EDUCATION AND DISABILITY/SPECIAL NEEDS

policies and practices in education, training and employment for students with disabilities and special educational needs in the EU

An independent report prepared for the European Commission
by the NESSE network of experts

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All responsibility for the analysis and interpretation of the data presented in this report lies with the authors.

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For printed copies (free of charge) please contact:
Dr. Angelos Agalianos
European Commission, DG Education and Culture
Tel.: +32-2-29.55.098, angelos.agalianos@ec.europa.eu

Foreword

There are several million EU citizens with a *disability* (a term used for adults at post-school level) or with *special educational needs* (a term used for children at school level). They are one of the largest groups of disadvantaged citizens in the EU. They have traditionally experienced institutional segregation, or have been deprived of educational and employment opportunities altogether.

Across European schools, universities and societies there is now much greater awareness of disability as an educational issue. This achievement is due to the ceaseless efforts of many actors that include: researchers, national and European level civil society organisations and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education which the European Commission supports financially and works closely with.

Whereas segregated provision is still common practice in some EU Member States, ***inclusive*** practices have been gaining ground in others as there is growing evidence that quality inclusive education is good education for *all* learners.

Successful inclusive education practices can be found in all Member States - at national, regional or local level. Some of these practices are reflected in transnational projects that the European Commission has supported under its Lifelong Learning Programme.

The *Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework* (which guides the Commission's policy cooperation with EU Member States in this field) and the May 2010 Council Conclusions on the social dimension of education and training underline that education systems need to respond to diversity and to provide for the successful inclusion of all learners, including those with disability/special needs. This concern is also embodied in the *United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and in the European Commission's *Disability Strategy* 2010-2020.

Despite this progress, much remains to be done. Knowledge from research is necessary to enable and guide progress in policy and practice. This report is a contribution towards evidence-based policy making. It identifies some key dimensions of the topic, **highlights key policy lessons** emerging from research and sets out the relevant evidence. The report is written specifically for policy and decision makers, in jargon-free language that can be understood and acted upon. It shows the position of learners with disabilities/special needs in different education systems and labour markets across Europe. It engages with questions that include:

- *What are the barriers faced by people with disabilities and children with special needs to participation in education, training and employment?*
- *What are the policies and practices that can overcome these barriers?*
- *What do schools, teachers, trainers, adult educators and learning support actors need in order to develop an inclusive culture and practice?*
- *How to improve the educational outcomes and qualifications of disabled people and children with special needs?*

This report shows that currently, despite the stated commitment of European Union Member States to inclusion, children with special educational needs and disabled adults are still often placed in segregated institutions or in mainstream settings with inadequate support. The evidence presented shows that children with special educational needs frequently leave school with few or no qualifications, subsequently moving into specialist post-school training which takes them further away from the labour market. They are much more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive than non-disabled people, and those who are relatively successful in the labour market struggle to find a job paying a living wage.

Disabled people who obtain higher education qualifications still experience labour market penalties, but they are much more likely to be employed than less qualified disabled people. Whilst access to higher education is clearly of vital importance for disabled people, this report shows that it would be an over-simplification to suggest that tertiary education is a panacea for all ills.

The report also shows that there is still wide variation across Member States in which children are identified as having special educational needs and where they are placed following identification (in mainstream or special schools). It suggests that on-going efforts are needed to harmonise definitions and improve data gathering that will enable cross-national comparisons.

The report confirms that, in all Member States, Roma, ethnic minority and socio-economically deprived children (especially boys) are overrepresented in special needs settings. These disproportionalities raise serious questions about the role of special education systems in further isolating pupils who are already socially marginalised, depressing rather than enhancing their future life chances. Research suggests that such children could be included in mainstream schools if there were greater investment in the development of their language skills and a higher level of sensitivity to cultural differences. The research also confirms that *teacher education* is clearly of vital importance in moving towards more inclusive systems.

The momentum for more inclusive systems is strong. The World Health Organization and the World Bank published the very first *World Report on Disability* in June 2011, setting an agenda for action over the next ten years. The United Nations' 2007 *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and the *European Disability Strategy 2010-2020* have also added impetus in the effort to remove the barriers faced by learners with disabilities or special needs.

Faster progress is necessary. We must put the promise of a better life for all, starting with the most vulnerable, at the very heart of European action. This is a key message in the EU2020 strategy and in the European Anti-Poverty Platform.

Brussels, July 2012

Jan Truszczyński
Director-General
European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture

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Methods and scope of the review

This review analyses the position of children with special educational needs and adults with disabilities in different education systems and labour markets across Europe. Various methods have been used to access research and statistical data on policy and practice relating to education and training for people with special educational needs and disabilities. Searches of social science databases (ERIC, BEI, AIER) were carried out and relevant texts obtained. Policy documents relating to education and training published by the European Commission and associated agencies (e.g. CEDEFOP and the European Agency for the Development of Special Needs Education) were gathered. Reports from NGOs were also obtained (e.g. The Open Society Institute, Amnesty International, UNESCO). Statistics were drawn from a range of sources, including government statistical services, OECD, the European Agency for the Development of Special Needs Education and the Labour Force Survey. In addition, a range of organisations and individuals working in the research and policy field were contacted to request information on their on-going work in the relevant domains.

Primary data analysis was not included in the remit of this review, which is issues based, and does not seek to provide a systematic review of all the literature on all categories of SEN and disability produced by all European countries. It has only been possible to draw on the English language literature. However, international coverage has been achieved through a careful analysis of work published in international journals (e.g. the European Journal of Special Needs Education, the International Journal of Inclusive Education) and policy and statistical reviews conducted by bodies such as the OECD and the European Commission.

Key messages and policy implications

1. Countries vary in the proportion of children they identify as having special educational needs and the proportion of the groups placed in special settings.

Policy implication 1: Countries should monitor over time the proportion of children they identify as having special educational needs and the proportion they place in mainstream schools. Countries with high use of special placements should develop more inclusive systems, with progress reviewed against targets.

2. Categorisation systems may be used to plan additional support and reasonable adjustments, but may also be used to stigmatise and segregate. The meaning and use of particular labels may change over time.

Policy implication 2: Countries should examine carefully the cultural meanings attached to the labels they use and their practical implications in terms of education and employment outcomes. Disproportionalities in identification and placement, particularly relating to socially marginalised groups such as children from socially deprived backgrounds, Roma children and children of immigrants, should be identified. Measures should be taken to reverse unwarranted over-representation of particular groups amongst the SEN population, with progress monitored against targets.

3. SEN systems are shaped by a web of geographical, cultural, social and economic factors.

Policy implication 3: NGOs, EU agencies and national policy makers should take account of the diverse traditions shaping current SEN systems. Whilst promoting moves towards inclusion, they should be aware of the danger that discourses may change whilst practices remain the same.

4. Funding regimes may incentivise or disincentivise the development of inclusive provision.

Policy implication 4: National and local policy makers should monitor the effects of funding mechanisms, ensuring they support inclusive practice and provision.

5. Countries vary in relation to the proportion of children included in international attainment tests such as PISA.

Policy implication 5: Organisations co-ordinating international tests such as PISA should provide clear guidelines on which children should be included in international tests. Countries should monitor and report on which children have been tested so that appropriate adjustments to raw scores may be made.

6. Learning support teachers and classroom assistants play a vital role in making inclusion work well in practice.

Policy implication 6: National and local governments should ensure that funding is available to employ sufficient support staff, and teachers should be trained in the management of such staff, ensuring in particular that learning support assistants help pupils without having a negative effect on their social integration.

7. Teacher education and continuing professional development have not always been organised along inclusive lines.

Policy implication 7: Providers of teacher education across Europe should ensure that the theoretical and practical aspects of programmes prepare new recruits to reflect the principles of inclusion in all aspects of their work.

8. Disabled people are particularly likely to leave school with few or no qualifications.

Policy implication 8: National and local policy makers and schools should make every effort to ensure that children with special educational needs leave school with the highest educational qualifications they are capable of achieving. Trends in attainment should be monitored over time, with targets set for improvements.

A role for the European Commission

9. Equality policies for disabled people in relation to education, training, employment and other social policy fields have been developed relatively recently by the EU.

Policy implication 9: The European Commission should continue to develop high level policies on inclusion in the fields of education, training and employment, monitor developments through data gathering exercises and encourage policy convergence in this area.

10. Inclusion is understood differently in different European countries, with various interpretations of which groups are in need of additional support measures.

Policy implication 10: There is a need for the European Commission to encourage countries to define clearly what is meant by inclusion in their particular context and which groups of children and adults are in need of additional support measures. The Commission should encourage shared understanding of what counts as inclusion and which groups are in need of additional support in education and employment.

