increase opportunities.

Setting targets

Many organisations set objectives to bring about improvement in their recruitment and selection processes. Disability Quotas are now illegal, but attainable targets can be set to assess success. For example, in the area of local government organisations, Manchester City Council set a target of 9.2% based on an independent survey of the number of adults in the working population who considered themselves to be disabled people.

Census figures will tell you how many people in your locality consider themselves to have an impairment (which is defined as a "long-term limiting illness"), and although this information does not give an accurate assessment of the extent of disabling social barriers, it will suggest the number of people likely to be disabled in the job market.

Experience suggests you should aim to set realistic, achievable targets for a given time scale and regularly review reasons for progress or lack of progress.

Complaints

Your organisation should have a well publicised recruitment/equality complaints procedure to enable individual concerns about recruitment and selection processes to be raised.

SECTION SIX

Disability Equality Standards

Introduction

In February 1995, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) published a document entitled "Racial Equality Means Quality"[11] that sets out standards for racial equality for Local Government in England and Wales. As of March 1996, sixty Local Authorities have adopted the standard.

The CRE outlined the case for action on racial equality. They devised the Standards to link in closely with relevant legislation on racial equality. They

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[11] The Commission for Racial Equality's "*Standard for Racial Equality for Local Government in England and Wales*" is available from: Central Books, 99 Wallis Road, London E9 5LN, Tel. (0181) 9864854

also highlighted the positive benefits of implementing the Standards as: enhancing local democracy and accountability; enhancing customer satisfaction; understanding customer needs; using people's talents to the full; becoming an "employer of choice", enhancing the relationship with central government; avoiding the cost of discrimination.

The CRE also provides a checklist for Local Authorities to determine how successful their policies have been in terms of Commitment, Action and Outcomes to equal opportunities. This checklist gives indicators that Local Authorities can use under each of these three headings to assess the success of their current policies and to give indicators of measures which they can take to improve the current standing.

Along with the Northern Officer Group we believe the approach adopted by the CRE is an extremely positive and useful way forward in the development of policies and standards for employer organisations to take in relation to equal opportunities. We have therefore based our standards on the model created by the CRE but have modified it to address specific issues relating to employer organisations, employment and disabled people.

The following checklist and measurements should be used for your xxxxxx to identify action you can take to ensure your policies and practice on disability issues do not discriminate against disabled employees.

Checklist

Employers should be able to demonstrate:

- COMMITMENT
- ACTION
- OUTCOMES

COMMITMENT

Does your organisation have the following?

A written disability equality policy clearly linked to the xxxxxx's Direction Statement and that reflects the standards contained in this document.

A member's committee with overall responsibility for disability equality policy implementation.

A high public profile for that policy.

An action or implementation plan covering:

- Senior Management's role.
- Responsibilities and resources.
- Desired outcomes and targets.
- Timetables and time scales.
- Methods for measuring progress.
- Methods for consultation with employees.
- Regular communication and publicity of the policy and action plan to:
    Employees.
    Applicants for jobs, advice and grants.
    Suppliers of goods and services.
    Recognised consultative forums.
    The public.

ACTION

Internal

Does the xxxxxx do the following?

- Collect information relating to disabled people on:

  All aspects of its personnel practice.
  Staff in post.
  Applicants for jobs, promotion and training.
  The population it serves.
  Applicants and those tendering for business contracts.

- Use the information to:

  Guide and target its personnel policy.
  Establish norms against which to measure performance and targets.
  Identify shortfalls in service provision and delivery, and the reasons for these.
  Feed these data into a review procedure.
  Improve performance.

- Review in detail:

  Recruitment and all personnel functions.
  Job criteria, against the requirement of the job.
  Staff selection methods, including tests, against required performance.
  Training needs.
  Promotion routes and procedures.

- Train and educate:

  All staff in the effective implementation of the action plan, including:
    Managers.
    Personnel and equal opportunities staff.
    Recruitment and selection personnel.
    Trainers.
    Service delivery staff.
    Customer care staff.

- Develop the potential of disabled staff, particularly where under represented, including action such as:

    Mentoring schemes.
    Shadowing schemes.
    Networking.
    Training to enable disabled staff to apply for work in particular areas of jobs, or at particular grades.

External

Does the xxxxxx do the following?:

- Reach out to the community and service users, and build partnerships, including:

    Providing work experience opportunities.
    Cooperating with other employers in developing and sharing good practice, including participating in local employers' equal opportunities networks.
    Initiating or participating and pre employment training schemes.
    Providing staff, and other resources to community groups.
    Encouraging suitably qualified disabled person led businesses to tender for the supply of goods or services.
    Requiring organisations on contracts to achieve minimum disability equality standards.
    Sponsoring community projects with a disability equality dimension.
    Offering equal access to financial support for disabled person's voluntary sector.
    Promoting awareness of the xxxxxx's disability equality policies, to develop accountability to those it serves.
    Providing a comprehensive service for the provision of accessible information.

OUTCOMES

Has the xxxxxx been able to demonstrate outcomes through procedures and action such as the following?

Improved representation of disabled people at all levels.
A broader skills and experience base in the workforce.
Improved employee understanding of relevant disability equality issues.
Greater commitment from disabled staff.
An enhanced reputation as an equal opportunities employer.
Increased output and productivity as disability harassment is tackled effectively.
Staff are comfortable with, and clear about, their rights and responsibilities.

Some Indicators

Disabled Person's Equality - Policy and Planning

1. All employees, service users, contractors and organisations that come into contact with the xxxxxx are aware of its equality action programme for disabled people.
2. The internal consultation processes ensure that all employees are informed of the value of equal opportunity, and are committed to that policy.
3. The xxxxxx is able to evaluate progress towards achievement of its equality objectives for disabled people.

Standards for Equality

Disability Equality - Policy and Planning

Level	Indicator	Action Required
1	Establish written policies based on the social model of disability. Ensure that the written policy is in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and relevant Codes of Practice.	
2	Endorse an action plan, flowing from policy. Ensure the action plan requires systematic activity to identify and remove disabling barriers within all departments. Set up a defined organisational structure, with resources for policy implementation and review. Consult staff on content of policy. Use relevant external data (for example, the Census, work force disabled person's profiles, consumer surveys, etc.) to inform policy. Establish disability monitoring systems.	
3	Feed results of consultation with employees into review and targeting. Define equality targets or outcomes that are specific, measurable, realistic and timetabled. Report monitoring of targets to a policy review mechanism. Extend the policy and monitoring systems to suppliers of services through the contracting procedure. Deliver management training programmes to reinforce commitment to, and the effectiveness of, the policy. Make provision in the equality policy for the needs of disabled people who may simultaneously be discriminated against on grounds such as sex, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc.	

4	Build 'equality for disabled people' objectives into the job descriptions and performance indicators of senior management, and ensure these are subject to the standard appraisal process. Analyse monitoring reports regularly and change practices, demonstrable outcomes and review plans as necessary. Publicise the policy and its success, internally and externally. Feed regular reports on progress into committees, for review and targeting. Use an appropriate and independent mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of policy implementation, as part of the policy review.	
5	Build disability equality objectives into the job description and performance indicators of all managerial staff and ensure these are subject to standard appraisal process. Act as an exemplar of equality for disabled people in the educational field, share experiences with other Universities, and provide support for them in the development of their own policy and practice. Build and support disability equality networks with other health service providers at regional, national and international level.	

Some Indicators

Disabled Person's Equality - Employment (Recruitment and Selection)

1. Applicants are drawn from a better, wider pool with greater opportunity for disabled people to apply for promotion, and for individuals in under represented groups to compete on equal terms.
2. Managers and staff think more clearly about job and skill requirements.
3. Selection decisions are more cost-effective as they result in lower rates of staff turnover.
4. Efficiency increases as recruitment procedure improves the match of applicants' skills to the needs of particular jobs.
5. Fewer supportable complaints about unfair recruitment.

Standards for Equality

Disability Equality - Employment (Recruitment and Selection)

Level	Indicator	Action Required
1	Make clear to recruiters and selectors the need for non disabling practices. Avoid restricting publicity for vacancies and opportunities to sources that would provide a narrow range of applicants. Use a well-designed, standard application form, available in a number of formats. Ensure that Job descriptions and selection criteria are clear and explicit. Make all procedures comply with the DDA.	

2	Take steps to encourage disabled applicants in areas where they are under represented. Ensure information for applicants is potentially available in different formats. Ensure adverts are placed where disabled people are most likely to see them. Set up mechanisms for collecting data on disabled applicants and recruits. Give detailed guidance and training to shortlisting panels, interviewers etc. on: the Social Model of disability including definitions of 'disability' and 'disabled person'; on the duty of employers to make adjustments. Ensure that recruiters are aware of 'Access To Work', 'PACTs' etc. Avoid the potential for bias in selection, for example asking candidates about their impairment. Establish a policy for checking job descriptions to ensure they are not disabling. Ensure mechanisms are in place for the provision of interpreters or facilitators at interviews. Ensure disabled applicants are not required to have a medical examination as a condition of securing employment if it is not necessary for the job they are applying for. Ensure training courses/opportunities are accessible to disabled people.	
3	Analyse all data on applications and appointments and use findings in the review process to establish targets. Take action to deal with causes of disparate impact, including: basing selection tests on criteria that are empirically validated; ensuring all candidates are well prepared for test taking, including adequate guidance and practice materials and training, if appropriate; ensure tests adequately reflect the needs of the post and do not disabled people with impairments. Observe strict caution in the use of any BPS psychometric testing procedure.	

4	Ensure job descriptions and requirements are not restrictive. Make changes to selection measures, including biodata tests, where unjustified disparate impact is shown. Take additional steps to reach groups which are under represented. Set objectives for increasing the proportion of under represented groups at senior levels.	
5	Continually review and develop person specifications and applicant profiles to reflect the xxxxxx's overall approach. Ensure there is an increased recruitment and selection of disabled staff against defined targets.	

Some Indicators

Disabled Person's Equality - Employment (Developing and Retaining Staff)

1. There are increased opportunities for all staff to progress in the xxxxxx.
2. Training budgets are used more effectively.
3. There are reduced levels of absenteeism.
4. Staff are more willing to contribute ideas and volunteer solutions.
5. There is better team-working.
6. Service delivery is improved.

Standards for Equality

Disability Equality - Employment (Developing and Retaining Staff)

Level	Indicator	Action Required
1	Introduce the implications for employees of the equality policy for disabled people, and the Code of Practice in Employment of Disabled People in staff induction. Inform new staff about established networks and support groups. Incorporate equality for disabled people principles into training plans for all staff.	

2	Set up procedures that contribute to a fair and effective working environment, covering policies such as: Grievance procedure Disciplinary procedure Protection against harassment and victimisation of disabled employees Training Staff Appraisal Religious and cultural needs Health and safety policies Consider adapting and using flexible working, part-time and job sharing agreements at all levels. Ensure leave arrangements recognise changing circumstances. Consider the availability of job restructuring eg. re allocation of non key tasks. Provide a policy on job reviews to identify core tasks where retention is an issue. Ensure that policies on redundancy or unfair dismissal do not disabled people with impairments.	
3	Ensure training and development initiatives are equally available to disabled employees. Ensure promotion procedures are accessible and open to disabled people. Provide training for managers on the detailed implementation of the disability equality programme, including individual action plans, with updates in light of legal and other developments. Meet specific training needs, where applicable, to develop particular skills. Provide development training as part of an overall plan to enhance skills for all groups. Use data on disabled people to monitor the numbers leaving the xxxxxx and ensure the workforce reflects the make up of the local community.	

4	Set up schemes to support the particular needs of disabled staff as part of staff development, for example: Mentoring Shadowing Self help networks and access to other relevant networks Establish consultation mechanisms to elicit feedback and ideas from staff, including disabled staff, on the programme. Include in line managers' appraisal evaluations of action taken to retain and develop disabled staff.	
5	Recognise and encourage the involvement of employees in the wider community. Achieve higher retention and career progression rates for all disabled staff. Over time, ensure fewer grievance and disciplinary actions are registered on disability equality grounds. Ensure the xxxxxx becomes an exemplar of good employment practice, sharing its experience and supporting employer organisations to develop their own good practice. Build and support disability equality networks with other xxxxxxs at regional, national and international level.	

Some Indicators

Disabled Person's Equality - Marketing and Corporate Image

1. All staff, and potential staff, are aware of the equality policy relating to disabled people.
2. Greater coverage of the xxxxxx's policy in the media, including media aimed at disabled people.
3. The xxxxxx is seen as a standard setter for equality for disabled people.

Standards for Equality

Disability Equality - Marketing and Corporate Image

Level	Indicator	Action Required
1	Provide the disability equality policy statement to all staff, applicants and new recruits. Advise staff of the basic provisions of the DDA and relevant Codes of Practice. Draw out the implications of the disability equality policy in the staff handbook, recruitment literature and induction training. Make clear the xxxxxx's commitment to the Social Model of Disability in advertisements, recruitment materials and procedures and staff training and counselling.	

2	Advertisements and recruitment literature positively reflect disability equality and diversity in text and illustrations; they are checked for disability discriminatory criteria and unwelcoming images. Inform external bodies, including employment agencies consultants, and contractors of the policy and its requirements. All staff receive literature advising them of their rights and responsibilities under the disability equality policy, for example, the duty not to discriminate, the right to be protected from harassment on the grounds of disability etc. Provide guidance for key staff on the implications of the policy for selection training and management. The xxxxxx's mission statement reflects the commitments of the disability equality policy.	
3	Relate appraisal linked performance indicators for all media and communications staff to promoting disability equality. Involve appropriate disabled staff integrally at high profile public events. Higher management act as 'ambassadors' to promote disability equality objectives, and share good practice at external events, for example, conferences, media interviews, public statements etc.	

SECTION SEVEN
Useful Information and Contacts for Employers

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

The documents listed below provide information to employers on many aspects of the DDA. The documents in this section can be ordered in any of the following ways:

1) Writing to DDA Information, FREEPOST MID02164, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9BR

2) Calling 0345 622 688 any time to order through a recorded ordering system. Please have the reference number of the document/s you want to order.

3) Calling 0345 622 633 if you prefer to speak to an operator. Again, please have the reference number of the document/s you want to order.

4) Calling the Text Phone service on 0345 622 644. This service is for people with a hearing impairment only. Again, please have the reference number of the document/s you want to order.

More up-to-date information, including a catalogue of the booklets, factsheets and information available may be obtained by:

1a) Writing to Disability on the Agenda, FREEPOST, London, SE99 7EQ

2a) Calling 0345 622 633

3a) Calling Text Phone service on 0345 622 644. This service is for people with a hearing impairment only.

Disability Discrimination Act Information Pack (April 1995)
This pack contains a more detailed guide to the contents of the Disability Discrimination Act. The full pack consists of eight leaflets - these can be ordered as a pack or separately.

Ref No.	*Format*
DL50	Pack of eight booklets
DL51	Audio cassette
DL52	Braille
DL60	Definition of Disability leaflet
DL70	Employment leaflet
DL80	Access to Goods, Facilities and Services leaflet
DL100	Education leaflet
DL110	Public Transport Vehicles leaflet
DL120	National Disability Council leaflet

What employers need to know

This document give practical information for employers on how to comply with the DDA. They provide examples of actions that are both lawful and unlawful under the Act.

Ref No.	*Format*
DL170	Booklet
DL171	Audio Cassette
DL172	Braille

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 - Are you facing employment discrimination? (November 1996)

This document gives details on how to make a complaint to an Industrial Tribunal and highlights other means by which a dispute can be resolved. It covers questions procedure, a compromise agreement, and information of where to obtain further information and advice.

Ref No.	*Format*
DL180	Booklet

The questions procedure (November 1996)

This document contains a questionnaire and reply forms (guidance notes are included on their completion) which an individual can use to ask an employer's reasons for their treatment, or failure to make a reasonable adjustment.

Ref No.	*Format*
DL56	Booklet
DL57	Audio cassette
DL58	Braille

FACTSHEETS

The following factsheets summarise specific points contained in the DDA.

Ref No.	*Description*
DX1	Definition of Disability.
DX11	General Description of Employer's Duties.
DX12	Reasonable Adjustment.
DX13	Who is/is not covered by the Employment Provisions?

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PUBLICATIONS

The following documents should be available free of charge from your local PACT office or from the Disability Employment Advisor at your nearest Job Centre.

Employing People with Disabilities (PGP2)
Presents the business case for employing disabled people.

Flying High..... encounters with ability (PGP5) (VID)
An excellent video presenting the business case for employing disabled people.

Sources of Information and Advice (PGP6)
A very useful guide.

Access to Work (PGP11)
An introduction to the Employment Service Access to Work Scheme.

Job Introduction Scheme (PGP 8)
Presents the JIS.

Offering Job Opportunities in Supported Employment (PGP 9)
A very useful introduction to the SPS.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Guide to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Caroline Gooding, Blackstone Press, £14.95.
An excellent guide, with the text of the Act. Every equality officer should have a copy.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Local Government Information Unit £15 (£7.50 for LGIU members).
Excellent on putting the new law into practice.

Employers' Action File, Employers' Forum on Disability, £110.
A comprehensive and practical guide to attracting, retaining and recruiting disabled employees.

Individual Employment Rights - ACAS Conciliation between Individuals and Employers, Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service.
Free from: ACAS Reader Ltd, PO Box 16, Earl Shilton, LEICESTER, LE9 8ZZ Tel 01455 852225

Industrial Tribunal Procedures, Department of Trade and Industry.
Free from JobCentres.

Disability and Work Labour Research Department £1.60 (£10 non labour movement organisations).
A guide to issues concerning disabled workers, with examples of good practice.

Disability Rights Handbook, Disability Alliance £8.95.
The best guide to rights, benefits and services for people with disabilities and their families.

Disabled People in Britain, Colin Barnes, BCODP £11.25.
The best description of the discrimination faced by disabled people, and the case for anti discrimination legislation.

