

Public Attitudes to Disability in Ireland

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- Report on Topline results of NDA Survey by Social Market Research in July 2011.
- Follow up of similar study conducted in 2001 & 2006.
- **Aim:** to guide future interventions & assess, where possible, changes and the cause for such.

Methodology



- 1,039 members of the Irish adult population (aged 18+) interviewed using a 20-minute face-to-face, interviewer completed survey
- Broad range of topics on attitudes relating to disability covered, including:
 - knowledge of disability and general attitudes,
 - education, employment,
 - relationships,
 - level of comfort living near people with disabilities,
 - State benefits and awareness of disability related organisations/legislation/initiatives.

This year introduced questions on use of technology

Findings

Have a disability %	No Disability %	Don't know %
12	86	2

- Most common disability is a condition that limits physical activity such as walking, climbing stairs, lifting, etc at 7%
- Decreased first hand knowledge of someone with a disability (64% compared to 71% in 2006; 48% in 2001)
- Awareness of the National Disability Authority at 33% (34% in 2006;12% in 2001)

- 58% consider that it is society which disables people by creating barriers; (62% in 2006)



- 34% do not think that people with disabilities are treated fairly in Irish society; (45% in 2006)
- 44% think the State does not provide enough benefits for them; (50% in 2006)

The most negative attitudes relate to people with mental health difficulties.

- Only **36%** agreed that children with mental health difficulties should be in the **same school** as other children. 24% would object if children with mental health difficulties were in the same class as their child. (vs 36% and 21% in 2006)
- Respondents also said they would be **least comfortable** having people with mental health difficulties as **work colleagues**, and again lowest levels of comfort in the neighbourhood..
- 37% of respondents thought people with mental health difficulties should **have children** if they wish. (41% in 2006)

Education

Should children with disabilities attend the same schools as children without disabilities? Answering yes for

- Children with mental health difficulties was **36%** in both **2006** and **2011**
- Children with Intellectual disabilities or autism was **56%** in **2006**, this fell to **38%** in **2011**
- Children with physical disabilities was **75%** in **2006**, this fell to **62%** in **2011**
- Children with vision, hearing or speech disabilities was **58%** in **2006**, this fell to **48%** in **2011**

Would you object if children with the following disabilities were in the same class as your child? Answering yes for....

- Children with mental health difficulties was **21%** in **2006** and rose to **24%** in **2011**
- Children with intellectual disabilities or autism was **8%** in **2006** rose to **21%** in **2011**
- Children with Physical Disabilities was **4%** in **2006** and rose to **9%** in **2011**
- Children with vision, hearing or speech disabilities was **5%** in **2006** and rose to **12%** in **2011**

Answering why.....(open question not prompted)

- Special needs considerations was the most common answer for this in 2006 (45%) and 2011 (52%).
- Followed by the possibility that children without disabilities will be hindered at 36% in 2006 and 51% in 2011
- In 2011, 39% believed children with disabilities would not receive sufficient support for their special needs.....this response was not captured in 2006

Employment

What makes you uncomfortable about having a work colleague with a disability.....

- **Personal discomfort (48%)** e.g. not knowing how to relate, having to assist them physically, not knowing what or what not to say
- **Suitability of work environment (41%)** e.g. not capable of the work, they would be better off in sheltered employment with dedicated supports
- **Behavioural concerns (37%)** e.g. worries about aggressive behaviour, problems with interpersonal communication, teamwork

Living and neighbourhood

Why would you be uncomfortable about people with disabilities living in your neighbourhood....

- Concerns about disruptive or dangerous behaviour (72%)
- Risk to themselves (56%)
- Neglect of their children (32%)
- Neglect of their property (20%)

Relationships

“Adults with disabilities have the same right to fulfilment through sexual relationships”

- 78% agreed on sexual relationships for people with visual / hearing impairments (90% in 2006)
- 77% agreed re people with physical disabilities (87% in 2006)
- 51% agreed re people with intellectual disabilities or autism; (56% in 2006)
- 56% agreed for mental health difficulties (61% in 2006)

“Adults with disabilities should have children if they wish”

- 69% agreed people with visual/hearing should have children (87% in 2006)
- 68% re people with physical disabilities (84% in 2006)
- 37% agreed for people with intellectual disabilities or autism (64% in 2006)
- 37% agreed for people with mental health difficulties (41% in 2006)

If disagreed, why adults with disabilities should not have children (new in 2011)

- Concerns about the child's emotional well-being (35%)
- Concerns about the child's physical well-being (34%)
- Concerns the people with disabilities cannot economically provide for the child (33%)
- Risk that the disability may be passed onto the child (33%)

Summary

- Since 2006 people believe those with disabilities fare better and society is less disabling
- People would prefer to live beside someone with a disability rather than travellers; black and minority ethnic groups; gay, lesbian or bisexual people; or eastern European migrant workers

However

- In general an increase in negative attitudes towards people with disabilities (education, relationships)
- Generally more fear for respondent rather than concern for the individual (co-worker, child, neighbour) with disability

Use of Irish Public Sector Websites

- Vast majority – (84% and over) report ‘no difficulty’ in using the websites named in our survey
- 35% of respondents use Motor Tax Online
- 30% use public transport websites
- Least used of our options: An Post, at 13%
- 15% reported “some difficulty” in using the HSE website
- People use websites to make payments online (69%)
apply for something online (63%) and find travel
information/make travel booking on public transport (54%)