11. The mis-identification of SEN amongst Roma children and other minority ethnic groups appears to be related to policy on language of instruction in many European countries.

Policy implication 11: The European Commission should encourage countries to ensure that language difficulties are not mis-interpreted as evidence of SEN. Additional language support in mainstream schools for children who have recently arrived in the country should be standard practice across Europe.

12. Devolved governance and marketisation of education systems are growing trends across Europe, which may have negative consequences for children with special ed. needs.

Policy implication 12: The European Commission should encourage countries to monitor the impact of devolved governance and marketisation on children with special educational needs, ensuring that these global trends are not detrimental to inclusive practices.

13. There is a dearth of research on the effectiveness of inclusive practices for particular groups of children.

Policy implication 13: There is a need for the European Commission and national governments to commission research which is designed to assess the benefits of different types of inclusive practices for specific groups of children. Research findings should be widely disseminated so that they influence practice.

14. The poor social integration of children with SEN in mainstream classes has been highlighted by research.

Policy implication 14: The European Commission and national governments should encourage investigation of the best ways of promoting social integration in mainstream classes. This might involve research by teachers on their own practice. Knowledge exchange initiatives should be used to communicate findings to teachers.

15. Studies in a number of countries have demonstrated that children with complex and profound impairments may be difficult to include in mainstream classes.

Policy implication 15: The European Commission should encourage countries to identify the best ways of including children with the most significant impairments. This is likely to involve intensive support in mainstream or a mix of mainstream and special provision. It should be recognised that placement in mainstream schools may not be appropriate for some children with very significant impairments (e.g. those with multiple physical, sensory and cognitive impairments who have little or no speech).

16. Whilst inclusive practices have been gaining ground, some parents' groups and medical lobbies have campaigned for the recognition of medicalised categories such as ADHD.

Policy implication 16: The European Commission should encourage national governments to monitor the use of medicalised categories and psycho-pharmaceutical interventions. Parents, teachers and doctors should be educated about the various causes of behavioural difficulties which may lie in the classroom, the wider social environment and in parenting strategies. Schools should ensure that the focus of assessment is on identifying educational needs, so that medical labels by themselves are not used as passports to additional support.

17. Most pupils with SEN benefit from the application of common pedagogical principles which are relevant to all pupils, whilst a minority require intensive and focused teaching and additional adaptations.

Policy implication 17: The European Commission and national and local policy makers should encourage schools to use generic pedagogical strategies which support the learning of the majority of pupils. Teachers should be aware of how to differentiate learning materials, when to apply intensive teaching methods and additional adaptations, and when to draw on the expertise of specialist teachers and other professionals.

18. In some European countries curricula are standardised and inflexible, which makes the inclusion of disabled children difficult. Grade retention practices are also inimical with the principles of inclusion.

Policy implication 18: The European Commission and national and local policy makers should encourage the use of flexible and personalised curricula, with additional support delivered in age-appropriate settings.

19. Programmes (IEPs) are one of the devices which may be used to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have access to the mainstream curriculum, but also have individualised targets.

Policy implication 19: The European Commission and national and local policy makers should encourage the use of IEPs to specify the individualised learning targets for pupils with special educational needs. The attainment of individual children should be regularly monitored against targets, and new short-term and long-term targets set as required.

20. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have a vital role to play in identifying the academic and social needs of their children, and in supporting their learning.

Policy implication 20: The European Commission should encourage the active involvement of parents. National and local policy makers and schools should ensure that parents are fully involved in all aspects of their children's education, including identifying difficulties, establishing learning goals and monitoring progress. It should be recognised that some parents will need considerable support themselves to be able to assist their child's learning.

21. Compared with their non-disabled peers, young disabled people in the 16-24 age group are less likely to participate in post-16 education and training, and transitions from school to post-school education may be impeded by a range of barriers.

Policy implication 21: The European Commission should encourage post-16 education providers to ensure that transitions are as smooth as possible, with the use of individual transition plans where appropriate. Reasonable adjustments should be made in order to include disabled people in education and training opportunities, preferably in mainstream rather than special settings.

22. Disabled people are less likely to progress into higher education than non-disabled people.

Policy implication 22: The European Commission should encourage national governments to monitor participation of disabled people in higher education over time and strive for equal participation rates of disabled people who do not have significant cognitive impairments.

23. There are no cross-European comparative data on the participation of disabled students in higher education, or on the impairments and outcomes of those who participate.

Policy implication 23: The European Commission should work with EU Member States to develop harmonised definitions and survey questions, so that cross-national comparisons may be made on higher education participation rates. Targets should be set to monitor progress over time.

24. There is a lack of up-to-date and reliable data on participation of disabled people in employment in different European countries

Policy implication 24: The European Commission should work with member states to conduct regular and reliable data-gathering on the employment of disabled people, allowing inter-sectional analyses to be conducted.

25. Disabled people with low or no qualifications are less likely to be in employment than disabled people with higher level qualifications. In terms of employment outcomes, disabled people with low or no qualifications are also disadvantaged compared with non-disabled people with low or no qualifications.

Policy implication 25: The European Commission should encourage countries to ensure that, as far as possible, disabled people receive the necessary support to gain educational qualifications, since this is likely to improve their labour market position. The educational qualification levels of working-age disabled people should be tracked over time, with targets set for improvements.

26. The position of unskilled workers in labour markets across Europe has deteriorated since the 1970s, and that of disabled unskilled workers has declined even more markedly.

Policy implication 26: The European Commission should encourage national governments to ensure that those without qualifications are able to participate in the labour market, in order to mitigate their risk of poverty and social exclusion. The position of unskilled workers in the labour market should be tracked over time.

27. Disability benefits ameliorate the risk of poverty and social exclusion, but are likely to be reduced in the context of the current public spending squeeze across Europe.

Policy implication 27: The European Commission should encourage national governments to undertake equality impact assessments to ensure that reductions in social transfers do not have a disproportionately negative impact on disabled people.

28. Flexicurity arrangements are helpful in allowing disabled people to work part-time without the entire loss of benefits

Policy implication 28: The European Commission should encourage member states to further develop flexicurity arrangements.

29. There is considerable convergence on disability and employment policy across Europe, with most countries adopting a similar repertoire of employment support measures. However, employment support and vocational rehabilitation programmes vary with regard to their effectiveness in moving disabled people into the labour market, or helping them to retain employment if they become disabled whilst working.

Policy implication 29: The European Commission should encourage national governments to monitor the outcomes of employment support programmes and prioritise those which appear to have better outcomes, particularly if they provide greater autonomy for disabled people. Employment retention programmes which aim to keep disabled people in employment should be developed further.

CHAPTER 1. Policies and Practices in Education, Training and Employment for Disabled People in Europe

Introduction

Historically, disability has been seen as a private trouble rather than a public issue, to be dealt with by individuals and their families, with some support from charitable bodies. For at least three decades, disabled people have challenged the personal tragedy discourse, campaigning for a new understanding of disability as socially constructed and created, rather than the inevitable outcome of impairment (Oliver, 1990). Ensuring equal access to education, training and lifelong learning has been a central focus of the struggle for equality and human rights (see below for further discussion). Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities underlines the importance of inclusive education as a means of enabling disabled people "to participate effectively in a free society". To ensure that participation is meaningful rather than tokenistic, Article 24 specifies that states have a responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations and appropriate support tailored to individuals' needs. The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (European Commission, 2010c) notes the strong mandate on the EU and member states to improve the social and economic situation of people with disabilities and underlines the aspiration of creating a barrier-free Europe (see below for further discussion).

In this review, we chart the current state of play with regard to the development and implementation of inclusive approaches within education, training and employment support systems within Europe and other parts of the developed world. We focus on the issue of disproportionalities in identification of special educational needs in relation to social background, gender and ethnicity. Although the discourse of inclusion is espoused by all European countries, the over-representation of socially marginalised groups within special education raises questions about whether this provision is promoting or undermining social inclusion. Competing understandings of inclusive education are discussed, and particular challenges in terms of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment are reviewed. Employment outcomes for disabled people are analysed and questions are raised about the nature and efficacy of employment support services. In this scene-setting chapter, we first consider approaches to disability equality in European social policy.