A Sure Sign (subtitled and signed), Sign Language Information Centre, £16 (Discounts for bulk orders).
A video that will be of interest to all deaf people and trade unionists, on why trade unions should make themselves accessible to deaf workers.

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

DARAS - The Disability Access Rights Advice Service

DARAS is a new service that aims to advise disability advisors about the provisions, rights and requirements of the DDA. It is run by Deloitte and Touche Consulting Group in association with National Consumer Council Services Ltd. DARAS also intends to establish a User Advisory Council to network with organisations that will be using its services.

DARAS can be contacted at:

Unit 99, Bow House Business Centre, 153-159 Bow Road, London E3 2SE.

Telephone	0345 585 445	
Text Phone	0354 585 447	Only for people with a hearing impairment
Fax	0354 585 446	

Disability in Business

Disability in Business provides a free business information line for employers who wish to find out more about the DDA. It is run by British Gas, the Employers' Forum on Disability, Royal National Institute for the Blind, and Scope.

Disability in Business can be contacted 9.30am to 4.30pm weekdays by phone:

Telephone:	0800 100 100
Minicom	0800 521 954

British Council of Disabled People

The BCODP is the national disabled person's movement.

They can be contacted at:

Litchurch Plaza, Litchurch Lane, Derby DE24 8AA

Tel 01332 295 551

Disability Resource Team

DRT can provide assistance in making meetings accessible - such as braille and large type transcription of documents - and disability awareness training and consultancy.

They can be contacted at:

Bedford House, 125-133 Camden High Street, London NW1 7JR

Tel 0171 482 5299

Employers' Forum on Disability

EFD brings together employers with a commitment to equal opportunities for disabled people, and promotes best practice. EFD is the only national employment organisation concerned exclusively with employment and training of people with disabilities. The Forum aims to improve job prospects of disabled people by making it easier for employers to recruit, retain and develop disabled employees.

They can be contacted at:

Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Street, London, SE1 2NY

Tel 0171 403 3020
Fax 0171 403 0404

Employment Medical Advisory Service

EMAS provides free advice about the placement and return to work of people with health problems and disabilities.

They can be contacted at:

1 Chepstow Place, London, W2 4TF

Tel 0171 221 0870

MENCAP

MENCAP is a charity that campaigns for people with learning difficulties and their families.

123 Golden Lane, London, EC1Y 0RT

Tel 0171 454 0454

MIND

MIND campaigns for the rights of people with mental illness.

They can be contacted at:

Granta House, 15-19 Broadway, London, E15 4BQ

Tel 0181 519 2122

National League of the Blind and Disabled

A TUC affiliated union, all of whose members are disabled.

They can be contacted at:

2 Tenterden Road, London, N17 8BE

Tel 0181 808 6030

Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation

RADAR offers employment advice and information.

They can be contacted at:

12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London, EC1V 8AF

Tel 0171 250 3222

Royal National Institute for Deaf People

RNID campaigns for deaf people's rights, and offers advice, information and services, including Deaf Awareness Training. RNID can offer advice on adjustments that may enable deaf people to do various jobs.

They can be contacted at:

19-23 Featherstone Street, London, EC1Y 8SL

Tel 0171 296 8000

Royal National Institute for the Blind

RNIB campaigns and provides services for blind people. RNIB can offer advice on adjustments that may enable blind people to do various jobs.

They can be contacted at:

224 Great Portland Street, London, W1N 6AA

Tel 0171 388 1266

Scope

Scope campaigns for people with cerebral palsy. It can provide advice and information.

They can be contacted at:

12 Park Crescent, London, W1N 4EQ

Tel 0171 636 5020

Sign Language Information Centre

SLIC provides information about BSL interpretation. You can book interpreters through SLIC.

They can be contacted at:

31 High Street, Carluke, ML8 4AL

Tel 01555 770297

Spinal Injuries Association

SIA is a campaigning organisation controlled by people with spinal injuries.

They can be contacted at:

New Point House, 76 St James' Lane, London N10 3DF

Tel 0181 444 2121

Appendices

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5.0 Northern Officer Group

Although the booklet is the product of the hard work and commitment from many members of the Northern Officer Group, the responsibility for errors, omissions and mistakes lies with the editors.

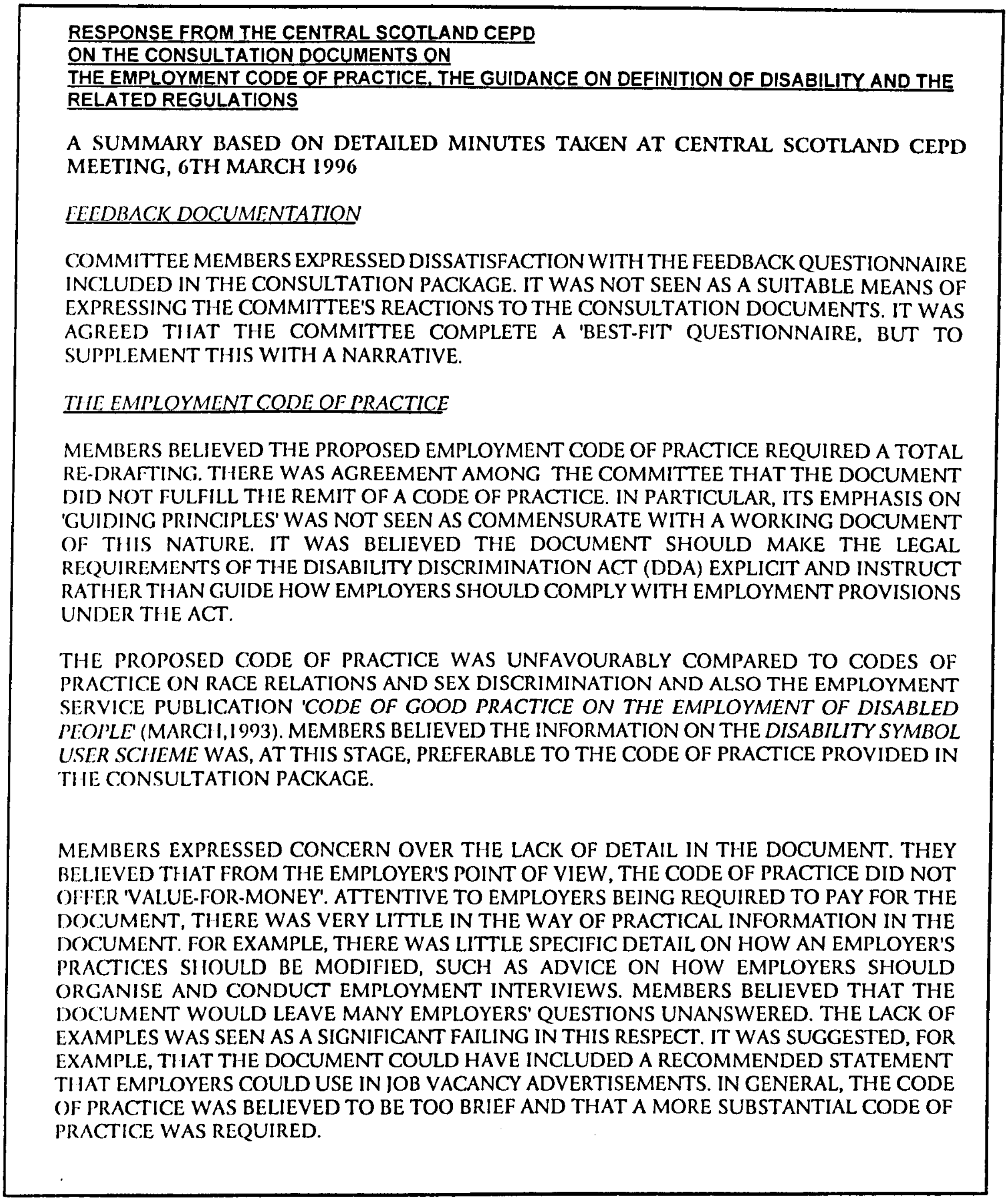
INDEX

[This will be completed for the final draft]

Copies available from Paul S. Duckett, Psychology Department, Stirling University
Printed at University of Stirling, April 1997

APPENDIX THREE (B)

Report written for CEPD for Consultation on the Disability Discrimination Act



RESPONSE FROM THE CENTRAL SCOTLAND CEPD ON THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS ON THE EMPLOYMENT CODE OF PRACTICE, THE GUIDANCE ON DEFINITION OF DISABILITY AND THE RELATED REGULATIONS

A SUMMARY BASED ON DETAILED MINUTES TAKEN AT CENTRAL SCOTLAND CEPD MEETING, 6TH MARCH 1996

FEEDBACK DOCUMENTATION

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH THE FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDED IN THE CONSULTATION PACKAGE. IT WAS NOT SEEN AS A SUITABLE MEANS OF EXPRESSING THE COMMITTEE'S REACTIONS TO THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE COMMITTEE COMPLETE A 'BEST-FIT' QUESTIONNAIRE, BUT TO SUPPLEMENT THIS WITH A NARRATIVE.

THE EMPLOYMENT CODE OF PRACTICE

MEMBERS BELIEVED THE PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT CODE OF PRACTICE REQUIRED A TOTAL RE-DRAFTING. THERE WAS AGREEMENT AMONG THE COMMITTEE THAT THE DOCUMENT DID NOT FULFILL THE REMIT OF A CODE OF PRACTICE. IN PARTICULAR, ITS EMPHASIS ON 'GUIDING PRINCIPLES' WAS NOT SEEN AS COMMENSURATE WITH A WORKING DOCUMENT OF THIS NATURE. IT WAS BELIEVED THE DOCUMENT SHOULD MAKE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT (DDA) EXPLICIT AND INSTRUCT RATHER THAN GUIDE HOW EMPLOYERS SHOULD COMPLY WITH EMPLOYMENT PROVISIONS UNDER THE ACT.

THE PROPOSED CODE OF PRACTICE WAS UNFAVOURABLY COMPARED TO CODES OF PRACTICE ON RACE RELATIONS AND SEX DISCRIMINATION AND ALSO THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PUBLICATION *'CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE'* (MARCH,1993). MEMBERS BELIEVED THE INFORMATION ON THE *DISABILITY SYMBOL USER SCHEME* WAS, AT THIS STAGE, PREFERABLE TO THE CODE OF PRACTICE PROVIDED IN THE CONSULTATION PACKAGE.

MEMBERS EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE LACK OF DETAIL IN THE DOCUMENT. THEY BELIEVED THAT FROM THE EMPLOYER'S POINT OF VIEW, THE CODE OF PRACTICE DID NOT OFFER 'VALUE-FOR-MONEY'. ATTENTIVE TO EMPLOYERS BEING REQUIRED TO PAY FOR THE DOCUMENT, THERE WAS VERY LITTLE IN THE WAY OF PRACTICAL INFORMATION IN THE DOCUMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WAS LITTLE SPECIFIC DETAIL ON HOW AN EMPLOYER'S PRACTICES SHOULD BE MODIFIED, SUCH AS ADVICE ON HOW EMPLOYERS SHOULD ORGANISE AND CONDUCT EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS. MEMBERS BELIEVED THAT THE DOCUMENT WOULD LEAVE MANY EMPLOYERS' QUESTIONS UNANSWERED. THE LACK OF EXAMPLES WAS SEEN AS A SIGNIFICANT FAILING IN THIS RESPECT. IT WAS SUGGESTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE DOCUMENT COULD HAVE INCLUDED A RECOMMENDED STATEMENT THAT EMPLOYERS COULD USE IN JOB VACANCY ADVERTISEMENTS. IN GENERAL, THE CODE OF PRACTICE WAS BELIEVED TO BE TOO BRIEF AND THAT A MORE SUBSTANTIAL CODE OF PRACTICE WAS REQUIRED.

SOME MEMBERS BELIEVED EMPLOYERS WOULD BE FRIGHTENED BY THE CODE OF PRACTICE, AND THAT DUE TO THE SENSITIVE NATURE OF THE TOPIC, ONE CHARACTERISED BY WIDESPREAD STIGMA AND SOCIAL STEREOTYPES, WOULD BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR CLARIFICATION.

MEMBERS FELT THE DOCUMENT LACKED STRUCTURE. A CONTENTS PAGE AND/OR INDEXING WAS VIEWED AS AN IMPORTANT SECTION OF ANY DOCUMENT OF THIS NATURE. IT WOULD ASSIST THE READER TO NAVIGATE THROUGH THE ISSUES RAISED. FURTHER, THE CONTENT OF THE DOCUMENT WAS NOT SEEN AS COHERENTLY ORGANISED, WITH TOPICS 'JUMPING AROUND', AND LACKING CONNECTIVITY. IT WAS BELIEVED THAT THE READER WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN FINDING OUT THE INFORMATION THEY REQUIRED DUE TO THESE FAILINGS. FURTHER, THE WRITING STYLE WAS VIEWED, AT TIMES, AS AMBIGUOUS OR UNNECCESSARILY VAGUE. THIS WAS SEEN TO BE PARTICULARLY THE CASE IN THE LACK OF CLARITY ON PAGE FOUR, PARAGRAPH THREE.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS, WHO HAD FAMILIARISED THEMSELVES WITH THE EMPLOYMENT PROVISIONS OF THE DDA, COULD NOT SEE HOW THIS LEGISLATION HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO THE PROPOSED CODE OF PRACTICE - THE TWO APPEARED TO SOME MEMBERS TO BE UNRELATED. THEY BELIEVED THE CODE OF PRACTICE ACTUALLY MYSTIFIED RATHER THAN CLARIFIED THE PROVISIONS OF THE DDA.

A CRITICISM WAS VOICED CONCERNING THE PERSPECTIVE FROM WHICH THE DOCUMENT WAS WRITTEN. ONE MEMBER STATED THAT THE CODE OF PRACTICE APPEARED TO PROMOTE A REACTIVE STANCE - TO HELP EMPLOYERS GET OUT OF COMPROMISING SITUATIONS, RATHER THAN ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS TO BE PRO-ACTIVE IN ADDRESSING DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION. IT ALSO VOICED THE HYPOTHESISED CONCERNS OF EMPLOYERS AND DID NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF EMPLOYEES. THUS, IT GAVE LITTLE INFORMATION FOR THE JOB APPLICANT CONCERNING HIS/HER EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS.

THE USE OF THE PHRASE ON PAGE TWO, PARAGRAPH THREE '*VERY LIKELY NOT* CONCERNING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TAKING MORE SICK LEAVE WAS VIEWED AS UNWARRANTED. MEMBERS FELT THE SENTENCE SHOULD BE REPHRASED '...ASSUMPTION THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE MORE LIKELY TO TAKE SICK LEAVE IS A STEREOTYPE AND *IS NOT* MATERIAL.' THIS WAS MORE GENERALLY VIEWED TO BE INDICATIVE OF THE DOCUMENT AS A WHOLE. THE STANCE OF THE DOCUMENT APPEARED TO MEMBERS TO BE PORTRAY DISABILITY MORE NEGATIVELY THAN POSITIVELY. THIS WAS FELT TO BE INCONGRUOUS WITH THE COMMITTEE'S OWN STANCE CONCERNING DISABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT, ONE THAT EMPHASISED THE POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

MEMBERS SAW THE DOCUMENT AS FAILING TO ENCOURAGE ORGANISATIONS WITH LESS THAN TWENTY EMPLOYERS TO ADOPT POSITIVE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

THE GUIDANCE ON DEFINITION OF DISABILITY AND RELATED REGULATIONS

CONCERNS WERE RAISED OVER THE DOMINANCE OF MEDICAL DEFINITIONS OF DISABILITY OVER SOCIAL DEFINITIONS OF DISABILITY. THIS WAS VIEWED AS HAVING WIDE RAMIFICATIONS WITH THE LATTER SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY BEING ADVOCATED BY MOST ORGANISATIONS IN THE DISABILITY MOVEMENT. MANY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, WHO COMMITTEE MEMBERS HAD EXPERIENCE OF, WOULD NOT FALL UNDER THE REMIT OF THIS DEFINITION GUIDANCE. IN PARTICULAR, MEMBERS QUESTIONED THE DISTINCTIONS MADE IN THE DOCUMENT ON ADDICTIONS. MEMBERS FELT THIS SHOULD BE COVERED BY MENTAL HEALTH AND THUS SHOULD NOT BE EXCLUDED. FURTHER, THE EXCLUSION OF 'DELIBERATELY ACQUIRED DISFIGUREMENT' MEMBERS BELIEVED COULD RESULT IN CASES OF DAMAGE CAUSED BY COSMETIC SURGERY BEING EXCLUDED. FURTHER, DELIBERATE SELF-HARM, WHICH AGAIN MEMBERS PERCEIVED TO COME UNDER THE REMIT OF MENTAL HEALTH DEFINITION, WOULD BE WRONGLY EXCLUDED. THE MESSAGE THAT THE DOCUMENT

CONTAINED CONCERNING EMPLOYERS NOT BEING EXPECTED TO TOLERATE BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS WAS SEEN AS DISCRIMINATORY AGAINST PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES. MEMBERS WERE CONCERNED OVER THE GENERAL LEVEL OF CONFUSION IN THE AREA OF MENTAL HEALTH, AND BELIEVED THE DEFINITIONS ADOPTED IN THESE WORKING DOCUMENT COULD UNFAIRLY DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THIS POPULATION.

THE COMMITTEE BELIEVED THAT THE PRESENT BRITISH STANDARD ON ACCESS TO BUILDINGS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WAS NOT AN ADEQUATE BENCH-MARKS FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE DDA. A COMMITTEE MEMBER HAD PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF ACCESS DIFFICULTIES, AS A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY, TO A BUILDING REPORTED TO SATISFY THESE BUILDING REGULATIONS.

MEMBERS EXPRESSED CONFUSION OVER THE ISSUES CONCERNING 'LESSORS' CONTAINED IN THE RELATED REGULATIONS DOCUMENTATION. IT WAS FELT UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF SUCH LEGISLATIVE INTRICACIES, OR THAT SUCH DETAIL COULD HAVE BEEN COMMUNICATED MORE COMPREHENSIBLY. IN PARTICULAR, PARAGRAPH FORTY-TWO OF THE REGULATIONS WAS HIGHLIGHTED AS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.