It should be noted that the terminology of "special educational needs" tends to be used at school level, whereas the language of "disability" is used at post-school level, reflecting the different discourses which are deployed at different life stages. The dominance of the special educational needs discourse at school level reflects the power wielded by professionals in identifying difficulties and allocating resources, whilst the discourse of disability is informed by a rights discourse. Efforts have been made to introduce a stronger rights discourse into education, but this has not been readily embraced by professionals (Riddell and Weedon, 2009). Special educational needs research has tended to be informed by psychology rather than sociology and there is therefore only a limited literature on social class and special educational needs. Policy and practice has tended to focus on how to "fix" individual children's problems, rather than identify and change the factors which give rise to difficulties in learning in the first place, which, as explained more fully in chapter 3, are often rooted in social, cultural and economic disadvantage.

1.1. European social policy and disability

As noted by Priestley (2007), the initial goal of the European Community was to create the economic and social conditions to facilitate the operation of a single market. The founding treaty of the European Economic Community in 1957 had a much greater focus on political and economic integration than on social and human rights, with the exception of rights to employment. The Single European Treaty of 1987 placed greater emphasis on citizenship rights, and subsequent European social policy documents, such as the EU Social Agenda (2005-2010) and the Strategy for Social Inclusion (2004), link human rights with social policy, with the goal of tackling discrimination and inequality throughout Europe. The most recent policy documents, formulated in the wake of the economic crisis, including the Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2010b), seek to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Within the strategy, equity and efficiency are seen as mutually reinforcing elements underpinning economic prosperity.

Priestley (2007) notes that a clear focus on disability within European social policy has emerged slowly over the past decade, influenced by a number of wider social forces including the growth of grassroots disability movements in member states. Official policies for disabled people in many member states tend to reflect a medical conceptualisation of disability, locating deficits in individuals to be addressed through medical treatment, rehabilitation or compensation. By way of contrast, the social model of disability promoted by disability activists focuses on the role of economic, social, political and cultural barriers in the creation of disability (Oliver, 1996; Priestley, 1998). The remedy, according to this analysis, lies in the removal of such barriers, so that individuals with impairments no longer experience discrimination and exclusion.

The growing influence of the disability movement was reflected in the recognition of disability as an equality strand, along with gender, race, religion or belief, age and sexual orientation, within the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997. Subsequently, the Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000) highlighted the social integration of disabled people, and was supported, in the same year, by a framework directive on non-discrimination in occupation and employment, requiring member states to implement anti-discrimination legislation by 2003. The framework directive was the first legislative intervention by the European Community relating to disabled people’s rights. Most recently, the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (European Commission, 2010c) identifies the fields of education and training and employment as two of the eight main areas for action. The Strategy notes that one in six of the European working age population (80 million people) are classified as disabled[1]. The rate of poverty for this group is 70% higher than the average[2] partly due to limited access to employment.

The European Community has also increasingly co-operated with other pan-national organisations in the promotion of inclusive education and rights for disabled people. European member states endorsed the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Educational Needs (UNESCO, 1994) and the Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All (UNESCO, 2000). More recently, the European Community signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in conjunction with member states in 2007. Ratification of this treaty has run into problems due to anxieties that treaty ratification commits member states to closure of all special schools. As noted above, the Convention includes a commitment to promote inclusive practices for disabled adults and children across all fields of social policy, including education, training and employment.

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[1] EU Labour Force Survey ad hoc module on employment of disabled people (LFS AHM), 2002

[2] EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), 2004.

1.2. Education and lifelong learning policy and links with disability

As a result of the early economic focus of the European Community, education and lifelong learning did not feature prominently in its activities (Holford et al., 2008). However, the Treaty of Maastricht, signed in 1992, established education unambiguously as an element of European social competence. As noted by a range of writers (e.g. Boshier, 1998; Field, 2006), throughout the 1990s European policy on education and lifelong learning tended to focus on their contribution to utilitarian economic objectives rather than to wider social goals, often referring to the challenges of globalisation and the danger of Europe being over-taken by the emerging economies of China, India and Brazil.

The economic models which influenced education and lifelong learning policies often assumed a tension between equity and efficiency. However, this dichotomy was challenged by writers such as Nicaise (2000) and Wilkinson (1996, 2005), the latter arguing that more economically equal societies performed better on many measures including health, well-being and levels of violence. Reflecting these arguments, the 2006 Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament maintained that social inequality carried serious economic costs and that efficiency and equity in education and training systems were complementary rather than dichotomous, with greater equity leading to greater efficiency.

It is important to note that, in the context of European policy on education and lifelong learning, equity has often been understood in economic terms, with relatively less attention paid to differences in outcomes associated with the six protected equality grounds (gender, race, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation, age) (Holford et al., 2008). However, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE), established in 1996, has a remit to improve the quality of special needs provision across Europe by encouraging cross-country collaboration and knowledge exchange. The Agency's work programme reflects both member countries' priorities and agreed EU policies on learners with special educational needs.

The Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2010b) includes clear performance indicators for education, including advice to member states that they should reduce the proportion of early school leavers. The aim is to reduce the European average of early school leaving to less than 10%. The close links between educational and economic performance are thus clearly recognised at European level, and although responsibility for education rests with member states, there are clear attempts to achieve convergence in the outcomes of particular systems.

1.3. Defining inclusive education

Although the language of school and social inclusion is all-pervasive in European policy discourse, there is often a lack of clarity about its operational meaning in terms of which groups are to be included and what are the defining characteristics of school and classroom inclusion. Booth (2000) describes inclusive education as the process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, curriculum and community of mainstream schools. Ainscow (2006) maintains that schools should focus on increasing the participation and attainment of groups who have historically been marginalised. Across Europe, there is variation in relation to which groups are recognised as in need of inclusion. For example, in England the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) states that the following groups must be included in inclusive schools: girls and boys, men and women; black and minority ethnic and faith groups; Travellers; asylum seekers and refugees; learners with "special educational needs"; "gifted and talented" learners; children "looked after" by the local authority; sick children; young carers; children from families under stress; pregnant school girls and teenage mothers; learners at risk of disaffection and exclusion. Most European countries do not provide such a comprehensive list, although clearly there are other dimensions which could be added relating, for example, to pupils with additional language needs. Vislie (2003), writing from a Norwegian perspective, suggests that there are on-going tensions within Western countries with regard to understandings of whether inclusive education applies only to or principally to students with special educational needs, or whether the concern should be with a much wider group, as defined above. She argues that "the challenge for inclusion is to get free from the continuous focus on special education and become able to set its own agenda" (Vislie, 2003), with a much wider focus on social exclusion.

Operational understandings of inclusive practice also vary greatly, often leading to considerable imprecision in terminology. The English Warnock Report (Department of Education and Science, 1978) argued that "integration" (the terminology in use at that time) might be locational, social or functional. *Locational* integration involved educating children with special educational needs on the same sites as other children, but with little educational or social mixing. *Social* integration was characterised by the mixing of children at break times, lunchtimes and for certain lessons such as Art, but with a large degree of separation for the bulk of learning activities. *Functional* integration involved the inclusion of children with special educational needs in all aspects of school life, including the mainstream curriculum and assessment. Whilst these distinctions are no longer in common usage, they none-theless continue to reflect the diversity of practices which may be counted as inclusion. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2010) note that inclusive practice varies widely, from including children with special educational needs in mainstream schools by relocating specialist provision from special to mainstream schools, to a broad notion of responding to diversity among learners without recourse to categorisation.

Whilst recognising that inclusion cannot be rigidly defined, there is a danger that the term may be couched so broadly as to become meaningless. Fulcher (1989), Riddell (2007) and Slee (2010) have noted the discursive use of language in this area. In line with current orthodoxy, describing a particular practice as inclusive acts as a legitimating device. In this way, completely different, and often contradictory, types of educational provision may be justified under the banner of inclusion. For example, in some parts of Scotland special units providing segregated education are euphemistically described as inclusion units. It is also clear that if children from extremely socially disadvantaged backgrounds are educated together, as might be the case in relation to Roma children in parts of Central and Eastern Europe, then this cannot be regarded as inclusive education, irrespective of the school's designation as mainstream or special. It is therefore important that countries, local authorities and schools define clearly what they understand by inclusion, so that exclusive practices may be identified and changed over time. The need for support in identifying and monitoring school inclusion is indicated by the popularity of the Index for Inclusion (Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE), 2000). Originally developed in the UK, the Index provides a list of indicators and questions to assist schools in engaging in a process of self-review with a view to developing inclusive ethos and practices. The Index has been translated into more than 32 languages.

1.4. Methods and scope of the review

Various methods have been used to access research and statistical data on policy and practice relating to education and training for people with special educational needs and disabilities. Searches of social science databases (ERIC, BEI, AIER) were carried out and relevant texts obtained. Policy documents relating to education and training published by the European Commission and associated agencies (e.g. CEDEFOP and the European Agency for the Development of Special Needs Education) were gathered. Reports from NGOs were also obtained (e.g. The Open Society Institute, Amnesty International, UNESCO). Statistics were drawn from a range of sources, including government statistical services, OECD, the European Agency for the Development of Special Needs Education and the Labour Force Survey. In addition, a range of organisations and individuals working in the research and policy field were contacted to request information on their ongoing work in the relevant domains. The draft report was read by other academic experts in the field to confirm the validity of the conclusions and to check that there were no major omissions or factual errors.