CONCERNING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT, COMMITTEE MEMBERS FELT THAT AN EQUAL EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON WHAT A POTENTIAL EMPLOYEE CONSIDERS REASONABLE AS OPPOSED TO PLACING AN OVER-EMPHASIS ON THE EMPLOYERS PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT WOULD BE A REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT.

CONCLUSION

REACTIONS TO THE CONTENTS OF THE CONSULTATION PACKAGE WERE VERY NEGATIVE. DURING THE MEETING, STRONG FEELINGS WERE EXPRESSED CONCERNING THE INADEQUACIES OF THESE DOCUMENTS. THE CONCLUSION OF THE COMMITTEE WAS THAT THESE PROPOSED WORKING DOCUMENTS BE RE-DRAFTED IN LINE WITH EXISTING CODES OF PRACTICE IN THE AREAS OF RACE RELATIONS AND SEX DISCRIMINATION. MEMBERS BELIEVED THAT THE CODE OF PRACTICE SHOULD FORGO CONCERNS OVER BREVITY IN ORDER TO REDRESS THE NEED FOR CLEAR AND PRECISE DETAIL OF THE DDA PROVISIONS. FURTHER, THE COMMITTEE EXPRESSED DEEP RESERVATIONS OVER THE GUIDELINES CONCERNING DEFINITIONS OF DISABILITY IN PARTICULAR,, THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES.

APPENDIX THREE (C)

Report written for CEPD relating to consultation on the future of CEPDs

A Report on the Activities of the Central Scotland Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities

Paul S. Duckett
Department of Psychology
University of Stirling

Presented to the Central Scotland CEPD
31st January 1996

SUMMARY

In this paper I report on my involvement, as a researcher, with the Central Scotland Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities. I offer a qualitative insight into the committee's activities over a period of fourteen months. I give an overview of the issues and topics raised at committee meetings. Further, I offer my analysis of the committee's efficacy in promoting the employment opportunities for people with disabilities. I place my analysis of the planning and realisation of committee events against a backdrop of theories on decision-making processes and minority group influence. In my conclusions I assert the reactive nature of the committee to the present political climate concerning disability employment rights. My analysis leads me to anticipate the success of the committee's continued involvement in the field of disability and employment. This paper was prompted by a government consultation exercise on the Disability Discrimination Act.

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROJECT

In February 1993, the Central Scotland Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities (CEPD) contacted the Principal at the University of Stirling. They requested research into the difficulties experienced by people with disabilities at employment interview. This followed the committee's concern that people with disabilities in Central Scotland were getting job interviews, but were not getting jobs. The request was passed on to David Fryer in the University's Department of Psychology. Early in 1994, David and I submitted a successful application for research funding from the Economic and Social Research Council for a three-year project. The project was to be based on the research question originally posed by the CEPD. Part of the research involved becoming familiar with the workings of the CEPD, and during this process I collected qualitative data on the activities of this committee.

HOW I COLLECTED AND ANALYSED THE DATA

During the first fourteen months of the research project, I attended seven CEPD meetings, three CEPD working group meetings and three CEPD events. The events included a workshop, a dinner/talk and an exhibition. The following analysis is based on field notes I took at CEPD meetings and events, and CEPD committee minutes taken by a Disability Employment Advisor who attended each meeting. I analysed the data using '*NUD*IST*' - a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis system.

In presenting my summary of the committee's activities, I offer an overview of the main issues prevalent in my field notes and CEPD minutes. My personal assessment of the efficacy of CEPD events is based on my observations of CEPD meetings, CEPD working groups and CEPD events. I have set this analysis against a backdrop of theoretical work in the fields of group decision making processes and minority group influence.

THE COMMITTEE

The committee comprised of fourteen individuals. This included the committee chairman, committee secretary and thirteen committee members. Four committee members were employer representatives. The remaining ten members represented employees. Three of the committee members were people with disabilities.

ISSUES RAISED AT CEPD MEETINGS

I have given a description of the main themes of the CEPD meetings I attended. Through describing the general themes, and excluding specific details of issues raised, I have sought to offer an insight into the sequence of issues addressed at these meetings.

Meeting One

The first CEPD meeting I observed was held in September 1994. The meeting was attended by the CEPD chairman, CEPD secretary, and eight CEPD committee members. Five nonmembers were also present, including myself, David Fryer, the Employment Service (ES) District Manager, and a Disability Employment Advisor (DEA). The first group of issues occurred in the secretary's report to the committee. These issues concerned the activities of the local PACT team - the number of job placements achieved by the PACT team. A theme that subsequently developed was PACT's recruitment of local employers to the Disability Symbol User scheme. This theme of recruitment was extended when the issue of planning forthcoming CEPD events was raised. The committee discussed the scope of employer organisations they hoped to reach. This led to issues concerning the government's consultation document on disability rights. Arising from this were concerns over the definition of disability, in particular the prevalence of stigma against disability in the attitudes of some local employer organisations. At the end of my notes from this meeting the theme of the CEPD's raison d'etre was raised. Their role as a marketing body was reaffirmed. From my field notes, no one theme appeared to dominate the meeting.

Meeting Two

The second meeting was held in October 1994. The meeting was attended by the CEPD chairman, CEPD secretary, seven CEPD members, a DEA and myself. The first issue raised was related to legislation. It concerned the government consultation document on legislation for disability rights. From this, the theme of the CEPD's raison d'etre arose. This involved the committee exploring and asserting their aims and objectives in the field of disability and employment. Also raised at this point were issues related to CEPD bureaucracy - the committee's present financial situation. Developing from this were issues concerning CEPD activities. This included the planning of the forthcoming CEPD workshop, strategies for recruiting workshop participants, and an exchange of ideas on future CEPD events. Subsequently, the committee addressed the issue of defining disability. In particular, this concerned the confusion prevalent in identifying disabilities. The topic of discussion changed with the presentation of the CEPD secretary's report. At this point, issues of legislation and disability benefits were introduced, though the issue of defining disability was still prevalent. Also, contained in the secretary's report were issues of PACT's activities and Disability Symbol use. The topic of discussion then turned to the ES 'Access to Work' policy. This was joined by issues of the general removal of barriers to employment and the use of assistive technologies in the work environment. Also raised were issues that highlighted the 'need' aspect of disability, i.e. people with disabilities were described in terms of their need for assistance in securing employment. At the end of my field notes, the issue of the CEPD's raison d'etre recurred. This concerned the committee comparing their own successes and achievements with other CEPDs in the country. From my notes the themes that I feel dominated were those of 'Access to Work', and the planning and general discussion of CEPD events. However, this dominance was not pronounced.

Meeting Three

The third meeting took place in December 1994. The meeting was attended by the CEPD chairman, CEPD secretary, eight CEPD members and myself. The discussion began with issues of CEPD bureaucracy - specifically the functioning of the National Advisory Council on Employment of People with Disabilities (NACEPD). This also broached issues of defining disability. The secretary's report then followed. During this, issues concerning PACT activities, and PACT bureaucracy were raised. These centred on the placement of individuals with disabilities into employment. Following this, issues of CEPD bureaucracy and the raison d'etre of both the CEPD and PACT were addressed. Much of the content of these issues concerned resources. The next issues to arise were those related to CEPD events, namely the previous month's workshop. This then raised the issue of Disability Symbol use and again of the CEPD's raison d'etre - specifically concerning justification of the CEPD's continued existence. The topic of CEPD events was then returned to involving the issue of participant recruitment. The issue of disability as characterised by an individual's need for assistance arose near to the end of my field notes, with the final entries being a return to legislative issues, the CEPD raison d'etre and bureaucracy. From my field notes, CEPD events appeared the dominant theme.

Meeting Four

The fourth meeting was held in February 1995. The meeting was attended by the CEPD chairman, CEPD secretary, seven CEPD members, a DEA, myself and a specialist career advisor. The first entry in my field notes was prompted by the secretary's report. This involved issues concerning PACT activities, in particular the 'Access to Work' scheme, legislative issues, the removal of barriers to employment, assistive technology and employment rehabilitation. Also, addressed were issues concerning forthcoming changes to disability benefits. The next coding to appear in my field notes was that of CEPD events, specifically the past workshop event. Discussion of this event involved issues concerning PACT recruitment and issues of defining disability, specifically the visibility of disabilities. Further issues raised included the Disability Symbol User scheme, issues concerning employment interviews and issues of defining disability that stressed an absence of abilities. Discussion then turned to issues of the CEPD's raison d'etre, comparing the efficacy of their own committee's activities with other CEPDs. There then followed a return to the topic of the CEPD workshop. This topic also involved the inclusion of issues of legislation, job type, and aspects of defining disability - including sensitivity of the subject matter, visibility, confusion and availability of information on disabilities. The CEPD's raison d'etre was then returned to almost simultaneously with a discussion on legislative issues. Again, this involved those aspects of defining disability that had arisen earlier. Also discussed were issues on job type, job training and employers' attitudes. The last coding in my field notes was of issues concerning legislation. The dominant issues coded in my notes were CEPD events and legislation. Also recurrent was the CEPD's raison d'etre, and to an extent, issues concerning defining disability.

Meeting Five

The fifth meeting was held in May 1995. The meeting was attended by the CEPD chairman, CEPD secretary, ten CEPD members, the ES district manager, a DEA and myself. The first issue coded in my field notes concerned CEPD events, specifically the workshop. This further included the theme of recruitment through discussing the need to maintain contact with workshop attendees. The CEPD secretary then gave a report that involved issues related to un/employment statistics and PACT activities. Developed from this were issues concerning PACT bureaucracy, in particular the relationship between PACT and the Job Centre. Also at this point the issue of job type arose. Issues of PACT activities, in particular activities related to the 'Access to Work' scheme, were subsequently raised. This incorporated the additional themes of barrier removal and job type. The discussion then led to issues concerning benefit legislation and ES bureaucracy, specifically the relationship between the Benefits Agency and the ES. The issue of legislation then became prominent, involving aspects of CEPD bureaucracy, in particular the future role of CEPDs following the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Bill. Additional issues concerned the 'Access to Work' scheme, job interviews and employers' attitudes to disability. At the end of the meeting the continuing theme of legislation remained prevalent. The last issue I recorded in my field notes concerned the CEPD workshop. The theme dominant in the meeting was that of legislation. Also prevalent throughout were issues concerning CEPD bureaucracy and the CEPD's raison d'etre.

Meeting Six

The sixth meeting was held in August 1995. A list of people present was not available at the time of this write-up. The first issues prevalent in my field notes concerned PACT, disability benefits - with a discussion of the introduction of incapacity benefit - and definitions of disability. The next issue to arise was legislation, in particular the government's merger of the Department of Employment and the Department of Education. This led to a discussion of CEPD events and raison d'etre, with concerns of the role of the newly appointed Employment and Education Minister and the committee's anticipation of his attitude towards CEPDs. The issue of supported employment was then raised and, with the secretary's report, issues of the Disability Symbol User scheme. The topic of legislation was then reintroduced followed shortly after by a return to the issue of disability benefits and the role of PACT. When the issue of legislation was raised, the topic of the CEPD's raison d'etre was also prevalent. Further, the issue of employers' reactions to legislation was evident and the issue of 'Access to Work' was raised. As the discussion on legislation continued, concerns over the definition of disability and issues of PACT activities in relation to legislation were raised. With discussion on legislation continuing, the issue of defining disability again became prominent. The theme of CEPD events followed carrying through to the end of the meeting. This involved issues of employer organisations, definitions of disability - especially awareness of disability - and employment rehabilitation. The dominant issue in my field notes of the meetings were those related to legislation. Issues concerning CEPD events became dominant towards the end. Further, definitions of disability and the CEPD's raison d'etre arose frequently throughout.

Meeting Seven

The seventh meeting was held in October 1995. Attending were the CEPD chairman, CEPD secretary, eight CEPD members, a DEA and myself. The first issue identified in my field notes was that of CEPD bureaucracy - the recruitment of new CEPD members. Discussion then moved to the topic of CEPD activities. Issues concerning legislation also arose, namely the committee's role in the government consultation exercise on the Disability Discrimination Bill. A theme also prevalent at this point was the CEPD's raison d'etre. This was prompted by questions over the future of CEPDs raised by the Bill. The issue of CEPD events was then raised, specifically the previous successful events that they had organised. Discussion of the committee's raison d'etre was also evident at this point. The next group of issues to arise occurred during the secretary's report. These again returned to issues of legislation and the raison d'etre of the committee. This latter issue was quite a strong theme at this point in the meeting. Also arising at this point in the meeting was the topic of CEPD bureaucracy, in this case concerning the NACEPD. Issues concerning CEPD and PACT recruitment activities - proposals to network with other organisations - then arose. The next issue to appear in my field notes concerned supported employment initiatives. Legislation was again prominent in the discussion at this point. The issue of legislation then appeared alone, though being joined at one point by concerns over both defining disability and PACT activities. The topic of PACT activities centre on the promotion of the forthcoming Code of Good Practice. The issue of legislation continued, this time joined by the CEPD's raison d'etre, occurring in the form of the government consultation exercise and their role in promoting the Code of Good Practice. At this point in my field notes issues concerning CEPD events dominated - specifically the forthcoming CEPD exhibition. Also occurring at this point were issues of the CEPD's raison d'etre, CEPD participant recruitment for forthcoming events and issues of defining disability. This latter issue was particularly concerned with the promotion of awareness. The issues prevalent at the end of my field notes were those concerning employers' attitudes to disability, job type and identifying the presence of abilities when defining disability. Dominant themes in my field notes of the meeting as a whole were those of legislation and CEPD events. Further, the CEPD's raison d'etre was an issue that frequently arose.

MY CONCLUSIONS ON THE NATURE OF ISSUES RAISED AT CEPD MEETINGS

It is evident the committee addressed a wide range of issues throughout all seven meetings. Also evident from the issues discussed was the prominence of PACT activities and of definitions of disability. I suggest the former helped the committee to remain up-to-date with the general employment situation for people with disabilities in their region. I believe the latter suggests the importance and complexity of issues that concern definitions of disability. However, the codings from my field notes would suggest the topics discussed became more polarised in 1995. The planning of and feedback on CEPD events appeared to remain an important focus for CEPD meetings throughout the year, though the initial even distribution of issues prevalent late in 1994, where no one theme appeared to dominate, was less evident during meetings held in 1995. This is suggested by the prominence of certain issues during meetings three to seven. One issues that dominated was legislation. This is not surprising when one considers the committee's involvement in the consultation exercise concerning disability rights legislation during this period. This made additional demands on the committee's time. I would further suggest there was an increasing degree of insecurity within the CEPD. I argue this is evident in the dominance of issues involving the CEPD's raison d'etre. Often during meetings, and particularly in the latter half of 1995, topics would be addressed which in effect legitimised the committee's existence or reasserted the committee's aims and objectives. The committee appeared to become more inward looking and sought to re-affirm the legitimacy of their activities. Again, I feel this was unsurprising as the disability discrimination legislation at the centre of the consultation exercise questioned the future role of CEPDs in the field of disability and employment. In general, I feel the changes I observed in the nature of the issues addressed during committee meetings reflected the demands made on this organisation from the NACEPD and Department of Employment, and the reactive nature of the committee to the surrounding political climate.

DATA ON THE EFFICACY OF CEPD EVENTS

My assessment of the efficacy of the CEPD events I attended is based on field notes taken at three CEPD working group meetings, three CEPD events and seven CEPD committee meetings. At the time of making the field notes, I was not just an observer but also a participant. Thus, I was involved in the decision-making processes at meetings and participated in CEPD events. I make my assertions concerning the efficacy of these CEPD events against a backdrop of academic work in the field of group processes. I have adopted theories from two areas of social psychology. The first concerns group decision-making - specifically 'groupthink'. I use this theory to offer an assessment of the efficacy of the planning processes behind CEPD events. The second concerns theories of minority group influence. I use these to offer a perspective on the potential efficacy of the CEPD events.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PLANNING OF CEPD EVENTS

Janis (1972) believes that if a group's decision-making process is poor, then the outcome is often poor. Similarly, if a group's decision-making process is good, the outcome is often good. Therefore, an examination of CEPD decision-making processes concerning the planning of their events may offer a potential predictor to the outcome of their events. According to Janis, poor decision-making can be the result of a phenomenon she calls 'groupthink'. She lists several causes of this phenomenon. First, she cites the presence of high cohesiveness within the group or decision-making body. Second, she cites insularity from information and a lack of searches for alternate options that may come out with the group. Third, she cites the tendency for the negative stereotyping of outgroups, i.e. organisations that are not represented in their own group's membership. Her theory further suggests the decision-making process can be improved, by adopting certain strategies or 'antidotes'. I shall examine two of these antidotes to 'groupthink' in relation to my observations of the CEPD working groups and the CEPD committee meetings.
The first, and arguably the most important, antidote to 'groupthink' and an ingredient for a healthy decision-making process lays in the hands of the group leader or group facilitator. Janis states that 'groupthink' is reduced and the decision-making process improved if the leader adopts a neutral role and avoids stating their preferences too explicitly. She argues that the second antidote is to encourage the expression of minority or deviant perspectives during group discussions.

I feel these antidotes were prevalent in the CEPD meetings I attended. This was particularly so during a workshop planning group meeting. The meeting was attended by the CEPD secretary, two CEPD committee members and myself. The meeting lasted approximately three hours. The remit of the group was to establish the aims and objectives of the workshop and to develop a structure for the event. The group facilitator (the CEPD secretary) achieved a degree of neutrality in her role. I believe that the informality and neutrality of her approach to the meeting created an open forum for the exchange of ideas. This was evident in my field notes from the meeting that cited an even contribution of ideas from all those who attended. The CEPD secretary did not dominate her own ideas on the meeting. The plans for the workshop were established through mutual consensus. I believe the facilitator's role was instrumental in creating an atmosphere where a consensus was comfortably reached. In reviewing my field notes from this meeting I found little suggestion of conflict present in the discussion, and no indication of member's acquiescence to the group facilitator's input. Further, the final decision on the structure of the workshop came from two ideas presented to the group, one from myself and one from a CEPD member. At the time of the workshop planning I had only been involved with the committee for a period of eight weeks. In many respects I was still a newcomer. The suggestion I made was one that had not been explored before by the committee, specifically using focus groups in a CEPD event. As such, it could be viewed as a deviant perspective. This was also the case for the second idea presented by a CEPD member. Both ideas were adopted by the planning group and later by the committee as a whole. I believe this suggests that deviant perspectives were incorportated into the decision-making process of this meeting.

These antidotes to poor decision-making were also present in CEPD committee meetings. During these meetings, the role of group leader/facilitator was adopted by the CEPD chairman. From my field notes, it was initially evident that he frequently expressed his own opinions, at times doing so quite explicitly. He also adopted a directive role during meetings. His role was instrumental to the structure of each meeting. However, my data suggested that his role was not a dominating one. First, many contributions and initiatives concerning CEPD events came from CEPD members. The future direction that CEPD events should take and the planning of forthcoming events was based on ideas that more frequently emanated from the CEPD membership than from the CEPD chair. Thus, my field notes suggest that CEPD event planning during committee meetings was based on a good decision-making process. Indeed, during one committee meeting when the discussion turned to the planning of forthcoming events, the chairman recognised the danger of the decision-making powers residing with one or two individuals rather than with the group as a whole. The comment was made in humour though it does suggest he was aware of the need to share the decision-making process across the whole CEPD membership. He also explicitly asked for contributions from new committee members of and observers present at the meeting. He also often encouraged members to contribute freely to the discussion. I feel that the milieu the chairman created during these meetings was assisted by a particular aspect prevalent in all the meetings. That aspect was the prominence of humour. I feel the presence of humour helped to achieve a level of informality and openness in the meetings. I believe this created an atmosphere in which all members were afforded the opportunity to contribute to the decision-making process.

The expression of divergent perspectives was encouraged during event planning at committee meetings. For example, one member suggested that a future event should address the issue of mental health. The committee as a whole incorporated this perspective in their discussion on planning events despite the consensus being that this was a very difficult and potentially risky area to address. With a degree of heterogeneity evident in the CEPD membership, representing people with disabilities, employers and employees, the viewpoints of members were sufficiently disparate to ensure that a wide range of ideas was contributed. The importance placed on hearing the minority perspective and encouraging deviant views was also evident in the recruitment strategies the committee adopted for their events. An emphasis was placed on inviting participants as well as contributors to CEPD events from a diverse background. At one point during a committee meeting, a concern was voiced that a broad range of employer organisation should be represented in the selection of event contributors. The need to hear divergent perspectives was indeed the ethos behind one of the CEPD events. The main aim of the CEPD workshop was one of hearing the opinions and experiences of employers. This was an ethos also evident in other CEPD events. During a presentation at the CEPD exhibition, the floor was opened for questions from attendees. Future dinner/talks were planned to similarly open the floor for discussion and encourage debate between speakers and attendees. I feel that the presence of these concerns improved the decision-making processes at committee meetings.

Perhaps the most prominent example of the committee showing a willingness to incorporate divergent perspectives to the planning process of CEPD events was the decision to hold a joint event with a local regional council. However, this decision may have uncovered a symptom of 'groupthink' and, as such, a contaminatory element to the committee's decision-making process. Discussion of their event partner's involvement in the planning of the event was more negative than it was positive. There may have been genuine reasons for this other than a tendency to negatively stereotype outgroup organisations, but I would suggest the committee need to address the possibility of displaying this tendency in their decision-making processes.

CONCLUSIONS ON THE CEPD DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES DURING EVENT PLANNING

My observations of meetings where committee members planned forthcoming CEPD events suggested to me there were 'healthy' decision-making processes present. I believe the group leader/facilitator had an important role in this process. Further, this seemed the opinion of committee members when discussion turned to the activities of other CEPDs. The success or failure of these CEPDs was attributed to the roles of committee leaders/facilitators. I believe that committee meetings were conducted in an informal manner that encouraged the involvement and contributions of all CEPD members. The one possible area of concern, suggested from an analysis of my field notes, was the occurrence of committee members negatively stereotyping outgroups. I believe that if this recurs in future meetings, it may endanger the quality of the committee's decision-making activities.

REFLECTIONS ON THE REALISATION OF CEPD EVENTS

Moscovici (1976) argues that no majority group or organisation is wholly homogeneous, and that all contain divisions that can be exploited by minority groups. He suggests that minority groups can exert influence on majority groups if they act in a way that is sufficiently consistent and convincing. Divisions within the majority can be made explicit and can lead to conflict from which new majority norms may emerge. I argue that the disability movement faces this challenge. The disability movement has been described in terms of a minority group that seeks to challenge the norms of the majority, that of an 'able-bodied' society (Finkelstein, 1991). As the CEPD advocate and promote the employment rights of people with disabilities, they function in a similar minority situation. The majority norm of an 'able-bodied' society is the norm they are seeking to change. I therefore feel that it may be pertinent to view the CEPD events in light of the minority group strategies that Moscovici and others recommend. These strategies are seen to increase the influence minority groups have over majority norms, and have been supported by empirical work in the social sciences (re: Brown, 1988). I have offered a brief review of the CEPD events in light of Moscovici's minority group strategies, which he calls 'behaviour styles'. These styles include consistency, investment, autonomy and rigidity/flexibility. I have also viewed the events in light of two further factors that contribute to effective minority group influence. These are the importance of ingroup/outgroup status (Maas et al., 1982) and the process of private as opposed to public attitude change (Maas and Clark, 1983).

Consistency

Moscovici states that in order for a minority interest group to be influential it must exhibit consistency over time in order to convince those who hold majority norms that their stance has substance and is not, for example, a passing whim. In the case of this CEPD, soon after each event the committee contacted all those who had attended. This follow-up of event participants added a strong sense of consistency to their activities. During follow-up, the committee reiterated the message they sought to convey through the event to those who had participated. The committee placed an important role to this aspect of their activities and it was seen as an important strategy. A further suggestion of the committee's concern for adopting a consistent approach was highlighted at the individual level. During one CEPD committee meeting, members were reminded that they should show consistency through promoting the employment rights of people with disabilities through contact with their own employers, work colleagues and/or employees. This consistency also manifests itself in the recruitment strategies they adopted. When the committee came across an employer organisation who showed disinterest in attending a CEPD event, the committee would continue to seek their participation in future events. This was most markedly demonstrated in their recruitment strategy towards a particular employer in their region who, at times, had shown an almost hostile regard for the activities of the CEPD. Eventually, after continuous efforts, the committee recruited representatives from this organisation to attend a CEPD event. Through this, and the work of the local PACT team, they found a channel to transmit their concerns of the employment rights of people with disabilities to that organisation.

These examples of the committee placing an importance on the consistency of their approach may, however, have been compromised during the latter months of my observations of their activities. This threat was, to a certain extent, out of their hands. It involved the uncertainty felt by the committee over their future role in the arena of disability and employment pending the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act. I believe there was some evidence of this in the CEPD event I attended in November 1995. Any questions directed to members of the committee at the event concerning the role of the CEPD in the future could not be answered definitively. At that stage the committee's future was uncertain.

Investment and Autonomy

Moscovici states that where members of a minority interest group are seen by those who hold the majority norm to have made a personal or material sacrifice in adopting their stand, their influence over the majority will be strengthened. Further, Moscovici argues that a minority group perceived to be acting out of principle rather than self-interest is more likely to influence the majority's norms. The committee invested large reserves of time and energy in the planning and realisation of their events. This was initially evident in the amount time the committee invested to ensure a high degree of professionalism in their events. An example of this was the close attention to detail paid by the CEPD secretary over the exact wording of CEPD workshop invitations. I believe that those who attended CEPDs events gained the impression that considerable amounts of time and energy had been invested in the planning and realisation of each event. Additional to investment by the committee as a whole, the sacrifices made by individual committee members were evident. For example, at the CEPD exhibition, one CEPD member had taken time off from his business to attend the event, a period during which he had particularly taxing demands on his time. I found this type of personal commitment common to all members who attended these CEPD events.

Concerning autonomy, the committee had no direct self interest in the themes explored at CEPD events. The interests addressed at CEPD events were those of the participants. In the case of the workshop, it was the interests of the local business community that were emphasised. The committee sought to listen to their concerns on issues of disability and employment. At the CEPD dinner the interests of local businesses were again emphasised. This time the advantages to employers of recruiting people with disabilities into their organisation were high on the agenda. The theme of the CEPD exhibition concerned the interests of both local businesses and people with disabilities through clarifying the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act. I would argue that these interests were allowed to dominant due to the remit of the committee. The CEPD's interest was in the promotion of employment opportunities of people with disabilities. The role of the committee was very much an adversarial one, serving the interests of employees and employers. Further, membership of the committee was voluntary and unpaid. I feel that these factors contributed a degree of autonomy to the committee's involvement in the field of disability and employment. However, this may have been compromised by the committee's close relationship with PACT. They relied on PACT's resources in the form of secretarial support during the planning and staffing support during the realisation of CEPD events. Further, the statutory duties of the committee involved a high degree of connectivity with PACT and the ES in general. PACT operates under tough performance targets, being required to find a specific number of job placements for people with disabilities in their region in a specific period of time. Arguably, PACT could be perceived as acting out of self-interest rather than principle in their involvement with CEPD events, i.e. PACT's support of CEPD events may have helped them achieve their performance targets. In theory, this may have compromised the perceived autonomy of CEPD events.

Rigidity/flexibility

Moscovici asserts that an influential minority group is one that argues its case in a rigid manner. Mugny (1982) qualifies this by stating that the group must also avoid appearing dogmatic, and must appear open-minded while still arguing their case in a rigid manner. Thus, minority group theory would predict a group that strikes the right balance between being rigid and fair as one that would procure the most influence on a majority. I believe the committee displayed both rigidity and fairness during their events. An impression of rigidity was prevalent in the unremittent emphasis they placed on the contributions that people with disabilities make as employees and upon an emphasis on the abilities of people with disabilities. These were messages that characterised all three events I attended. I feel that the committee took the further important step in creating an impression of fairness and openness through the committee's decision to incorporate an open forum in their events. Though the committee had specific messages they sought to convey through their events, they avoided doing so dogmatically through actively creating a forum in which alternate opinions could be aired. As mentioned in an earlier section, the workshop placed an emphasis on hearing the experiences of employers. The exhibition incorporated a session of questions and answers following a presentation. Further, plans for a future dinner/talk event were centred on the concept of an open debate.

Ingroup/outgroup status

Maas et al., (1982) cite that when a majority perceives members of a minority interest group as sharing attributes common to themselves (ingroup status) the influence of that minority group is likely to be greater. Thus, if the distinction between the two groups is broken down, influence may be exerted more effectively. The CEPD placed an emphasis on breaking down the distinction between employers and potential employees with disabilities. The committee sought to encourage employers and employees with disabilities to mix socially. This was a strong theme in all the CEPD's events. It was highlighted in the committee's decision not to issue name badges to participants at two of their events. This helped to break down the barriers between employers and people with disabilities. It further allowed the committee to place an emphasis on the abilities of potential employees rather than on their disabilities. Further, the strong representation of CEPD members at CEPD events, a membership that included local employers, may also have promoted a degree of ingroup status with respect to the employers who attended. These CEPD members shared common attributes with employers at the event.

Internal change

It has been established that for effective minority influence to take place, change must occur in people's private as opposed to public opinions. An example of a public change of opinion would be an employer's use of the Disability Symbol in their marketing material. Though an employer may be fulfilling the requirements of being a Disability Symbol User, the employer may still privately hold discriminatory attitudes towards people with disabilities. Private change would have occurred if the employer altered his/her own personal opinions concerning the employment of people with disabilities, opinions that may or may not be expressed publicly. The strategy of CEPD events was, in many respects, targeted to change people's private opinions. This was evident in the emphasis placed on the social aspects of their events, seeking to exert influence at the intrapersonal level. Employers were confronted face to face by people with disabilities and, as such, some were confronted by their own prejudices. During the CEPD workshop the employers' personal feelings, thoughts and experiences were the focus of attention. Many activities during CEPD events required the self-reflection of participants. A strong element of face to face interaction presided all the events. I believe that this may have facilitated private attitude change and may have been a particularly appropriate strategy for the committee to adopt.

MY CONCLUSIONS ON THE EFFICACY OF CEPD EVENTS

Through viewing CEPD events against a backdrop of minority group influence theories, I would conclude the committee has incorporated into their events strategies that are effective in the promotion of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. My analysis would suggest the CEPD events incorporated elements that enhance the committee's influence on employer practices. However, I believe there are two threats to the influence this CEPD may have. These are the consistency and autonomy of the committee as perceived by those how attend their events. I believe the threat to consistency is directly attributable to the present development of legislation concerning disability employment rights. Specifically, the consultation exercise on the Disability Discrimination Act that presently questions the future of CEPDs. I feel the consistency already practiced by the committee and its past record of running successful events is at risk if the insecurity this legislative activity has created is not resolved. The second threat I have identified concerns the autonomy of the committee's activities. I believe that the involvement of PACT in these activities may have compromised the committee's perceived autonomy. I would not suggest that PACT should have less of a role in the CEPD activities. Indeed, their resources were important in ensuring that CEPD events could be realised. However, I would suggest that the committee needs to address the manner in which PACT's role in these events is perceived by those who attend the workshop.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

I have written this paper in reaction to the present government consultation process on the Disability Discrimination Act, specifically aspects that address the future of CEPDs. Issues concerning legislation dominated many of the conclusions I have reached in my analysis of the activities of the Central Scotland CEPD. It is apparent to me that legislation is already altering the role of the committee, though in the present climate of legislative uncertainty, in a detrimental manner. I believe the Central Scotland CEPD committee shows a healthy divergence and openness in its decision-making processes and has developed effective means with which to influence the employment practices of local organisations. I would anticipate this will continue to be the case if their future is secured within the coming months. Finally, to my knowledge, there has been no in-depth qualitative analysis of the activities of CEPDs. I believe the results of this paper would suggest that there is much to learn from the activities of these committees and therefore that additional research in this area is urgently needed.

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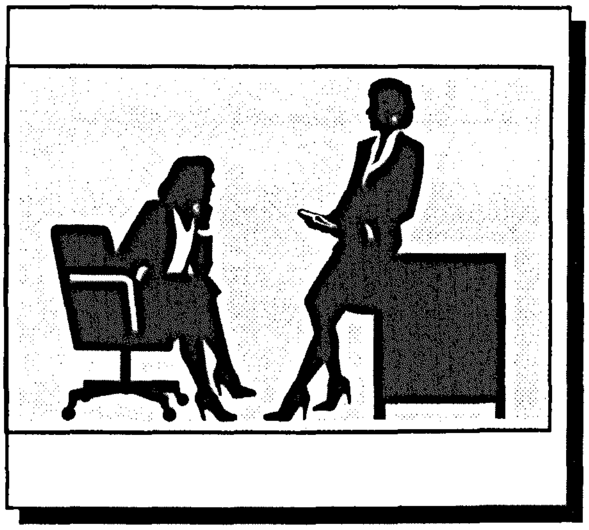
CEPD

"Leapark Hotel Workshop" Report

Aims

The members of the Central Scotland Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities (CEPD) had two aims in holding this workshop. The first was to listen to employers talking about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings concerning disability and employment. Secondly, it was intended that those attending the workshop would benefit from the opportunity to share views on disability and employment with others in a relaxed and supportive, but stimulating forum.



Participants

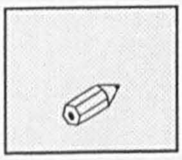
Invitations were sent to major employers in Central Region, Scotland. Representatives of thirty-seven employers accepted and attended the workshop. Participants included people from all levels of organisations.

Leaflet produced by Economic and Social Research Council sponsored Researcher.
Researcher: P.S. Duckett, Department of Psychology, University of Stirling.

The Workshop

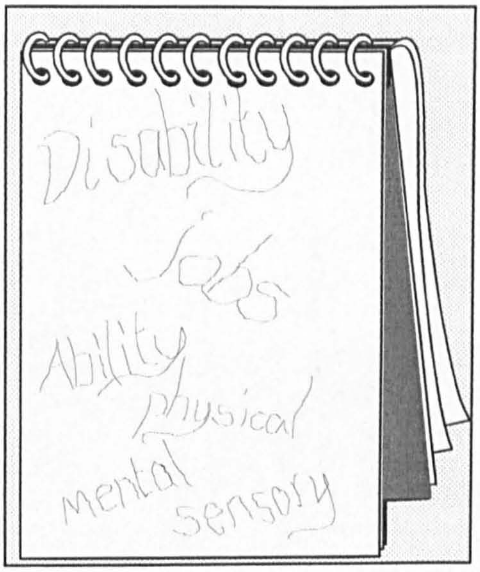
The workshop was held at the Leapark Hotel on November 22nd. After an introductory address, participants were asked to form into four groups.

Each group was involved in two, one-hour sessions. The first session sought to facilitate sharing of participants' experiences. This session intended to allow discussion concerning issues of disability and the barriers participants perceived concerning the employment of people with disabilities. The second session was more structured. Participants were asked to talk through a hypothetical application for employment by a person with one of five given disabilities: paraplegia, deafness, blindness, learning disability, and mental health difficulties. Issues were then explored by the group moderators.



During both sessions, participants' comments were noted down on flipcharts. At the end of each session, results were reported through displaying the flipcharts to the group as a whole.

Results



These results are based on an analysis of the flipcharts from both group feedback sessions. Inevitably, this does not do justice to the wealth and variety of comments made by participants. However, a comparison of each group's flipcharts helps identify general themes that developed throughout the workshop. These themes came from the workshop participants, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the workshop host, the Central Scotland CEPD. The first set of flipcharts analysed were those from the focus group sessions.