Primary data analysis was not included in the remit of this review, which is issues based, and does not seek to provide a systematic review of all the literature on all categories of SEN and disability produced by all European and other developed countries. It has only been possible to draw on the English language literature. However, international coverage has been achieved through a careful analysis of work published in international journals (e.g. the European Journal of Special Needs Education, the International Journal of Inclusive Education) and policy and statistical reviews conducted by bodies such as the OECD and the European Commission.

1.5. Conclusion

This chapter has set the broad scene with regard to the forthcoming analysis of education, training and employment support systems for disabled people. It has been argued that because the European Community initially focussed on the creation of a single market, less attention was paid to education and lifelong learning on the one hand, and to equality issues on the other. As the social agenda of the European Community developed over the past two decades, there has been greater focus on education and lifelong learning not only as drivers of the economy, but also as creators of socially cohesive societies. The voice of disabled people in Europe has grown over this period, drawing on the development of grass-roots movements of disability activists and their supporters in member states. Along with the establishment of legal protection for disabled people, there have also been efforts to promote their visibility and voice, reflected in the European Year of Disabled People in 2003 and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (European Commission, 2010c). Whilst policies on education and lifelong learning are determined by member states, there is also a quest for policy convergence, driven in part by pan-national agreements such as the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which may be seen as part of a process of globalised governance. In the following chapter, the focus is on the use of particular categories of special educational needs in different member states and variations in the proportion of people identified as having special educational needs and disability which arise as a result of these variations.

The structure of the report is as follows. Chapter 2 considers the classification systems and the use of mainstream and special settings for children with special educational needs in different European countries. In chapter 3, the focus shifts to a consideration of the social characteristics of children with special educational needs in different countries. The disproportionate identification of children in relation to gender, ethnicity and social class is also explored. Classroom practices are the subject of chapter 4, which presents evidence on the curricular and pedagogical approaches which are most likely to foster inclusion. Chapter 5 analyses the post-16 education, training and employment experiences and outcomes of disabled people and chapter 6 explores the different approaches to employment support across Europe. Finally, chapter 7 draws together the main themes arising from the review together with their policy implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2. European SEN Classification Systems and Placement Patterns

Introduction

All countries in the developed world have systems of categorising children with special educational needs. Each system of categorisation is underpinned by particular discourses concerning normality and difference, and is often used to legitimate other important decisions, including which children are placed in special schools or classes, receive different types of teaching, are included in testing regimes and attract additional funding or other types of adjustment. Categorisation systems shape the purpose and ethos of particular types of school which may be impairment specific, such as schools for the blind and deaf which are common across Europe and other developed countries. Special educational needs categories may also shape the professional identities and practices of teachers who work in these schools. By the same token, teachers, professional bodies, voluntary organisations and parents may act as champions for particular categories, which may fall in and out of favour at different times. This chapter discusses categorisation systems and the proportion of children identified as having special educational needs across Europe and in the wider international context. Placement patterns with regard to the use of special and mainstream settings are analysed and factors leading to national variations are discussed. These include geographical, historical and cultural influences, the extent of parents' rights and the education policy context, including marketisation and devolved governance.

2.1. Categorisation and dilemmas of difference

Norwich (2008) developed the concept of dilemmas of difference in relation to special educational needs decision-making. Labelling a child as different may be beneficial in terms of justifying the allocation of additional resources to purchase auxiliary aids and services to overcome barriers, such as a specially adapted chair for a child with a physical impairment or a learning support assistant for a child with autistic spectrum disorder. The need for reasonable adjustments to overcome a range of social barriers underpins disability equality legislation and is seen as entirely consistent with social model thinking as discussed in Chapter 1. On the other hand, labelling a child as different may be extremely dangerous if this leads to social segregation and the development of a spoiled identity. As discussed further in Chapter 3, some labels tend to be socially stigmatising and are associated with diminished future life chances (e.g. social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and learning difficulties). Other labels, whilst not entirely stigma-free, may be actively promoted by voluntary organisations and pursued by parents (e.g. dyslexia). We return to the positive and negative aspects of different approaches to identification and categorisation in the concluding section of this chapter.

2.2. International approaches to SEN categorisation systems

It is difficult to make international comparisons with regard to SEN policy and practice since each country has a different system of classification. The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (EADSNE, 2009, 2010) has illustrated this diversity but has not tried to impose a harmonised system. By way of contrast, the OECD (2000, 2005, 2007) has attempted to analyse country differences and merge categories in order to make cross-country comparisons. In a report published in 2000, the OECD analysed the definitions used in 23 countries and identified the following four basic patterns:

1. Use of disability categories only (for example, France, Germany)
2. Use of disability categories plus disadvantaged students (for example, Greece, New Zealand)
3. Use of disability categories plus disadvantaged students plus gifted students (for example, Spain, Turkey)
4. Provision based on the need to respond to exceptionalities rather than defining students (for example, New Brunswick, Canada, UK, Denmark).

In order to undertake cross country comparative analysis, the OECD invited the 22 countries participating in its on-going studies of SEN to reclassify their national categories into the following framework:

Category A: disabilities with organic origins where there is substantial normative agreement about the categories (for example, sensory, motor, severe, profound intellectual disabilities);

Category B: difficulties which do not appear to have organic origins or be directly linked to socio-economic, cultural or linguistic factors (for example, behavioural difficulties, mild learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties, dyslexia);

Category C: difficulties that arise from socio-economic, cultural, and/or linguistic factors; some disadvantaged or atypical background which education seeks to compensate for.

This system has some negative features, in that it tends to gloss over national complexities. On the other hand, it has some utility in teasing out some important international contrasts.

A further system is the International Classification for Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2002). This system is intended to act as a planning device for policy makers by blurring the distinction between social and medical models, focusing on impairments, activity limitations and social participation restrictions. Reflecting this complexity, it has been termed the "bio-psycho-social model". Within the ICF, a person is identified within four dimensions:

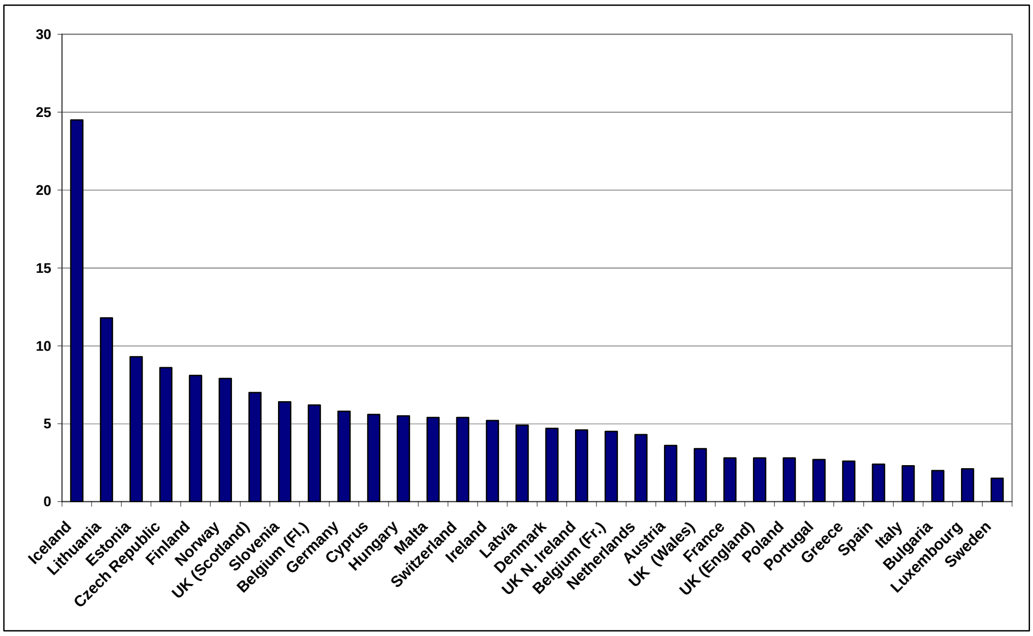
1. body function (covering physical and psychological function)
2. body structure
3. activity and participation
4. environmental factors

A child and youth version of the ICF has been developed (Simeonsson et al., 2003). Despite the attractiveness of its multi-dimensional nature, it is evident that the ICF has to date not been greatly used in the categorisation of individual children nor in the planning and monitoring of SEN systems.