Leaflet produced by Economic and Social Research Council sponsored Researcher.
Researcher: P.S. Duckett, Department of Psychology, University of Stirling.

Session I: Focus Groups

Exploring Thoughts and Feelings on Disability

1a) Visibility of Disability

One of the most dominant themes to arise from the focus groups concerned the distinction between '*visible*' disabilities and '*invisible*' disabilities. Wheelchair users were cited as those whose disabilities were visible. Disabilities such as epilepsy, and mental health difficulties were cited as less visible, or even invisible,

"General concept of disability is wheelchair bound ... obviously seen disability. ... Hidden disabilities can be more difficult as not always obvious at first." (Group 2)

The extent to which a disability could be seen was an important distinction in defining a disability.

1b) Stigma and Inadequate Information

Another dominant theme was stigma, i.e. the negative stereotyping and labelling of people who have disabilities. This was cited as present, irrespective of the in/visibility of the disability.

" ... people shying off from people with disabilities (Group 1)

All groups suggested that stigma and negative stereotyping existed and had an impact on the lives of people with disabilities. Lack of information within the general population and society as a whole was identified as a theme by the focus groups. For example, this created uncertainty of how to 'cope' with people with disabilities,

"Don't know how to handle it." (Group 4)

1c) Feelings Concerning Disability

In answer to the question "what does disability mean to you?", two types of feelings predominated: those of fear, and embarrassment.

"Fear of [the] unknown." (Group 1)

"Embarrassment, lack of knowledge on how to tackle a situation means it is badly handled." (Group 4)

One group identified the benefits of increasing information available on issues concerning disability through direct experience,

"[There is a] growing awareness of people with learning disabilities in society ... When people encounter people with disabilities in

[the] workplace [they] become more positive." (Group1)

1d) Absence of Abilities

This was more frequently mentioned than was a presence of abilities. For example,

"Blindness: Goods going to wrong customers. [Could] work in an office more easily, but not driving [...] a big restriction." (Group 3)

1e) Well-Meaning Help

There was an assumption that people with disabilities needed benevolent help or assistance in some form.

"Employees can also be very protective of people with disabilities - particularly Sheltered Placements." (Group 1)

1f) Additional themes identified during this stage included the problems of defining disability, and the impact disability has upon an individual's identity.

Perceived Barriers to the Employment of People with Disabilities

2a) Stigma

When participants were asked to identify barriers to the employment of people with disabilities, stigma was the most commonly cited, appearing on each group's flipcharts.

"Assumptions/presumptions - again create often unnecessary barriers which often become even more difficult." (Group 2)

"Negative attitudes to disability." (Group 3)

2b) Physical Barriers

Additional to the barriers created through negative attitudes, the physical barrier of gaining access to the workplace was also a prominent theme,

"The working environment can be wrong for some people with disabilities - access problems for blind people in workplace." (Group 1)

These barriers were seen as particularly pertinent to people with physical disabilities, such as wheelchair users, and people with sensory disabilities, such as blindness.

2c) Competitiveness of Job-Market

Another barrier identified was that of the existing climate of competitiveness in the job-market. This was seen to diminish the employment opportunities available to people with disabilities, because in an increasingly competitive market economy, many employers preferred 'able-bodied' employment applicants. Underlying these themes, there appeared to be an assumption that people with disabilities were less productive and less flexible employees.

"Quite often don't have capacity to take on people with disabilities due to increased competition." (Group 1)

2d) Further themes that recurred concerned the identification of barriers including: issues of cost-benefits to employers, concerns over safety of people with disabilities in the workplace, and a lack of knowledge and understanding concerning the issue of disability in the workplace.

Session II
Forced Choice Exercise

During this exercise, each group participant was asked to both select a disability they felt they could cope with as an employer, and to similarly reject a disability. Irrespective of the particular disability accepted or rejected, there were common themes to the reasons given for the forced choices made by each group participant.

Choices Made by All Four Groups

DISABILITY	ACCEPT	REJECT
Paraplegia	6	6
Deafness	15	4
Blindness	4	12
Learning Disability	9	4
Mental Health	3	11

Reasons for Choices Made

The concept of ability was fundamental to many of the reasons given for accepting a particular disability. Such choices were dominated by the identification of an individual's *abilities,* rather than disabilities,

"Can work like anyone else." (Group 3, concerning accepting paraplegia)

"Other senses compensate." (Group 4, concerning accepting deafness)

In the case for rejecting a particular disability, a perceived lack of social skills was identified as a reason for rejecting a person with a disability,

"Lack of independence." (Group 1, concerning rejecting learning disability)

"Communication [difficulties]." (Group 4, concerning rejecting deafness)

A dominating theme was the overall impact that a disability had on an individual. A small impact on an individual's abilities and faculties was given as a reason for accepting a disability, while a greater impact on an individual was cited as a reason for rejecting a disability,

"Wouldn't change life as much." (Group 1, concerning accepting paraplegia)

"Would have to give up leisure activities." (Group 1, concerning rejecting blindness)

When the impact of a disability on a person's abilities was unknown, it was more likely to be used as a reason for rejection,

"Little known about it." (Group 4, concerning rejecting mental health difficulties)

"Lack of understanding." (Group 4, concerning rejecting paraplegia)

Inability to empathise with a particular disability was also a problem,

"Difficult to imagine what it must be like." (Group 3, concerning rejecting paraplegia)

Conversely, availability of information was a reason for accepting a disability.

"Easy to quantify and find solutions to problems." (Group 2, concerning accepting paraplegia)

The availability of information was closely associated with a concept identified in the earlier focus group session, that of the degree of visibility of a disability,

"If employing [a paraplegic, you] know what [the] difficulties are before they start." (Group 2. concerning accepting paraplegia)

The more visible a disability was, the greater the degree of information concerning the impact of that disability was perceived available to the employer.

A particularly strong theme that developed was that of aid or help. When aid or help was perceived as available concerning a particular disability, this was given as a reason for accepting that disability,

"Amenable to support." (Group 3, concerning accepting mental health difficulties)

"[Availability of] 'hearing dogs'." (Group 4, concerning accepting deafness)

However, a lack of such aid and support was not cited on any of the flipcharts as a reason for rejecting a disability.

As with the flipcharts from the focus group session, a dominant theme was the presence of stigma concerning disability. This was seen as both distorting fellow employees' appreciation of the abilities of an individual with disabilities, and affecting the social relationships that develop between fellow employees and that individual.

"Would be treated as child." (Group 1, concerning learning disability)

"Isolation." (Groups 3 & 4, concerning paraplegia and blindness respectively)

Overview

The themes identified above are not exhaustive. In reality, each group identified a wide range of issues concerning the employment of people with disabilities. The full range of comments made could not be covered in this report. Instead, common themes are reported. It is inevitable that this does an injustice to the variety of valuable contributions to the workshop that each participant made.

The CEPD members who attended the workshop felt that the event had been successful. The intention was to hear the views of individuals as opposed to hearing the 'corporate voice', i.e. a company's equal opportunity policies and philosophies. It was felt by the organisers that this intention was met. This was to a large extent achieved through the efforts made by the participants; it was their input into the workshop that ultimately made the event a success. The openness of participants' disclosures concerning their thoughts, feelings and experiences was particularly gratifying. A third of all issued feedback questionnaires were returned. These questionnaires suggested that the workshop had been a positive experience for participants.

Both help and advice for employers on issues concerning disability and employment was provided to participants through leaflets from Central Region's Placing, Assessment and Counselling Team (PACT), and through informal discussions with both PACT and CEPD representatives during lunch that followed the workshop.

Further CEPD events are presently being planned.

APPENDIX THREE (E)

Feedback report for PACT Managers following a meeting

REFLECTIONS OF OUR DISCUSSION ON DIFFICULTIES FACED BY PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY AT EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

By
Paul S. Duckett
University of Stirling

Research funded
by the
Economic and Social Research Council

Foreword

These are my perceptions of the group discussion that took place at the ADC on 6th June 1996. This paper should be read very much as *my* interpretations of the issues we discussed. In doing so, if you find any disparity between my perceptions and your own I would be very keen to hear of how our thinking diverges. It would help me to more accurately represent the issues that *you* feel are important to this area.

I have presented my interpretations as cognitive maps with accompanying text. Cognitive maps are a means to represent connections between ideas and themes that arise during individual or group discussions. I hope they will be of interest to you. I have also enclosed a copy of the 'dartboard' we used to generate ideas concerning intervention strategies and a brief summary of the discussion that took place while we were doing this exercise.

The discussion was of value to my research and would like to thank all those who participated in the group for their open involvement in the discussion. I hope the discussion and this interpretation of it are of some use to you.

Concept Map Sheet One: Disability awareness and asking questions

I feel this map reflects the issues of awareness and asking questions about disability that arose during our group discussion. Members of the group identified a need to increase employers' familiarity with disability. This was seen to be a key to the removal of barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities. A lack of familiarity was associated with a deficit of accurate and appropriate information. This lack of information available to employers became a dominant theme. Accurate and appropriate information was seen as important to achieving a successful job/person fit. For employers, this information was seen to be lacking with respect to an individual's disability. For the prospective employee who has a disability, such information was seen to be often lacking concerning the nature of the job they were applying for. The lack of information available to employers was identified as leading to interviews conducted in a way that further disabled the job applicant, for example, the absence of an induction loop for an applicant who has a hearing impairment or lack of accessibility for an applicant with a mobility impairment. PACT was identified as very much working on the issue of maximising the information available to employers before the interview stage. Looking to the immediate future, the Disability Discrimination Act was seen as an important means to increase employers' awareness of disability. Concerning the level of awareness that needs to be achieved it was noted that a little knowledge could be a dangerous thing, perhaps leading to an employer finding justification for discriminating against a job applicant with a disability, i.e. a decision based on limited information about the applicant's disability.

Increasing employers' familiarity with disability was noted as a way of making the task of asking questions about disability much easier. It was recognised that asking such questions is often very difficult to do. The discussion focused on the process of interviewers asking questions during the interview. There was a concern that the wrong types of question were being asked to the job applicant who has a disability. In particular, it was believed there was a danger of interviewers concentrating too much on an applicant's disability rather than on their abilities or competence. This was seen to introduce negativity into the whole interview interaction leading an interviewee to present themselves negatively through the manner in which they answered these questions. It was conceded employers would always ask questions about disability, this highlighting the importance of ensuring interviewers asked the right questions.

These problems concerning asking questions were seen as particularly true when the interviewer was insufficiently trained. The view was expressed that you were more likely to encounter an untrained interviewer in a smaller business. The more professional interviewers were associated with larger employers. After the discussion it occurred to me that there was an unhealthy connection between the identification of problems with untrained interviewers who were working in small businesses and the 'opt-out' clause in the DDA for small businesses. This is the reason for the arrow I have drawn connecting the two themes on the concept map.

Concept Map Sheet Two: Disability identity

I have drawn this concept map to represent the issue of disability identity discussed during our meeting. Disability identity was seen as very much tied to the labels applied to people with disabilities. This labelling process was commonly one where people with disabilities were associated with negative attributes such as low competence, low self-esteem, unemployability. One group member mentioned a means to counter such negative labelling through PACT sending their 'best' candidates to any employer who was new to the idea of recruiting people with disabilities. The rationale behind this was that every candidate with a disability that followed that initial candidate would 'be tarred with the same brush' by the employer. Thus, it was important to create a good impression with the first candidate they sent for an interview.

Group members voiced a desire to remove labelling if that were possible. A group member mentioned the example of Aberdeen Council's practice of removing all questions on job application forms that could be used to label or categorise job applicants either by gender, race, age or disability. But there were problems with such an avoidance of labelling the job applicant.

For example, the Disability Symbol User scheme relied on the very process of labelling people with disabilities. The act of labelling also meant that provision could be made at job interviews for applicants who have special requirements such as access and communication aids. In general, the whole conversation over the removal of labels was underpinned by an acceptance that at present labelling was unavoidable.

The view that equated disability with difficulty was one seen to be held most commonly by untrained interviewers - a theme prevalent in Concept Map Sheet One. This was not a view that PACT held. While PACT concentrated on the positives of disability, untrained interviewers were said to concentrate on the negatives. On the map this is signified by PACT negating and untrained interviewers equating with the perceived difficulties associated with disabilities. The map suggests to me that PACT's role is to not only affirm the positives but also to negate the negatives concerning disability.

Concept Map Sheet Three: Interview roles

This final concept map reflects the issues addressed during our meeting that concerned the respective roles occupied by the interviewer and interviewee during a job interview and the implication of these roles. The interviewee in general was seen to occupy a disempowered role. Further, they were perceived to be in a role in which they were under extreme levels of pressure, particularly with respect to performing well. Such pressure was not part of the role ascribed to the interviewer and their role was one perceived as usually active rather than passive. This difference in roles was characterised by the typical scenario of the interviewer asking all/most of the questions and the interviewee being there to answer them. The passivity of the interviewee's role during job interviews was seen as particularly the case for interviewees with disabilities. The exception to the rule was an interview where both the interviewee and interviewer occupied active roles. This was an exception that gave PACT 'something to work on', facilitating their work in this area.

Following on from the theme of interviewees empowering their role during interviews was the suggestion that the interviewee with a disability should attempt to turn the interview around. Rather than concentrating on the negatives, produced by focusing too much on the disability, interviewees should concentrate on the positives. Further the interviewee could ask more questions and be given the opportunity to define their own disability and describe assistive technology that could be used to assist them to do the job. However, issues concerning defining a disability and describing assistive aids were seen as difficult for interviewees to do effectively. Further, the process of interviewees redressing the power imbalance that exists in employment interviews could be construed as confrontational by the interviewer. This was perceived to have a potential negative effect on the outcome of the interview for the job applicant.

There was a further perception among the group that job interviews were used more as an elimination than a recruitment procedure. The presence of a disability on the part of the applicant was perceived as an easy target to trigger their elimination from the employment selection procedure.

There was perhaps a perception that the presence of a DEA during meetings between prospective employees with disabilities and employers may have empowered the role of the job applicant. This was characterised by a member of the group mentioning the ease with which PACT could "crush" employers' 'I've had a bad experience of an employee with a disability' excuse, but acknowledged that PACT could not be there with every job applicant with a disability who faced an employer espousing such an excuse.

The Dartboard: Identifying interventions
[I have written this brief summary of the discussion that took place as a chronology of issues as they arose during the half hour we spent on this exercise. Please refer to an enclosed copy of the flipchart for the placement of each of these issues on the 'dartboard']

The first issue mentioned was a concern to bring a more humanistic orientation into the way society thinks about people with disabilities. This was seen as hopefully leading to the treatment of people with disabilities as individuals rather than as a group. A group was perceived as more easy to stereotype. Society was seen to have an important influence on the self-perception of people with disabilities: the role of cultural and societal values was seen as having a direct impact on the self-confidence and self-esteem of people with disabilities. Socioeconomic factors were also seen as important. It was argued that high levels of unemployment create discrimination.

The issue of humanism was reintroduced into the discussion but from a different angle. It was argued that we should dehumanise issues concerning disability, with the human element being seen as that containing the potential for prejudice and discrimination. The problem with the recruitment of people with disabilities into employment was seen as mitigated by the presence of a human element in the decision-making process. The effect of legislation as a means of eradicating discrimination was discussed. There was a feeling of uncertainty over the efficacy of legislation, in particular in respect to the 1944 Act. It was noted that sexism and racism still exists despite there being anti-discrimination legislation in place. Thus, it was construed that employers would always find a reason to account for what might appear to be their discriminatory behaviour.

It was noted that it was not long ago when there had been a hope in the 'demographic trend' solution to the lack of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. However, the expected gap in the employment market created by a drop in the number of school leavers had not opened the job market for people with disabilities. A present change in the employment market perceived as possibly opening employment opportunities for people with disabilities were not the numbers in employment but the nature of that employment. It was noted that at present there existed an employment market characterised by short-term contracts, with 'jobs for life' being less common than in the past. It was suggested this might open the doors to employment for people with disabilities. For example, an employer may be more willing to take on employees with disabilities if the employment contract was short-term rather than long-term. It was seen as a means to get employment onto the CVs of people with disabilities and improve their chances of securing more permanent work in the future.

It was recognised that disability was an expanding market, with more disabilities being recognised every day. With disability being a growth industry and the existence of an increasing number of lobbying groups with ever more people with disabilities making demands, there was concern that there could be a backlash against it. This growing market of disabilities was also associated with an increasing tendency to label individuals. For example troublesome children are now given them medical label of hyperactivity.[1] There was a concern to reverse this trend.

Some group members commented that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) seems to have created greater awareness of disability issues in the United States. The success of this piece of legislation reaching the statute books was attributed largely to the intense lobbying of Americans with disabilities. However, the increased awareness of disability issues in the US was not solely attributed to the passing of the ADA. It was also felt attributable to what was perceived as a more blatant disregard for people with mobility impairments in the US before the implementation of the Act.

The segregation of people with disabilities in the education system, for example separate schools for the blind, was seen as divisive. It was seen as perpetuating the practice of labelling. This was also seen as a potential problem with the existence of separate disability interest groups. It was, however, also acknowledged that the perceived divisiveness of such institutions and groups may actually be positive for those who are members, through the establishment of a collective spirit, a place where people with disabilities can attend in the knowledge that their disability experiences will be shared by others.