2.3. The proportion of children identified as having special educational needs in different European countries

There is considerable variation across Europe in the proportion of children identified as having SEN, as shown by Figure 2.1 below and Table 2.1 (next page), which draw on data published by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education in 2010. They show considerable variation in the percentage of the school population identified as having special educational needs, ranging from 1.5% in Sweden to 24% in Iceland. However, caution is needed in interpreting these data. England, for example, appears to identify only 2.8% of children as having special educational needs, whilst Scotland is reported as identifying 7%. However, the English data only include children with a statement of need and exclude children receiving support in mainstream classrooms but who lack a statutory plan. By way of contrast, the data for Scotland include all children who are receiving support, not only those with statutory support plans. There are major variations in a number of countries over time, often reflecting different counting practices rather than policy change. For example, in 2008, Estonia recorded 19% of children as having special educational needs, but only 9.2% in 2010. This was because, in 2008, all children with some sort of additional need were included in the statistics, whereas in 2010 only those with more significant difficulties were counted.

Figure 2.1. Pupils identified as having SEN as a percentage of the total school population in selected European countries



Source: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, Country Data 2010

Note: The statistics for Bulgaria and Italy are drawn from European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, Country Data 2008 since they are not included in the 2010 publication.

Table 2.1. Number of pupils in European countries in compulsory education and percentage in segregated special schools and special classes

Country	Number of pupils in compulsory education	Number of pupils with SEN and as % of total pupil population	Number of pupils in segregated special schools and as % of total pupil population	Number of pupils in segregated special classes and as % of total pupil population
Austria	802,519	28,525 (3.5%)	11,787 (1.5%)	965 (0.1%)
Belgium (Fl.)	871,920	54,336 (6.2%)	46,091 (5.2%)	0
Belgium (Fr.)	687,137	30,993 (4.5%)	30,773 (4.4%)	0
Bulgaria	693,270	14,083 (2.0%	8,119 (1.1%)	391 (0.05%)
Cyprus	97,938	5,445 (5.5%)	293 (0.3%)	583 (0.6%)
Czech Republic	836,372	71,879 (8.6%)	30,092 (3.6%)	7,026 (0.8%)
Denmark	719,144	33,733 (4.6%)	12,757 (1.8%)	18,986 (2.6%)
Estonia	112,738	10,435 (9.2%)	3,782 (3.0%)	1,459 (1.3%)
Finland	559,379	45,493 (8.1%)	6,782 (1.2%)	14,574 (2.6%)
France	12,542,100	356,803 (2.8%)	75,504 (0.6%)	161,351 (1.3%)
Germany	8,236,221	479,741 (5.8%)	399,229 (4.8%)	0
Greece	1,146,298	29,954 (2.6%)	7,483 (0.6%)	22,471 (2.0%)
Hungary	1,275,365	70,747 (5.5%)	33,014 (2.6%)	0
Iceland	43,511	10,650 (24.0%)	143 (0.3%)	348 (0.8%)
Ireland	649,166	33,908 (5.2%	4,976 (0.8%)	2,380 (0.4%)
Italy	7,326,567	170,696 (2.3%)	693 (0.01%)	0

Latvia	185,032	9,057 (4.8%)	6,363 (3.4%)	1,175 (0.6%)
Lithuania	440,504	51,881 (11.7%)	4,253 (1.0%)	855 (0.2%)
Luxembourg	64,337	1,374 (2.2%)	663 (1.0%)	0
Malta	48,594	2,645 (5.4%)	137 (0.3%)	13 (0.03%)
Netherlands	2,411,194	103,821 (4.3%)	64,425 (2.7%)	0
Norway	615,883	48,802 (8.0%)	1,929 (0.3%)	5,321 (0.9%)
Poland	4,511,123	127,954 (2.8%)	59,880 (1.3%)	0
Portugal	1,331,050	35,894 (2.7%)	2,660 (0.2%)	2,115 (0.2%)
Slovenia	162,902	10,504 (2.7%)	2,829 (1.7%)	400 (0.24%)
Spain	4,437,258	104,343 (2.35%)	17,400 (0.4%)	0
Sweden	906,189	13,777 (1.5%)	516 (0.06%)	13,261 (1.5%)
Switzerland	777,394	41,645 (5.4%)	16,223 (2.1%)	25,422 (3.3%)
UK (England)	8,033,690	225,920* (2.8%)	96,130 (1.2%)	16,190 (0.2%)
UK (Scotland)	647,923	45,357 (7.0%)	6,659 (1.0%)	1,481 (0.2%)
UK (Wales)	377,503	12,895 (3.4%)	3,070 (0.8%)	2,843 (0.7%)

* Data for England includes pupils with Statements of Need only

Source: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, Country Data 2010

Note: The statistics for Bulgaria and Italy are drawn from European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, Country Data 2008 since they are not included in the 2010 publication.

2.4. Wider international comparisons using OECD data

As noted above, the three-category system devised by the OECD has been used to draw some interesting cross-country comparisons. In 9 out of the 11 countries for which incidence data were available, a lower proportion of pupils was assigned to category A (organic disabilities) compared with category B (non-normative difficulties). There were also large differences in use of category A. For example, the US reported 5.6% of pupils in category A, 70% of whom were in mainstream classrooms, compared with 1.8% in the Netherlands, 87% of whom were in special schools.

Table 2.2 illustrates contrasting use of SEN categories in countries from which data were available in all three categories:

Table 2.2. Comparison of percentages of children in cross-national categories A, B and C over the period of compulsory education (countries for which data available for all three categories), 2003

	A (normative disabilities)	**B (non-normative difficulties)**	**C (social disadvantage)**
Mexico	0.73	1.61	34.83
Chile	0.97	4.81	19.85
Germany	1.59	2.81	0
Netherlands	2.52	7.49	22.26
Belgium (Fr)	2.63	1.57	13.71
Spain	2.97	3.62	3.43
United Kingdom (England)	2.99	12.33	0
Slovac Republic	3.45	0.59	0.16
Belgium (Fl)	3.80	1.53	24.19
Czech Republic	4.25	5.91	0.07

Source: OECD, 2007

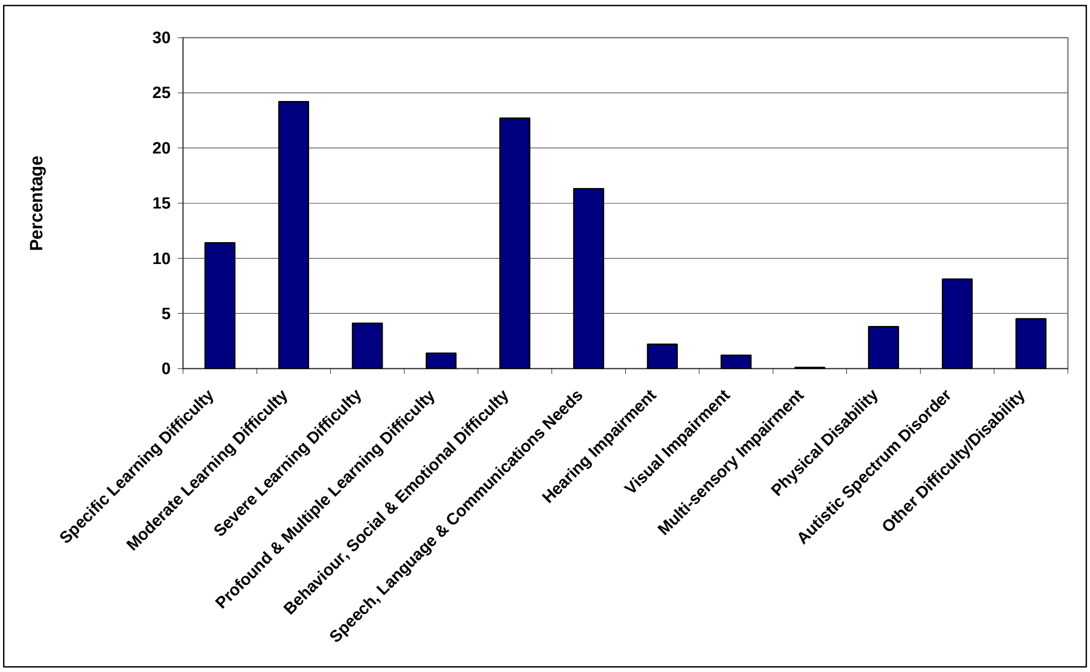
Overall, these data suggest marked differences across countries in understandings of which children should be categorised as different from the norm, underlining the socially constructed nature of SEN definitions. Some of the differences are difficult to explain. For example, one might expect that a poor country such as Mexico would have more disabled children compared with relatively richer countries such as Belgium and the UK. However, the reverse is the case, suggesting that the threshold for identification is lower in richer countries, but also that there may many disabled children in Mexico whose needs are not identified.