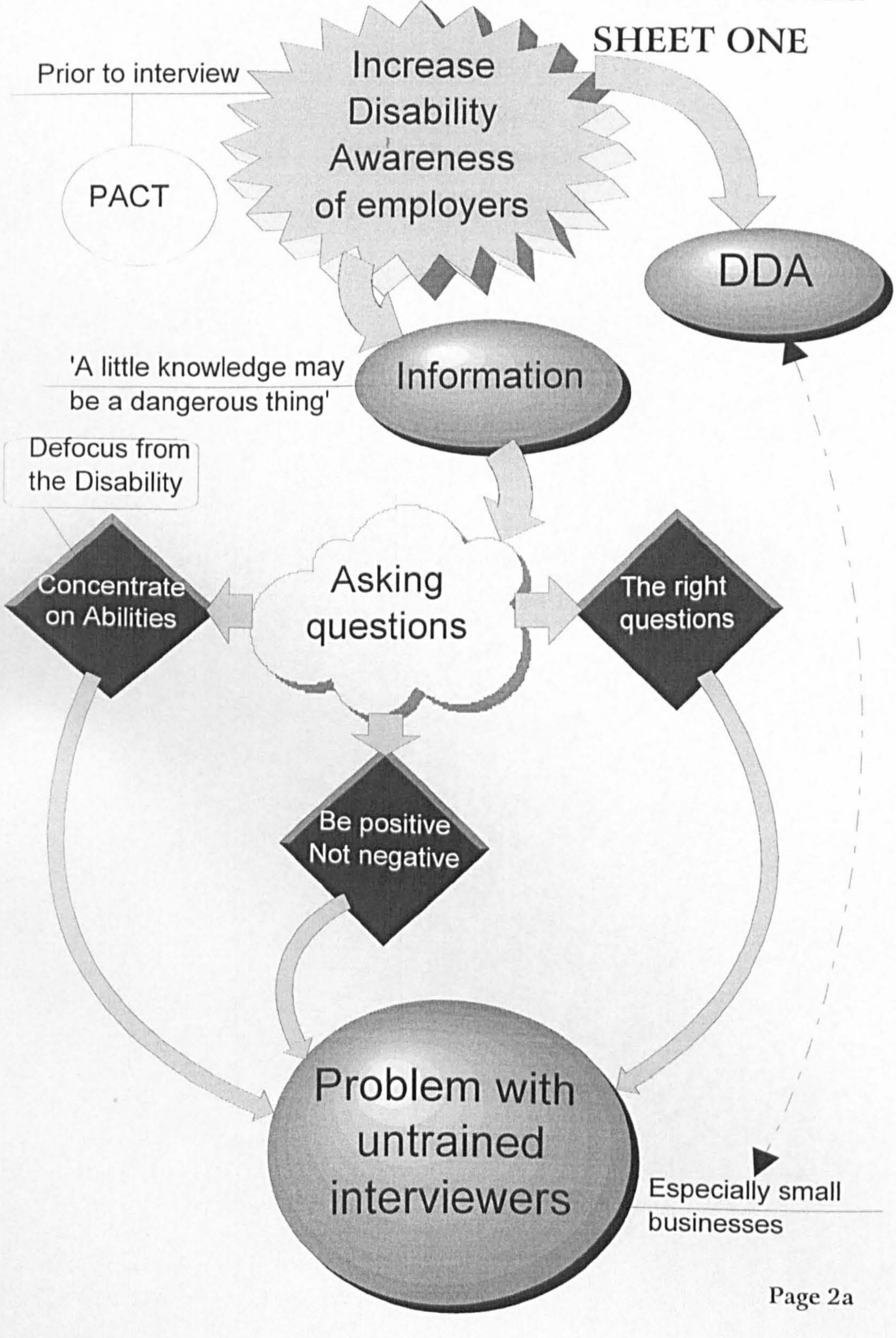
It was suggested that to remove the discrimination that existed against people with disabilities it was important to identify the catalyst that produces prejudice. It was suggested that a possible catalyst could be the perceived existence of difference. For example, employers may discriminate against people that represent a perceived difference as disparity does not align with the process of assimilation that underlies the process of achieving a job/person fit.

At the level of people with disabilities, a problem could be the negative attitudes held by people with disabilities themselves. The attitude they had towards their own disability was seen as a factor that may contribute to their marginalisation from the employment market.

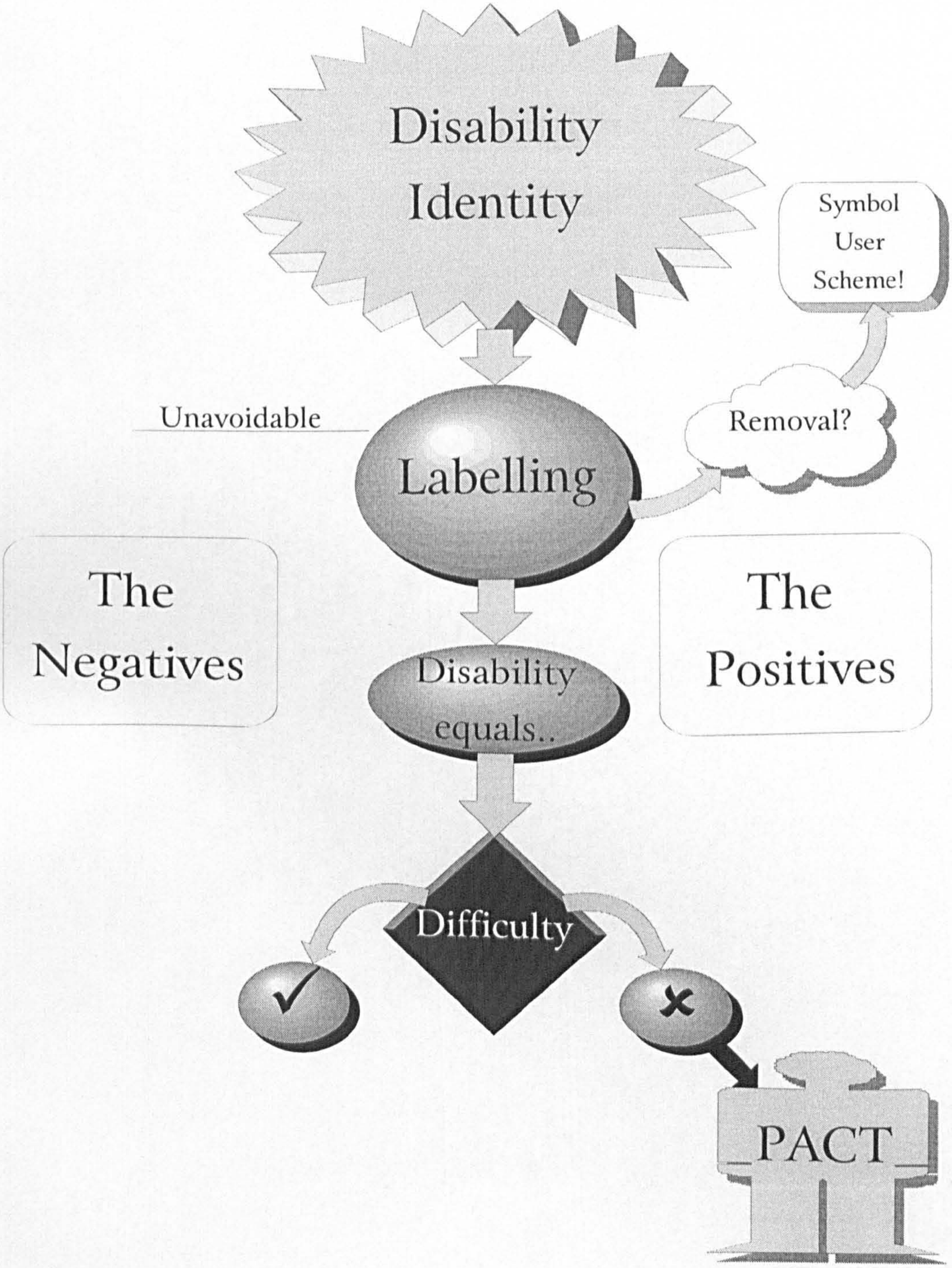
What's next?

To update you on the future direction I intend to take this research, I have a couple more months of data collection and analysis to complete. Following this, I intend to develop and implement an intervention programme that will seek to redress some of the difficulties people with disabilities experience at employment interviews. If you would like to hear of the progress of such an intervention or want an input into its formulation, please get in touch.

CONCEPT MAP SHEET ONE

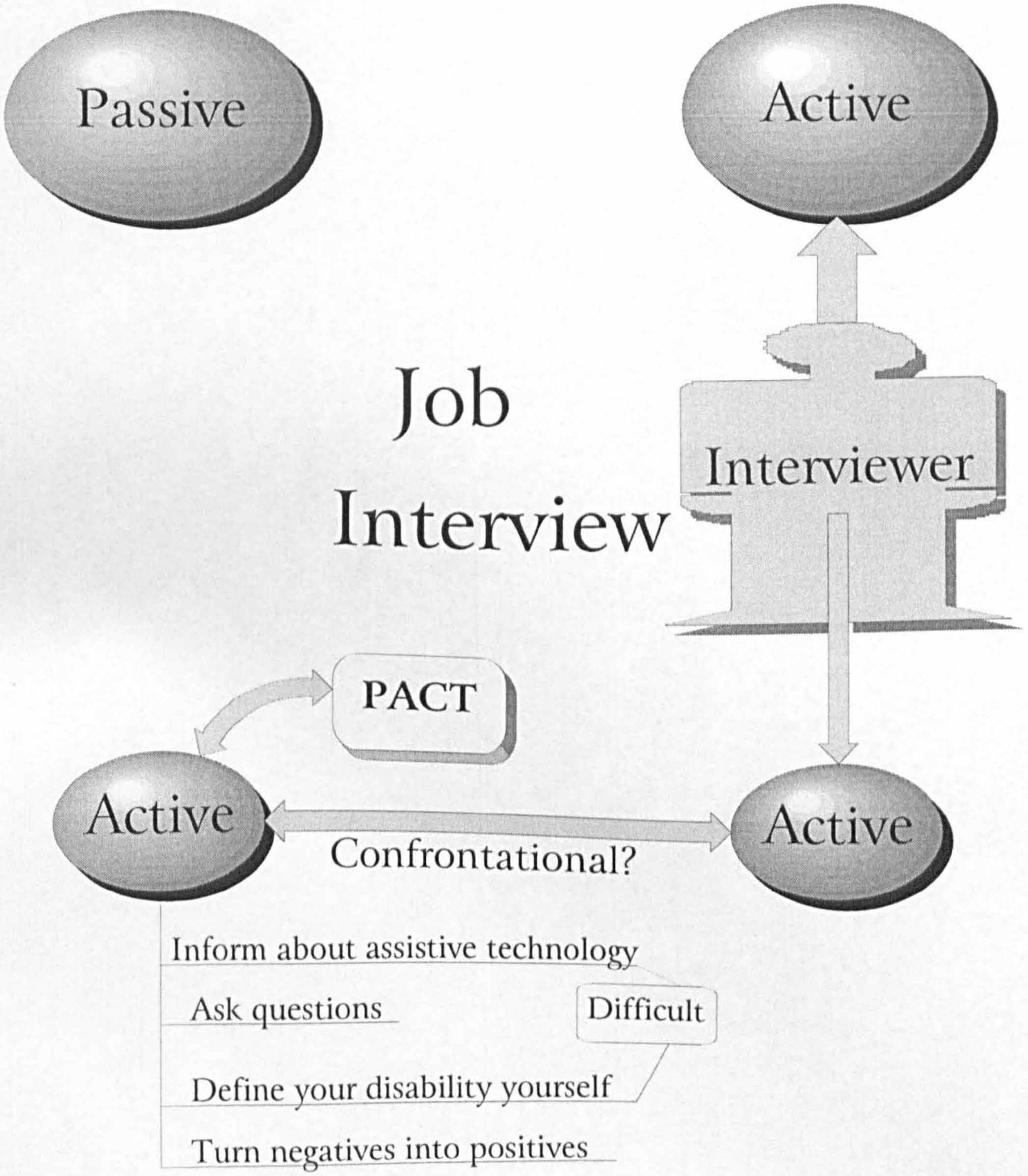


CONCEPT MAP
SHEET TWO



CONCEPT MAP
SHEET THREE

The Rule



Passive

Active

Job Interview

Interviewer

PACT

Active

Active

Confrontational?

Inform about assistive technology

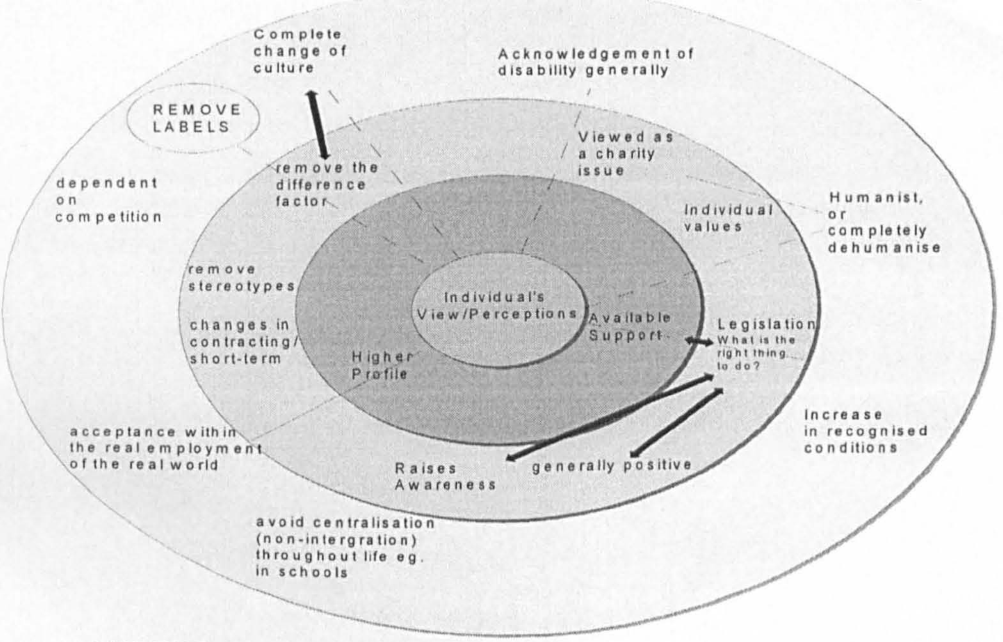
Ask questions

Difficult

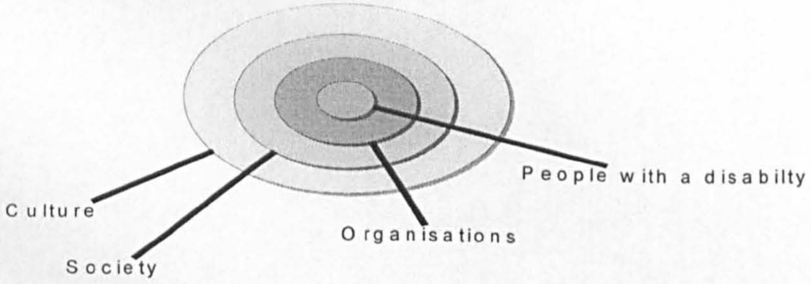
Define your disability yourself

Turn negatives into positives

THE DARTBOARD



LEGEND:



Endnote

1. I have included the following extract from a recent book edited by Len Barton as I thought it might be of interest:

> 'Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) presents itself as a syndrome of spectacular administrative convenience. The increasing retention of young people in school devoid of post-schooling options has generated increasing conflict in schools which translates into increasing rates of suspension and exclusion (Slee, 1995). The pathologising of student disruption provides a more sophisticated and pervasive technology of control than the rituals of punishment and exclusion. This diagnostic transfer is akin to what Muetzelfeldt & Bates (1992), following Habermas (1976) and Offe (1984), refer to as crisis displacement.
>
> The complex social context of disruption in schools is reduced to an individual aetiology which can be managed through the application of a diagnostic/descriptive label, chemical interventions, withdrawal or behavioural interventions. The impairment is uncomplicated by historical or political specificity. Moreover, teacher, school culture and organisation, and curriculum are removed from the diagnostic enquiry. An increasing proportion of the integration project is directed to these not so docile bodies of disruptive or ADD/ADHD students. The 'disability' or syndrome, by invoking a medical discourse, also avoids normative langauge of the 'maladjusted student'.
>
> ADD/ADHD is particularly beguiling for parents. The pathologising of the student's behaviour transforms the relationship between the child and the parent and the parent and the school. Where once they were having to account for their 'bad' child to school authorities, they now have a special needs child. Added to this is the promise of treatment and or cure. Methylphendate [Ritalin], a central nervous system stimulant which acts on the cerebral cortex, is frequently administered to repress hyperactivity (Barkely, 1990). That Govoni and Hayes (1988, 778-9) have chronicled a number of adverse effects of Ritalin such as growth suspension, anorexia, nausea, blurred vision, depression, drowsiness, dizziness and cardio-vascular complications alerts us to the need for diagnositc exactitude in the face of such risks. A minimum expectation ought to be that the disabling factors of schooling be eliminated before embarking upon such a course of treatment.'
>
> (Barton, 1996, pp.114-5)

APPENDIX THREE (F)

Information on steering and consultancy groups and financial costings sent to Local Authority prospective funders

PRELIMINARY PLANS FOR A RESEARCH INTERVENTION

Below I provide preliminary details of the process of the intervention planned. Specific content will be co-constructed with research participants during Phase One of the intervention. This outline, however, should be read as provisional, as participant input during the first phase will determine the exact form it takes. The main aim of the intervention, however, is clear: to establish a Consultancy Group consisting of disabled people that will proactively use the results of my research and their own experiences to advise employers on good practice for employee selection and how best to avoid discrimination against disabled job applicants.

The intervention will involve establishing two types of groups: a steering group and a consultancy group. The steering group will have the initial task of designing and developing the intervention process and content. This will be deployed by the consultancy group. The steering group will further adopt the role of supporting the development of one or more consultancy groups and ensuring the continued autonomous viability of both organisations as the principle researcher gradually reduces his involvement in the project during 1997.

Note on terminology

'Participants' refers to a subsection of the disabled people who have been involved in my research process as informants on job interview experiences. Selection will initially be based on participant's self-referral for membership of the group. Participants will include both employed and unemployed individuals.