2.5. The nature of categories used different European countries

There are also major differences over time in the labels which are used to categorise children, and the social understandings which underpin particular labels. Some classifications, which are initially used to channel additional resources to certain groups of children, are later used to discriminate and derogate (Florian and McLaughlin, 2008), so it is important for all countries to examine critically their use of labels over time. European countries typically employ about twelve classification categories, mainly disability-based, although some may refer to social or cultural differences. By way of illustration, figures 2.2 and 2.3 (next page) show the differing categories which are used in England and Scotland. It is interesting to note that, following the Warnock Report in 1978, England officially abolished the use of such categories, using only the umbrella category "special educational needs". However, for a range of reasons including the need to plan services more effectively, the twelve categories shown below were reintroduced in 2003.

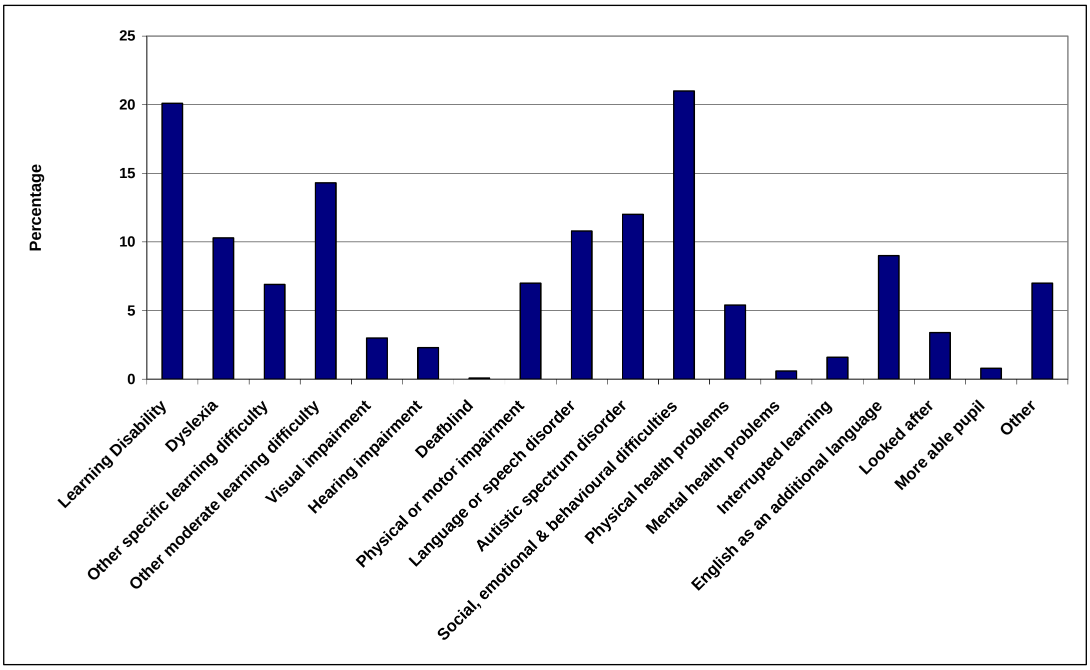
Scotland introduced the over-arching category of additional support needs in 2004, but uses eighteen sub-categories to officially record pupils' disabilities and difficulties. Whereas the English categories relate to disabilities, learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties, the Scottish system includes categories which relate to children's social situation, such as being looked after by the local authority or having frequent school moves, which might include children of Gypsies and travellers.

Figure 2.2. Pupils with different types of difficulty in England as a percentage of total SEN population, 2009



Source: Department for Education and Schools, 2010

Figure 2.3. Pupils with different types of difficulty in Scotland as a percentage of total ASN population, 2009



Source: Scottish Government, 2009a

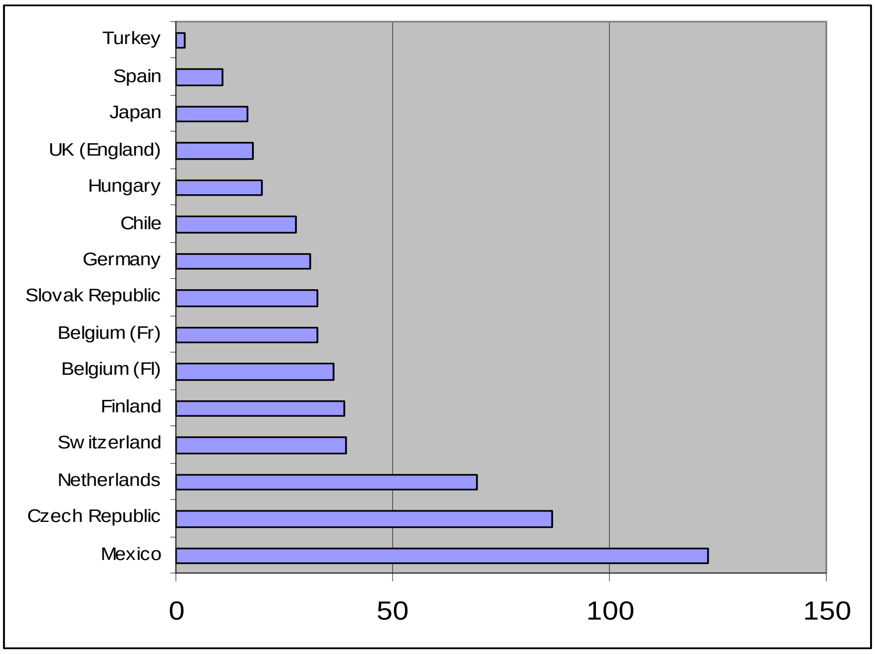
1. Categories are not mutually exclusive - children may be counted in more than one category

In analysing the types of categories used in England, Scotland and other European countries, a distinction may be drawn between normative and non-normative difficulties. Physical and sensory difficulties fall into the normative category, since there is broad agreement on what counts as normal functioning and as a result relatively objective assessment measures are available. By way of contrast, non-normative refers to types of difficulty where there is less agreement about normal functioning and where professional judgment plays a larger part in identification. Social emotional and behavioural difficulties, mild/moderate learning difficulties and dyslexia might be regarded as non-normative difficulties. Across all countries, normative categories tend to be low incidence, whereas non-normative categories are high incidence, accounting for the majority of children identified as having special educational needs in many countries.

2.6. Placement of pupils with special educational needs: international comparisons

There are marked discrepancies between countries with regard to their use of special schools (see figure 2.3). European countries with selective rather than comprehensive schools systems, such as the Netherlands, Belgium (both French and Flemish communities) and Germany have a relatively high number of special schools per head of population, and identification of SEN is often used as a trigger for special school placement. By way of contrast, countries like Spain and the UK, with comprehensive school systems, have less special provision. Poorer countries such as Turkey and Mexico illustrate two contrasting approaches. Turkey appears to make very little use of special schools, whereas Mexico appears to have a major investment in the special school sector, particularly for children identified as socially disadvantaged (see table 2.2).

Figure 2.4. Number of special schools per 100,000 of pupils in compulsory education: international comparisons

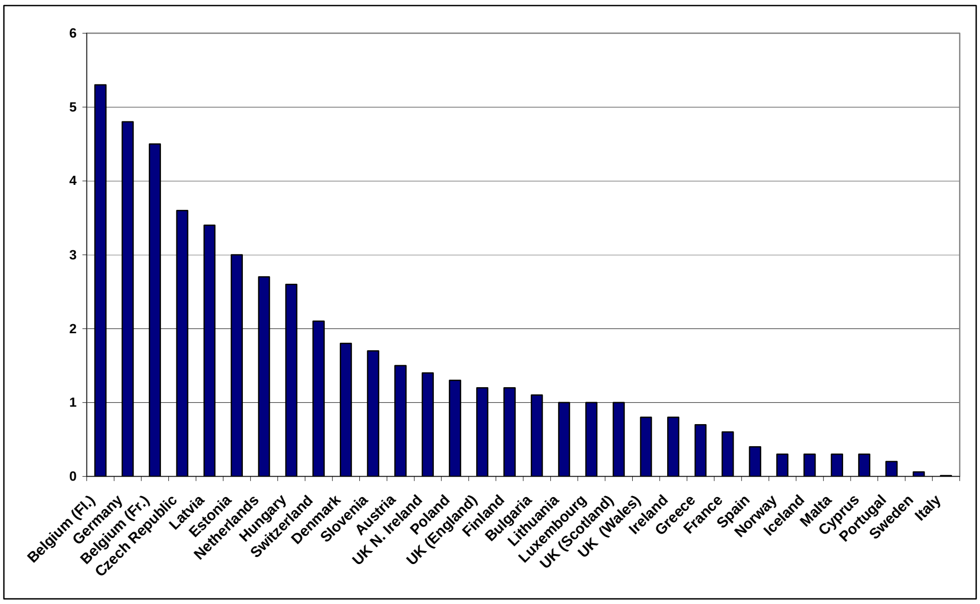


Source: OECD, 2007

2.7. The proportion of pupils in special settings in different European countries

Figure 2.5 uses data published by the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education in 2010 to illustrate variations in the use of special placements, including special schools and special classes, across Europe.

Figure 2.5. Pupils in special schools and classes as a % of the total school population in each European country



Source: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, Country Data 2010

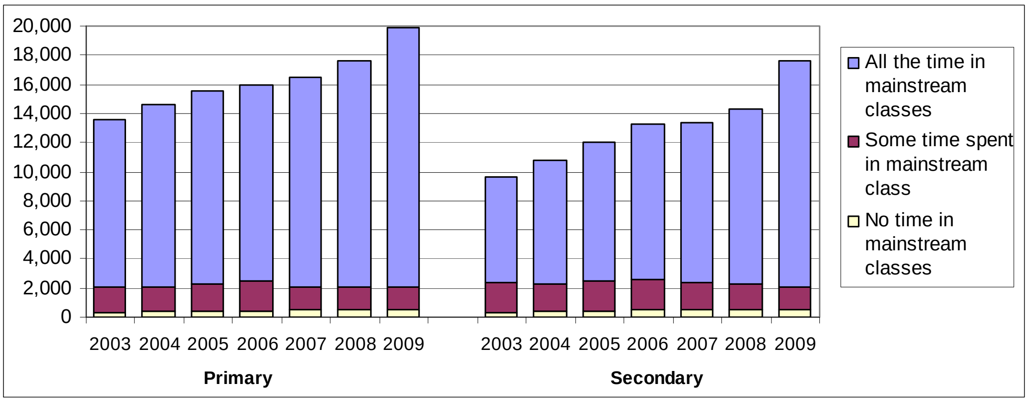
Note: The statistics for Bulgaria and Italy are drawn from European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, Country Data 2008 since they are not included in the 2010 document.

The figure shows marked variation in the proportion of children placed in special schools and classes, ranging from 0.1% in Italy to 5.8% in Switzerland, which has a relatively high proportion of pupils in segregated special classes, and 5.1% in Flanders, which has a high proportion of pupils in special schools.

2.8. Shifts from special to mainstream provision

Progress towards greater use of mainstream placements is evident in the majority of developed countries (OECD, 2007). For example, official government data for Scotland, illustrated in figure 2.5, show that a growing proportion of children are being identified as having additional support needs, most of whom are spending all of their time in mainstream classes. However, a degree of caution is called for in the interpretation of these data since the proportion of children educated in special schools or units (about 1% of the pupil population as illustrated in figure 2.6 has remained almost static for at least 20 years. Whilst some special schools have shut down, the number of special units attached to or embedded within mainstream schools, such as behaviour support units, has increased. Forms of exclusion may therefore have become less visible. Beneficiaries of inclusion policies tend to be higher achieving children with physical or sensory impairments, who might once have been taught in special schools, but are now routinely educated in mainstream classes in accordance with the wishes of their parents. As noted in chapter 4, it is common across European countries that teachers are less willing to include children with severe behavioural or learning difficulties who continue to be placed in special settings.

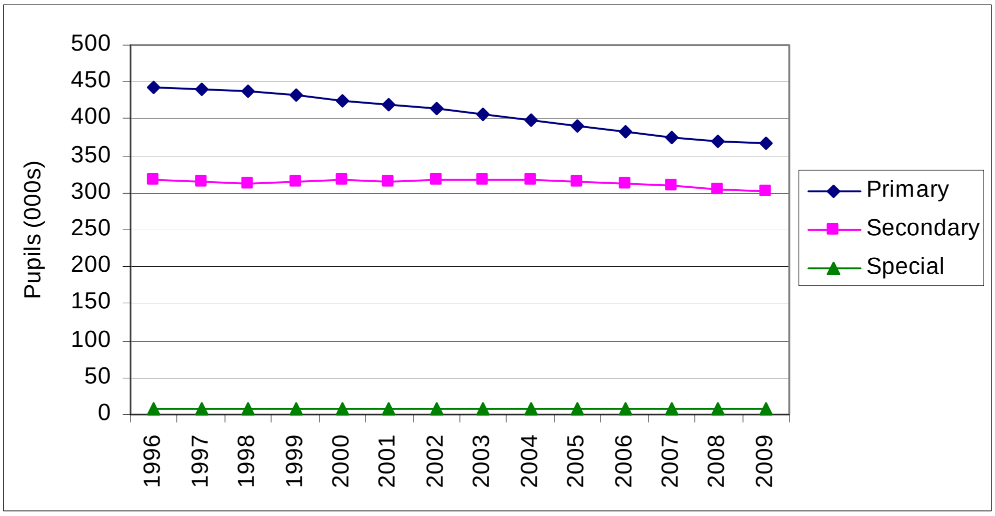
Figure 2.6. Numbers and location of children with additional support needs in mainstream schools in Scotland



Source: Scottish Government 2009a

A similar pattern may be observed in Finland (Kivirauma et al., 2006), where there has been a growth in the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs, a slight decline in the number of children in special schools accompanied by an increase in the number of children partly or completely integrated in general education. At the same time, there has been a marked increase in the number of pupils in special classes (see table 2.3).

Figure 2.7. Numbers of pupils in mainstream primary, secondary and special schools in Scotland



Source: Scottish Government 2009a

Table 2.3. Pupils with special educational needs in Finland according to educational setting

Setting or form of special education	1998	2001	2002	2003
Completely integrated in general education		4,653	6,061	7,224
Partly integrated in general education	1,852	5,602	6,190	7,439
Special class	7,972	9,377	10,866	21,147
Special school	12,002	11,200	10,900	10.029
Total	21,826	30,832	34,017	36,839
%	3.7%	5.2%	5.7%	6.2%

Source: Kivirauma et al., 2006, drawing on Finnish Department of Education data

In Norway, which has for many years promoted inclusive education, there is a trend towards the use of special placements for children who are judged to be particularly challenging. Skårbrevik (2005) noted:

> Special schools have been closing down in Norway over the past 20 years; however, for students with behaviour problems and at risk of dropping out of school, "alternative schools" have been established. These schools offer programmes that are less academic and contain more manual and physical activities (Skårbrevik, 2005, p. 399).

Corroborating this finding, Wendelborg and Tøssebro (2008) noted that children with special educational needs in Norwegian primary schools spent less time in mainstream classes as they became older. The authors suggested that this reflected a tension between the prevailing ideology of inclusion and school's maintenance of existing practice.

2.9. Summary of placement patterns

The general trend across Europe is towards a gradual reduction in the number of special schools and an increase in the proportion of children with special educational needs who are included in mainstream. However, this apparent increase in the use of inclusive placements partly derives from an increase in many countries, for example, Scotland and Finland, in the proportion of children identified as having special educational needs. In some countries, there has been an increase in the use of special units attached to mainstream, which may sometimes mask the use of special placements since children may be enrolled in the mainstream school, but spend very little of their time there. In addition, the use of various forms of alternative curricula for children who are deemed to be challenging may conceal the reach of the special sector. Looking at changes in patterns of placement across Europe during the 1990s, Vislie (2003) concluded that there was a great deal of inertia in the system, with countries which had always made considerable use of mainstream schools (e.g. Italy, Greece, Spain, Norway, Sweden) continuing to do so, whilst countries with high use of special schools (e.g. Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany) also continuing along traditional lines.

2.10. Factors shaping national systems of special needs education

In this section, a brief overview is provided of the factors which appear to have an effect on the shape and underlying conceptualisation of SEN systems in different countries.