Phase One: Planning the intervention

GROUP DETAILS	AIMS
Group Identity A 'steering' group. *Size of group:* 10 - 15 participants. *Frequency of meetings:* During the preliminary stage the group will meet fortnightly until aims one to four [see opposite] are fully met * *Duration:* One to two hours.	***Aim One: authenticating the research results*** To share my analysis of the data I have collected over the past two years with research participants and to ask participants to correct, contribute to and agree upon a group-authenticated interpretation of the research results.
	Aim Two: co-constructing the research intervention For principle researcher and steering group members to jointly prioritise areas for intervention and develop a presentation of the data and a preliminary structure for an Employer's Code of Good Practice.
	Aim Three: timetable meetings with employers To develop a preliminary timetable of meetings with employers and review the range of employers to whom the intervention program can be offered.
	Aim Four: Sustaining the steering group establishing one or more consultancy groups To establish the conditions for an ongoing steering group and one or more consultancy groups and to identify means to sustain the activities of both groups. Further, to reflect upon extending group membership to other disabled people who have expertise/experience of employment interviews.

*Thereafter, the group will meet once every two to three months in order to meet aims three and four and to reflect on aim two. Aim one will be replaced by the aim of reflecting and acting upon feedback from the consultancy group/s on the results of their activities. In Aim Two, the role of the principle researcher will be gradually reduced and ultimately omitted.

Phase Two: implementation of the intervention

GROUP DETAILS	EMPLOYER'S INVOLVEMENT	AIMS
Group Identity A 'consultancy' group. *Size of group:* 3 - 5 participants. *Frequency of meetings:* 2 meetings every month. *Duration:* Half hour to one hour per meeting.	Consultancy Group** meets the employer for approximately one hour.	To present the results of the research, the preliminary ideas of a Code of Good Practice, and to gain feedback from employers.
	Principle researcher meets the employer for approximately half an hour to one hour.	To collect information from the employer of their areas of concern, and/or of the employer's current employee recruitment practices.
	Consultancy Group meets alone.	Developing a preliminary, individually tailored Code of Good Practice through relating research results to the employer's concerns and/or practices.
	Consultancy Group meets the employer for approximately one to two hours.	To negotiate a final Code of Good Practice with Employers.

** From the end of 1996 to mid-1997 the consultancy group will include the presence of the principle researcher. As the group becomes established, the principle researcher will reduce the frequency of his presence in the group.

INTERVENTION COSTING

WAGES

STEERING GROUP			
3 meetings x 2 hours x 10 Pps x £5	£300		
CONSULTANCY GROUP [per employer]			
3 meetings x 1 hour x 4 Pps x £5			£60
CONSULTANCY GROUP [7 employers]			
		£420	
TOTAL		£720	

TRAVELLING EXPENSES

[£2.50 max per person]

STEERING GROUP			
3 meetings x 10 Pps x £2.50	£75		
CONSULTANCY GROUP			
3 meetings x 4 Pps x £2.50			£30
CONSULTANCY GROUP [7 employers]			
		£210	
TOTAL		£285	

APPENDIX THREE (G)

Recruitment material for intervention stage of project issued at a CEPD event

A PROGRAMME FOR PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE IN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS:

Avoiding discrimination against disabled people

Programme Facilitator: Paul S. Duckett

At the University of Stirling, a three-year ongoing research project has been looking at the difficulties experienced by disabled people at employment interview. The research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK).

Following over two years of research, involving over 120 disabled and non disabled people across Central Region, the present 'Programme for Promoting Good Practice in Employment Interviews' is being developed. The programme will involve a consultancy group meeting with individual employers to discuss findings of the research, to discuss the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act (1996) and, to provide advice on employee selection procedures.

Employers involved with the programme will have a meeting with a small consultancy group on three occasions, totalling between three and five hours of contact. The programme will offer each employer an individually tailored Code of Good Practice that employers may use as a working document for their own particular organisation. The whole consultancy programme will be offered free of charge.

If you, as an employer, are interested in receiving more information and/or would like to become involved in this free programme please fill in the reply slip below [S.A.E attached], and the programme facilitator will be in touch with you to offer more detail.

----------------✂--

REPLY SLIP

Name: ____________________ Position ______________

Organisation:_______________ Phone No. ______________

Contact ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

____

____

Are you interested in hearing more about the free 'Programme for Promoting Good Practice in Employment Interviews'?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Return to: Paul S. Duckett
Dept. of Psychology
University of Stirling
Stirling
FK9 4LA Phone: (01786) 466839

APPENDIX 3H

Letter of invitation to participants for intervention phase of project

ESRC Research – Employment Interview Experiences of Disabled People

Paul S. Duckett
Department of Psychology
Cottrell Buildings
University of Stirling
FK9 4LA
Phone: (01786) 466839 [office hours]
Fax: (01786) 467641 [office hours]
E-mail: psd1@stirling.ac.uk

Date:

[Name]
[Address]

Dear [Name],
It has been several months since I was last in touch. During that time, I have been conducting additional interviews, performing extensive document and literature reviews and have been actively involved in addressing disability discrimination in the employment arena. I am writing both to thank you for you previous involvement in this project and further to see if you can help me in the final stage of the research.

I've now almost come to the end of the 3 year project, and there are two tasks I've still to do. First, I need to check the conclusions I have reached are ones people who have participated in my research agree with and would feel happy for me to publish. Secondly, I would like to put the results of my research to some immediate and practical use in the local community.

I am seeking to address both tasks through developing a 'Program of Change' that I will set up with employers in Central Region. I have seven major employers already interested - including BP Oil - and have received financial support for the venture from Falkirk Council.

The program of change I am setting up involves establishing two groups: a **'Steering Group'** and a **'Consultancy Group'**. I would like you to consider joining either one or both groups. I can pay you ***£5 per hour*** for your involvement and can reimburse your travel expenses or provide transport to and from group meetings. Membership of the groups will be confined to disabled people who have job interview experience. All group members will be treated as equal partners in the enterprise and there will be no pre appointed 'experts' or 'group leaders'. I have enclosed details of the two groups with an estimate of how often and for how long meetings will last.

If you are interested in becoming involved, please complete the return slip enclosed. Also, if you would like more information before you decide whether to become involved, I would be happy to meet, phone, or write to you to discuss matters more fully. The first meetings will take place mid-January of next year.

Again, thank you for you previous support.

Yours sincerely,

DETAILS OF THE TWO GROUPS

I want to set up two groups, a Steering Group and a Consultancy Group. Both groups are for disabled people. The groups will ask employers to make job interviews easier for disabled people. We will use information that I have got from chatting to people about what happened to them at job interviews. We will also use the experiences of all group members to help employers understand what it is like to be a disabled person applying for a job. - Paul

THE STEERING GROUP

GROUP DETAILS	AIMS
Name of the Group The 'steering' group. *How many people will be in the group:* 10 - 15 people *How often the group will meet:* The group will meet either fortnightly or monthly. *How long meetings will last:* 1 - 2 hours.	***Aim One: making sure the researcher has understood things*** To chat about the things people have told the researcher. Also, group members will tell the researcher if they think that he has missed anything important. The whole group will decide what are the important things disabled people experience when they go for job interviews.
	Aim Two: deciding on what to tell employers For the researcher and the group to decide what are the important things they would like employers to change when they interview disabled people for jobs. Also to think about writing a leaflet to tell employers what we think would be good things for them to do:.a Code of Good Practice.
	Aim Three: deciding when to meet the employers To agree a timetable of meetings with employers and to look at the different types of employers we want to talk to.
	Aim Four: keeping the group going To chat about the future of the group. Also to talk about how to get more money to help us do the things we want to do and talk about if we want other people to join the group who can help us.

THE CONSULTANCY GROUP

GROUP DETAILS	AIMS
Name of the Group: The 'consultancy' group. *How many people in the group:* 3 - 5 people. *How often the group will meet:* 2 meetings every month. 3 meetings per employer. *How long meetings will last:* ½- 1 hr per meeting.	**Meeting 1** To meet the employer and talk about the experiences of disabled people who are looking for jobs. And, to chat about our ideas of a Code of Good Practice.
	Meeting 2 The researcher will go to the employer and get information on what they do when they interview people for jobs. The group will then meet and the researcher will tell them what the employer has told him as we will chat about writing a Code of Good Practice for that Employer.
	Meeting 3 To meet the employer and chat about the Code of Good Practice and see what they think. We will try to agree what the employer should do so that they can make things easier for disabled people at job interviews.

----------✂--✂----------

REPLY SLIP

I, [Name], am intesterested in becoming involved in:

[please tick one or both boxes]

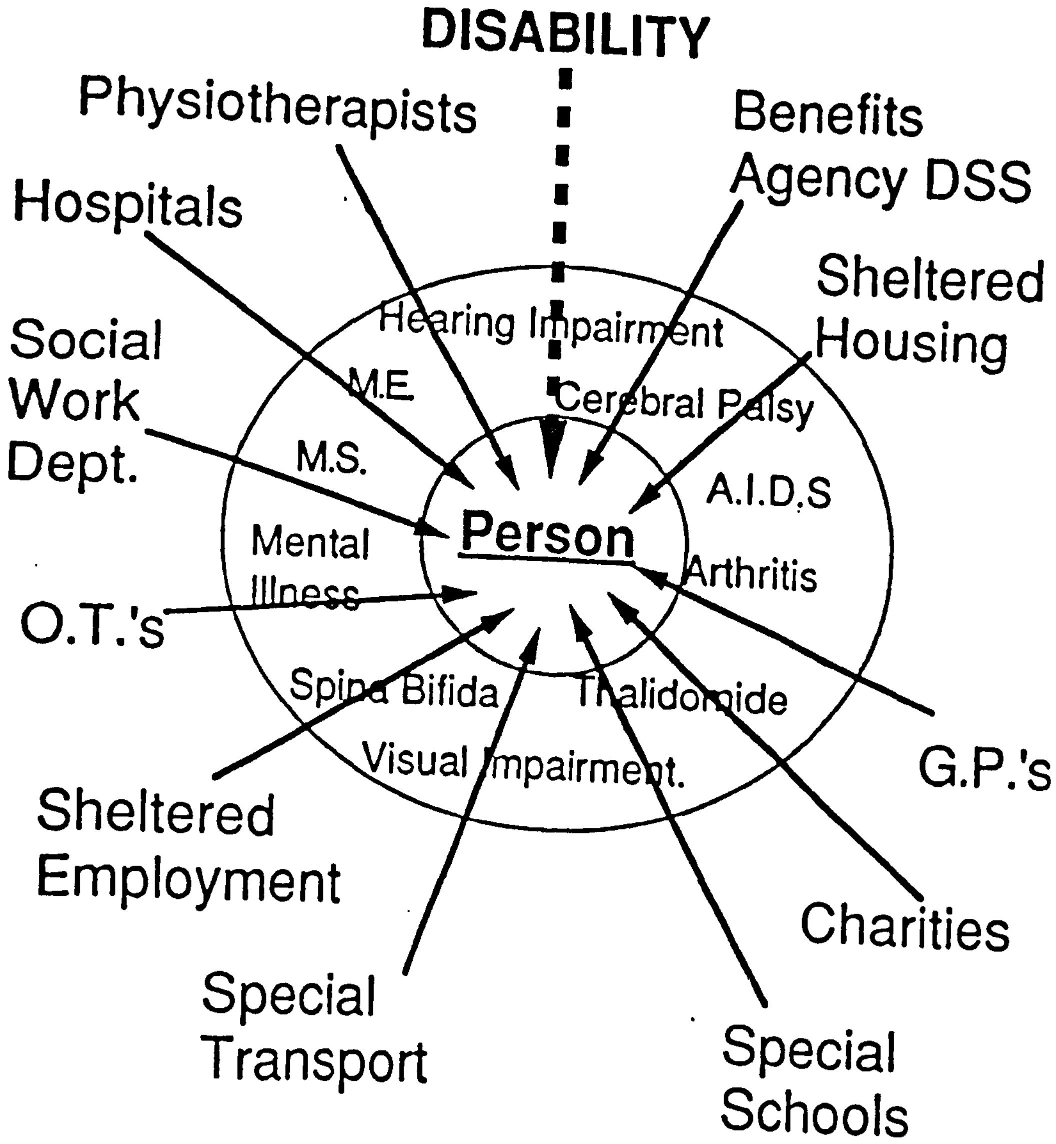
☐ The 'Steering Group'

☐ The 'Consultancy Group'

APPENDIX THREE (I)

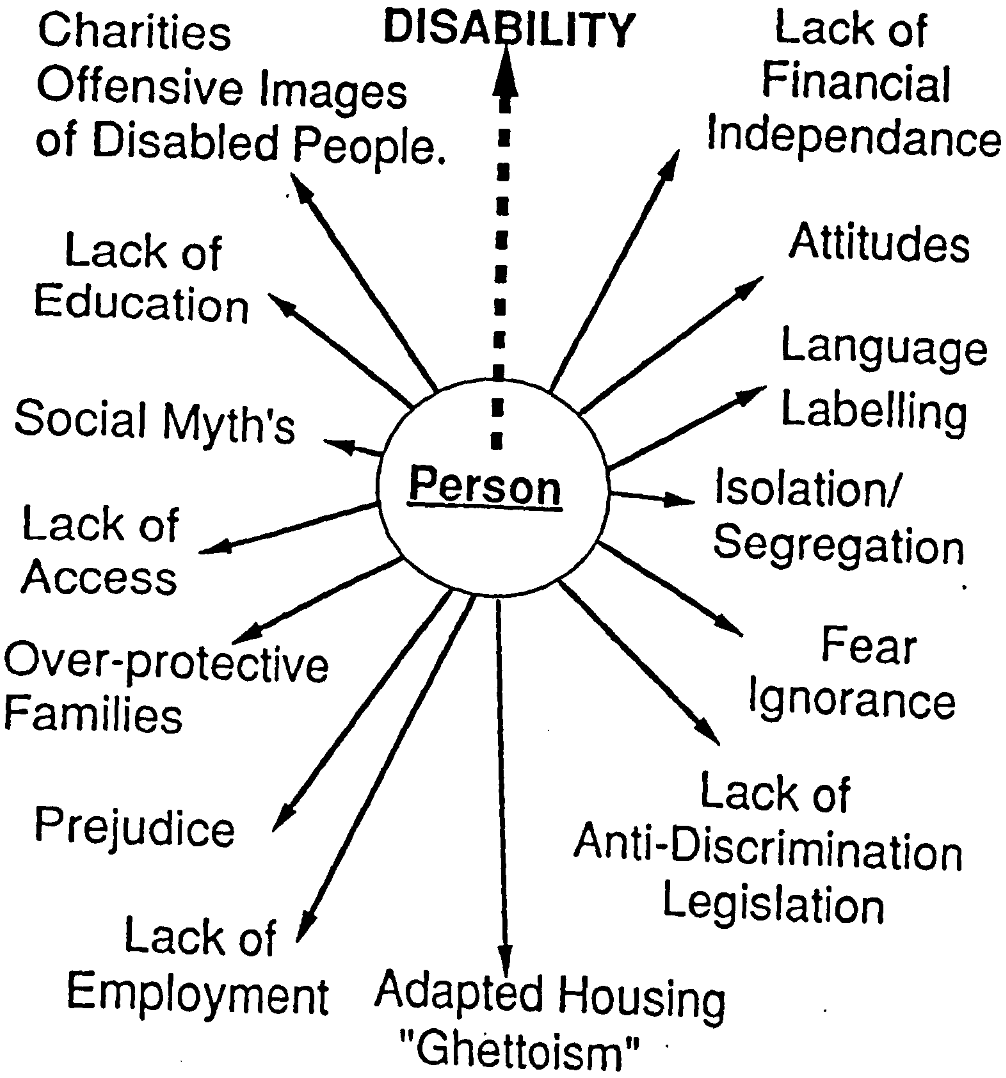
Material shared by Sandy (research participant) for inclusion in Code of Practice

MEDICAL MODEL



Responses in Society to a persons Medical Condition

SOCIAL MODEL



DISABILITY

Charities
Offensive Images
of Disabled People.

Lack of
Financial
Independance

Lack of
Education

Attitudes

Language
Labelling

Social Myth's

Person

Isolation/
Segregation

Lack of
Access

Over-protective
Families

Fear
Ignorance

Prejudice

Lack of
Anti-Discrimination
Legislation

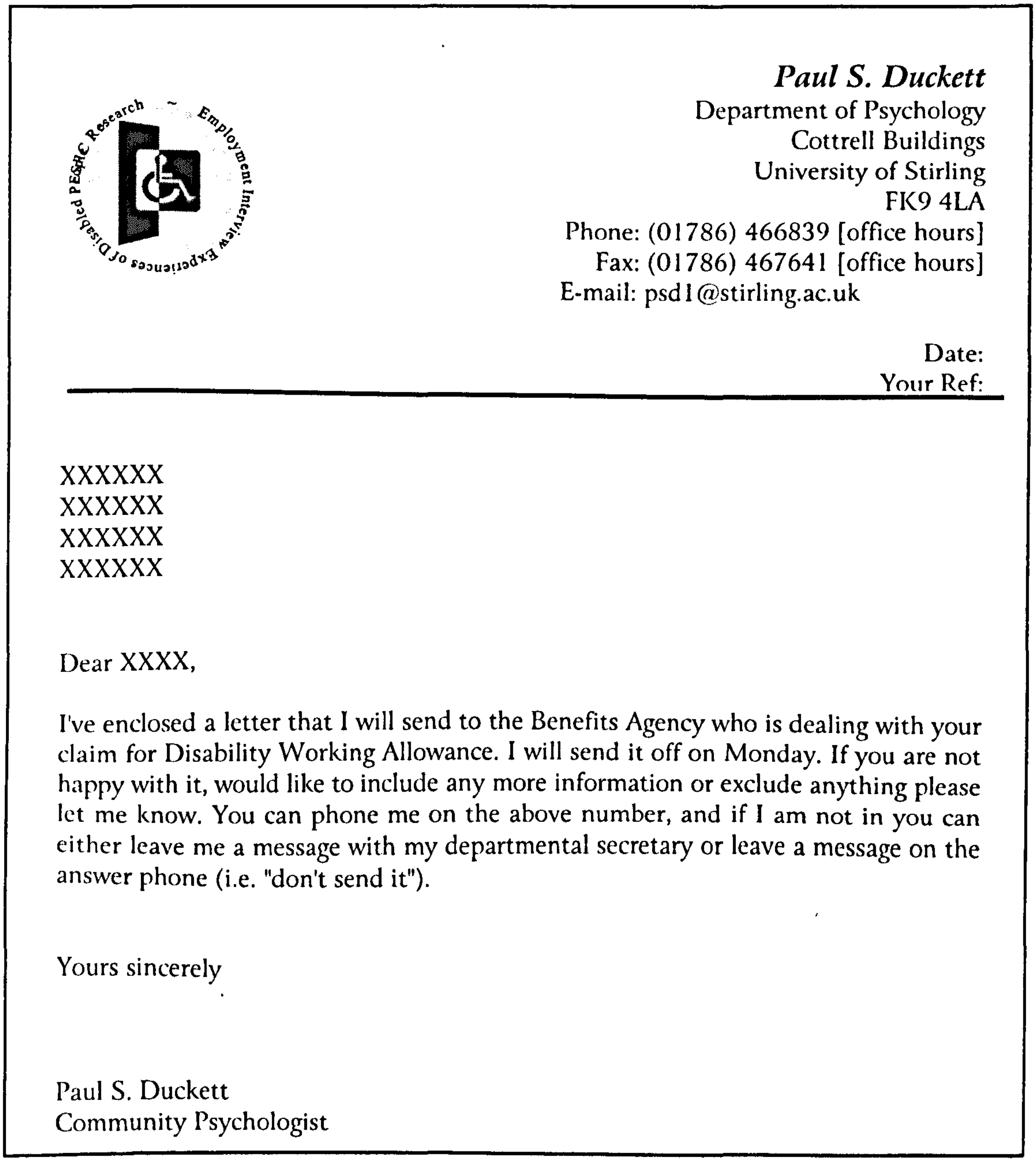
Lack of
Employment

Adapted Housing
"Ghettoism"

It is the "Barriers" present in Society that truly Disable People.

APPENDIX 3J

Letter support for a participants claim for Disabilty Working Allowance



Paul S. Duckett
Department of Psychology
Cottrell Buildings
University of Stirling
FK9 4LA
Phone: (01786) 466839 [office hours]
Fax: (01786) 467641 [office hours]
E-mail: psd1@stirling.ac.uk

Date:
Your Ref:

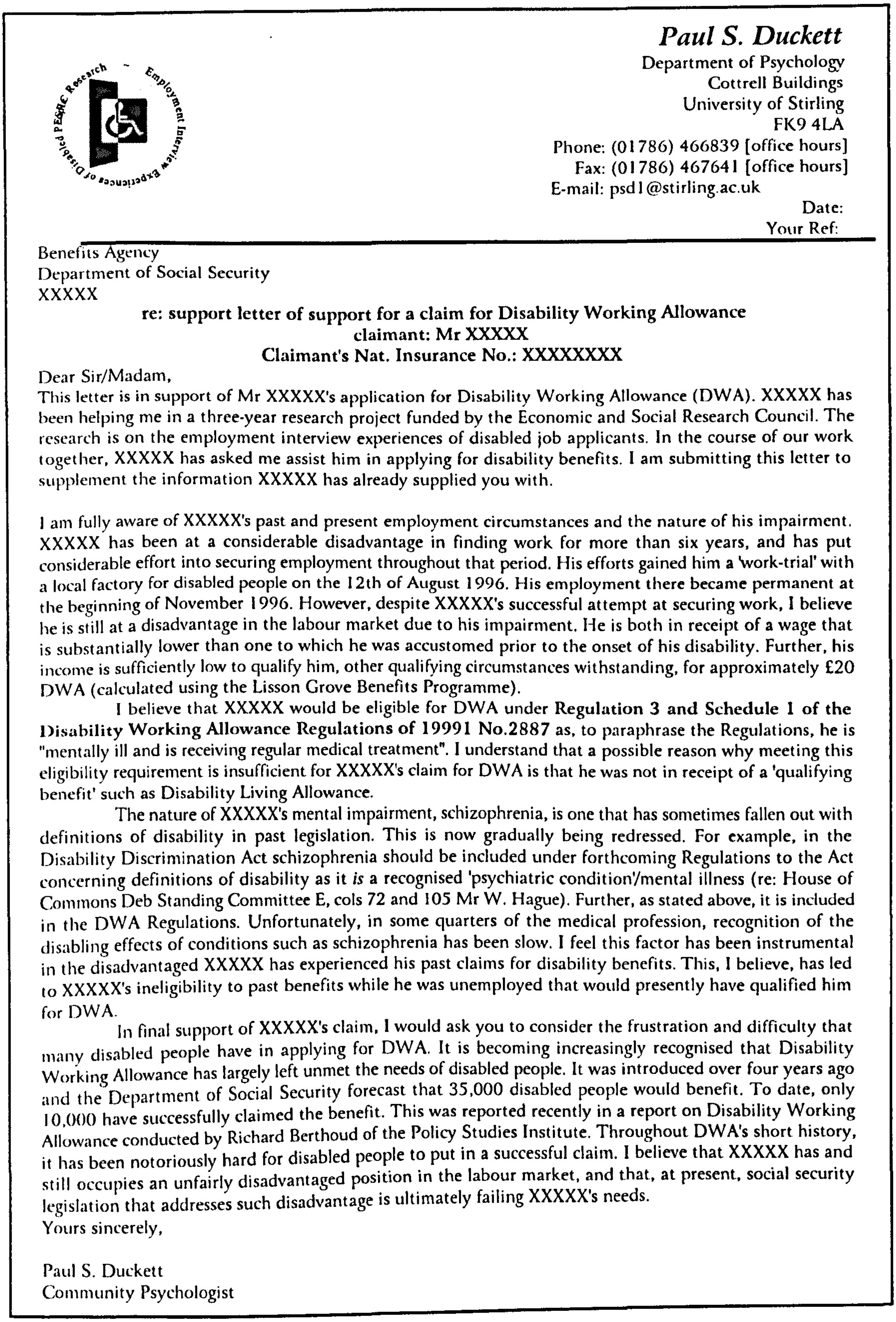
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

Dear XXXX,

I've enclosed a letter that I will send to the Benefits Agency who is dealing with your claim for Disability Working Allowance. I will send it off on Monday. If you are not happy with it, would like to include any more information or exclude anything please let me know. You can phone me on the above number, and if I am not in you can either leave me a message with my departmental secretary or leave a message on the answer phone (i.e. "don't send it").

Yours sincerely

Paul S. Duckett
Community Psychologist



Paul S. Duckett
Department of Psychology
Cottrell Buildings
University of Stirling
FK9 4LA
Phone: (01786) 466839 [office hours]
Fax: (01786) 467641 [office hours]
E-mail: psd1@stirling.ac.uk
Date:
Your Ref:

Benefits Agency
Department of Social Security
XXXXX

re: support letter of support for a claim for Disability Working Allowance
claimant: Mr XXXXX
Claimant's Nat. Insurance No.: XXXXXXXX

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is in support of Mr XXXXX's application for Disability Working Allowance (DWA). XXXXX has been helping me in a three-year research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The research is on the employment interview experiences of disabled job applicants. In the course of our work together, XXXXX has asked me assist him in applying for disability benefits. I am submitting this letter to supplement the information XXXXX has already supplied you with.

I am fully aware of XXXXX's past and present employment circumstances and the nature of his impairment. XXXXX has been at a considerable disadvantage in finding work for more than six years, and has put considerable effort into securing employment throughout that period. His efforts gained him a 'work-trial' with a local factory for disabled people on the 12th of August 1996. His employment there became permanent at the beginning of November 1996. However, despite XXXXX's successful attempt at securing work, I believe he is still at a disadvantage in the labour market due to his impairment. He is both in receipt of a wage that is substantially lower than one to which he was accustomed prior to the onset of his disability. Further, his income is sufficiently low to qualify him, other qualifying circumstances withstanding, for approximately £20 DWA (calculated using the Lisson Grove Benefits Programme).

I believe that XXXXX would be eligible for DWA under **Regulation 3 and Schedule 1 of the Disability Working Allowance Regulations of 19991 No.2887** as, to paraphrase the Regulations, he is "mentally ill and is receiving regular medical treatment". I understand that a possible reason why meeting this eligibility requirement is insufficient for XXXXX's claim for DWA is that he was not in receipt of a 'qualifying benefit' such as Disability Living Allowance.

The nature of XXXXX's mental impairment, schizophrenia, is one that has sometimes fallen out with definitions of disability in past legislation. This is now gradually being redressed. For example, in the Disability Discrimination Act schizophrenia should be included under forthcoming Regulations to the Act concerning definitions of disability as it *is* a recognised 'psychiatric condition'/mental illness (re: House of Commons Deb Standing Committee E, cols 72 and 105 Mr W. Hague). Further, as stated above, it is included in the DWA Regulations. Unfortunately, in some quarters of the medical profession, recognition of the disabling effects of conditions such as schizophrenia has been slow. I feel this factor has been instrumental in the disadvantaged XXXXX has experienced his past claims for disability benefits. This, I believe, has led to XXXXX's ineligibility to past benefits while he was unemployed that would presently have qualified him for DWA.

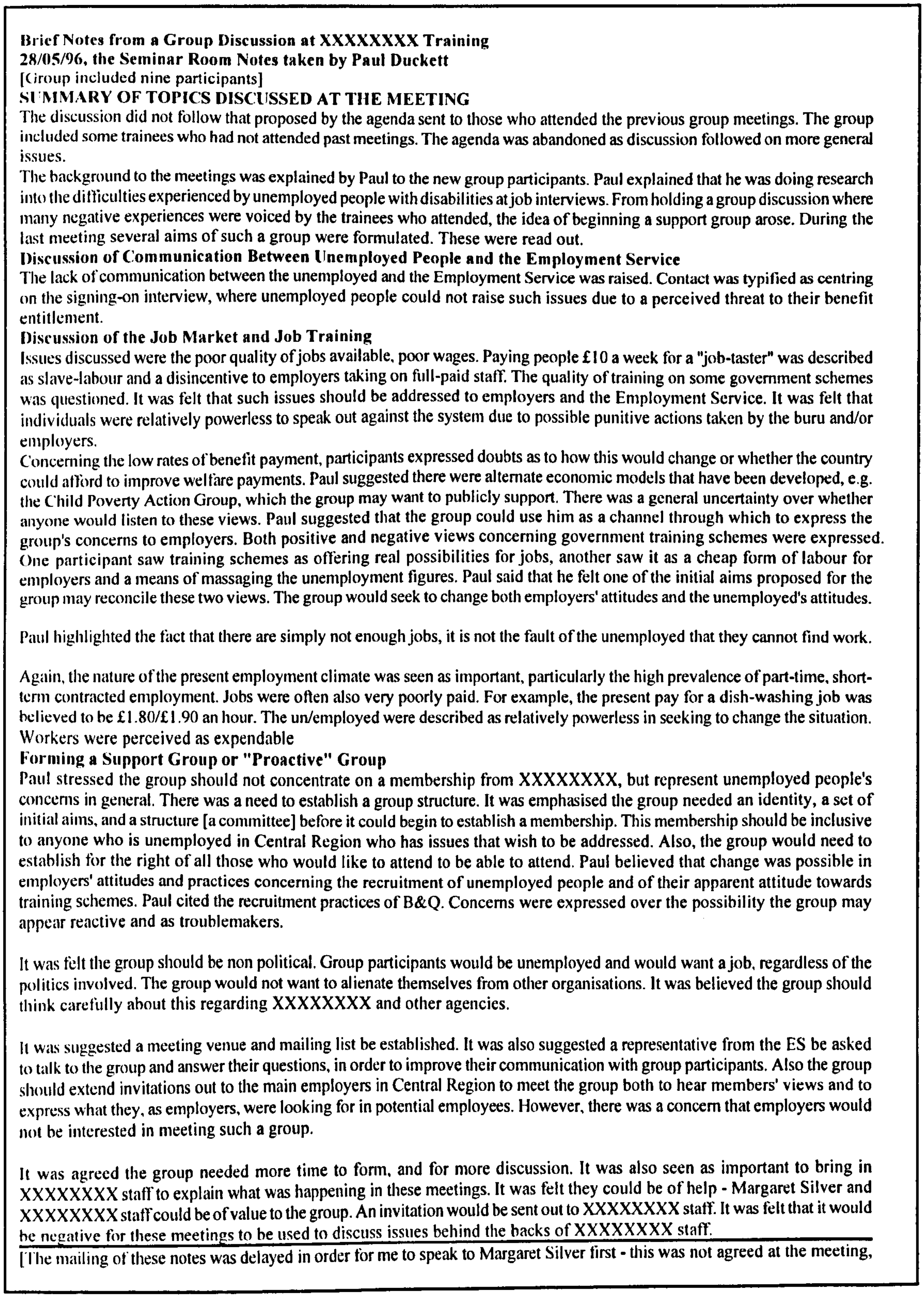
In final support of XXXXX's claim, I would ask you to consider the frustration and difficulty that many disabled people have in applying for DWA. It is becoming increasingly recognised that Disability Working Allowance has largely left unmet the needs of disabled people. It was introduced over four years ago and the Department of Social Security forecast that 35,000 disabled people would benefit. To date, only 10,000 have successfully claimed the benefit. This was reported recently in a report on Disability Working Allowance conducted by Richard Berthoud of the Policy Studies Institute. Throughout DWA's short history, it has been notoriously hard for disabled people to put in a successful claim. I believe that XXXXX has and still occupies an unfairly disadvantaged position in the labour market, and that, at present, social security legislation that addresses such disadvantage is ultimately failing XXXXX's needs.

Yours sincerely,

Paul S. Duckett
Community Psychologist

APPENDIX THREE (K)

Example of feedback given to support group



Brief Notes from a Group Discussion at XXXXXXXX Training
28/05/96, the Seminar Room Notes taken by Paul Duckett
[Group included nine participants]

SUMMARY OF TOPICS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING

The discussion did not follow that proposed by the agenda sent to those who attended the previous group meetings. The group included some trainees who had not attended past meetings. The agenda was abandoned as discussion followed on more general issues.

The background to the meetings was explained by Paul to the new group participants. Paul explained that he was doing research into the difficulties experienced by unemployed people with disabilities at job interviews. From holding a group discussion where many negative experiences were voiced by the trainees who attended, the idea of beginning a support group arose. During the last meeting several aims of such a group were formulated. These were read out.

Discussion of Communication Between Unemployed People and the Employment Service

The lack of communication between the unemployed and the Employment Service was raised. Contact was typified as centring on the signing-on interview, where unemployed people could not raise such issues due to a perceived threat to their benefit entitlement.

Discussion of the Job Market and Job Training

Issues discussed were the poor quality of jobs available, poor wages. Paying people £10 a week for a "job-taster" was described as slave-labour and a disincentive to employers taking on full-paid staff. The quality of training on some government schemes was questioned. It was felt that such issues should be addressed to employers and the Employment Service. It was felt that individuals were relatively powerless to speak out against the system due to possible punitive actions taken by the buru and/or employers.

Concerning the low rates of benefit payment, participants expressed doubts as to how this would change or whether the country could afford to improve welfare payments. Paul suggested there were alternate economic models that have been developed, e.g. the Child Poverty Action Group, which the group may want to publicly support. There was a general uncertainty over whether anyone would listen to these views. Paul suggested that the group could use him as a channel through which to express the group's concerns to employers. Both positive and negative views concerning government training schemes were expressed. One participant saw training schemes as offering real possibilities for jobs, another saw it as a cheap form of labour for employers and a means of massaging the unemployment figures. Paul said that he felt one of the initial aims proposed for the group may reconcile these two views. The group would seek to change both employers' attitudes and the unemployed's attitudes.

Paul highlighted the fact that there are simply not enough jobs, it is not the fault of the unemployed that they cannot find work.

Again, the nature of the present employment climate was seen as important, particularly the high prevalence of part-time, short-term contracted employment. Jobs were often also very poorly paid. For example, the present pay for a dish-washing job was believed to be £1.80/£1.90 an hour. The un/employed were described as relatively powerless in seeking to change the situation. Workers were perceived as expendable

Forming a Support Group or "Proactive" Group

Paul stressed the group should not concentrate on a membership from XXXXXXXX, but represent unemployed people's concerns in general. There was a need to establish a group structure. It was emphasised the group needed an identity, a set of initial aims, and a structure [a committee] before it could begin to establish a membership. This membership should be inclusive to anyone who is unemployed in Central Region who has issues that wish to be addressed. Also, the group would need to establish for the right of all those who would like to attend to be able to attend. Paul believed that change was possible in employers' attitudes and practices concerning the recruitment of unemployed people and of their apparent attitude towards training schemes. Paul cited the recruitment practices of B&Q. Concerns were expressed over the possibility the group may appear reactive and as troublemakers.

It was felt the group should be non political. Group participants would be unemployed and would want a job, regardless of the politics involved. The group would not want to alienate themselves from other organisations. It was believed the group should think carefully about this regarding XXXXXXXX and other agencies.

It was suggested a meeting venue and mailing list be established. It was also suggested a representative from the ES be asked to talk to the group and answer their questions, in order to improve their communication with group participants. Also the group should extend invitations out to the main employers in Central Region to meet the group both to hear members' views and to express what they, as employers, were looking for in potential employees. However, there was a concern that employers would not be interested in meeting such a group.

It was agreed the group needed more time to form, and for more discussion. It was also seen as important to bring in XXXXXXXX staff to explain what was happening in these meetings. It was felt they could be of help - Margaret Silver and XXXXXXXX staff could be of value to the group. An invitation would be sent out to XXXXXXXX staff. It was felt that it would be negative for these meetings to be used to discuss issues behind the backs of XXXXXXXX staff.

[The mailing of these notes was delayed in order for me to speak to Margaret Silver first - this was not agreed at the meeting,