Geographical, historical and cultural factors

Amongst "old" EU member states, earlier educational traditions continue to be reflected in current SEN systems. Countries of North West Europe with concentrations of population in urban centres, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany developed special schools from the eighteenth century onwards, first as philanthropical institutions and subsequently funded by the state. From the 1970s onwards, efforts have been made to develop more inclusive systems, although progress has been very slow (Vislie, 2003). By way of contrast, many countries in southern Europe, such as Italy, Spain and Greece, were much poorer prior to EU membership and did not have the same tradition of special education for disabled children. In Greece, for example, having a disabled child was sometimes regarded as a source of social shame, and, in the absence of local special schools, such children were cared for at home or in residential institutions (Vlachou, 1997). Children with learning disabilities, mental health difficulties and physical difficulties were sometimes institutionalised at an early age in remote rural or island communities, and it was not until the 1990s that these institutions were closed (Tsiantis et al., 1995a; 1995b). During the 1970s and 1980s, as the need to educate all disabled children was recognised in international agreements and national policies, Greece was able to develop a more inclusive system without having to close a large network of special schools. However, as pointed out by Vlachou (2004), resistance to the social inclusion of disabled children might still persist within ostensibly inclusive systems.

Within countries of Central and Eastern Europe making the transition from centrally managed to market economies, entirely different conceptualisations of disability have prevailed. As noted by a number of commentators (Tsokova and Becirevic, 2009; Radoman et al., 2006) the Soviet tradition of defectology, exemplified in the work of Vygotsky (1983) was very powerful. Within this discipline, the aim was to use psychometric and medical tests to identify children whose development was abnormal as a result of intrinsic organic rather than environmental factors. Children's academic aptitude was deemed to be fixed from an early age, and the task of the psychologist was to allocate the child to an appropriate type of special education. Discussing the system of special education in Serbia, Radoman et al. (2006) note the ongoing influence of the Faculty of Defectology at the University of Belgrade, which trains defectologists to work in special schools and residential institutions and has opposed the closure of special schools and the principles of inclusive education. Teachers in mainstream schools have also been influenced by defectological thinking, and therefore express animosity towards inclusion. Radoman et al. (2006) suggest that some other countries in the region, such as Albania, which was influenced by China rather than the Soviet Union, may face fewer barriers to the development of inclusive education because they do not have to begin by tackling ideological opposition to inclusion rooted in defectology.

According to Kugelmass and Galkiene (2003), the development of inclusive education in Lithuania was also affected by the legacy of the Soviet occupation. During the Soviet era, disabled children were either kept at home or sent to boarding schools catering for children with physical or mental disabilities. In 1990, 53 such special boarding schools were in existence. These schools were regarded as fitting well with Soviet ideas of socialised welfare provision, but they prepared children for a very limited range of vocational occupations and isolated them from the rest of society. Kugelmass and Galkiene (2003) noted a tendency to label "troublesome" families as either "asocial" or "dysfunctional". Children from asocial families, whose parents might be in prison, were particularly like to be sent to the special boarding schools, whereas children from dysfunctional families, whose parents might be drug users or alcohol abusers, were often denied education. The authors noted that since the re-emergence of Lithuania as an independent country, progress has been made, for example, during the 1990s the number of children with "mental disabilities" placed in special boarding schools fell by 50%. In 2001, 87% of pupils with special educational needs were being educated in mainstream schools, the majority in mainstream classes. Thirteen per cent of children with special educational needs continued to be educated in special boarding schools. However, obtaining accurate statistics may still be an issue, since there is evidence that, in 2001, 49.9% of rural children and 52.3 % of children living in urban areas did not attend school at all. According to Kugelmass and Galkiene (2003), the following obstacles continued to stand in the way of the development of fully inclusive education systems in Lithuania:

- Lack of competent and appropriately trained educators;
- Insufficient literature and research on integrated teaching methods;
- Non-readiness of individuals to accept people with disabilities;
- Blaming families for the problems faced by their children;
- Financial difficulties facing the country during the period of economic and political transition

Tsokova and Becirevic (2009) point out the dangers of assuming that models of inclusive education derived from the UK or Scandinavia may be parachuted into countries of Central and Eastern Europe without taking account of their existing traditions. Countries seeking accession to the European Union are under intense scrutiny from a range of international bodies including NGOs and may simply adopt discourses of inclusion, whilst underlying practice and thinking remains unchanged. Achieving attitudinal change within education systems is clearly a major task involving new thinking amongst policy makers, practitioners and teacher educators, and cannot simply be achieved by semantic change. The Teachers for the Future Initiative supported by the European Training Foundation attempts to encourage systemic change by fostering a deeper understanding of inclusive education within initial teacher education programmes.

Funding regimes

Meijer (1999), reporting on a study of seventeen European countries, argued that funding regimes which channelled resources to special schools tended to make greater use of the special sector, since available places were always filled. This suggests that children are placed in particular categories and identified as requiring special school provision in response to earlier funding decisions. The study also suggested that allocating individual budgets to pupils with special educational needs tended to encourage schools and parents to seek such funds, escalating the number of pupils identified as having SEN. This finding is supported by the US experience, where there has also been a steady increase in the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs, attributed by Bowers and Parrish (2000) to the use of individualised pupil funding. In England, where funds are partly directly allocated to the individual pupil by the local authority and partly devolved to the school for more general use, there have been inflationary pressures, with 20% of pupils currently identified as having special educational needs defined as having a statement of needs or being on a school action or school action plus programme. Meijer (1999) and Bowers and Parrish (2000) suggested that allocating funds to local authorities and schools, rather than to individual pupils, might be a more effective means of promoting inclusion and curbing escalating special needs budgets. By way of contrast, Evans (2007) suggests that local authorities should always be required to undertake an audit of children with special educational needs in specific locations, since distributing funds on the basis of proxy measures such as deprivation means that disabled children in socially advantaged schools are likely to lose out. Clearly, there is a need for local authorities to monitor carefully the impact of their funding regimes for pupils with special educational needs.

The impact of marketisation

Lange and Riddell (2000) compared the impact of marketised school systems in the US and the UK on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. In the 1990s, charter schools in the US and grant-aided schools in the UK were established to introduce greater diversity into the school system, thus allowing parents a greater degree of choice, at least in theory. Rather than being accountable to the local authority or the school district, these schools had independent boards of managers who had direct control of the school budget. Lange and Riddell (2000) concluded that even though charter and grant aided schools were bound by federal/national legislation relating to pupils with special educational needs, they generally regarded these regulations as unnecessarily bureaucratic and sought to bypass them. In the UK, there is considerable evidence that the school choice legislation of the 1980s in both England and Scotland tended to increase social segregation, with a greater concentration of pupils with SEN in socially deprived urban areas (Lupton, 2005). These areas also had a high proportion of run down social housing, so that pupils with SEN were experiencing disadvantage at an individual and family level as well as within their wider social environment (Clark et al., 2001). Whilst additional resources were channelled towards schools in socially disadvantaged areas, these were rarely sufficient to provide extra support for all pupils needing extra help.

Faith schools may also play a part in local educational markets. In England, for example, there is evidence that the pupil population of faith schools in London is significantly more socially advantaged than the population within the school's catchment area and faith schools include significantly fewer children with SEN (Allen and West, 2011). More recently in England, the marketisation agenda is being strongly promoted by the newly elected centre-right Coalition Government. Free schools, based on the Swedish model, are being set up alongside independently managed academies. It will be important to assess the extent to which these new schools include pupils with special educational needs and, across Europe, there is a need to monitor the impact of decentralised educational governance on pupils with special educational needs.

Parental power

There is considerable variation between countries with regard to parents' ability to choose their child's school and their legal right to challenge local authority decisions concerning placement and resource allocation. As a result of strong advocacy by parents and the disabled people's movement, in the USA, England and Scotland, parents are able to take cases to courts or tribunals if dissatisfied with educational provision, and also have access to alternative dispute resolution in the form of mediation. Recent research on dispute resolution in England and Scotland (Riddell et al., 2010b) indicates that local authorities are opposed to the extension of parents' rights of appeal, whereas parents contend that they only use litigation as a last resort and as a result of an endless struggle for resources. By way of contrast, in the US where litigation has been described as "almost a sport" for many people (Russo and Osborne, 2011), judicial routes to resolve special educational needs disputes are commonly used. In the USA and the UK, enabling parents to challenge school and local authority decisions appears to have raised the profile of special needs education and increased the funding allocated to disabled pupils. On the negative side, it is evident that socially disadvantaged parents, many of whom have children identified as having learning or behavioural difficulties, have great difficulty in using the judicial routes available to them due to lack of knowledge cultural capital and resources. By way of contrast, in many other European countries such as the Netherlands, there is less of a tradition of litigation in citizen versus state disputes and parents' rights of appeal are much weaker. Only about a hundred cases a year are subject to legal challenge in the Netherlands, compared with more than three thousand in England (Zoontjens, 2011). Zoontjens also makes the case that because parents in the Netherlands have not been empowered to challenge local decision-making, the special needs system remains shrouded in mystery and progress towards inclusion has been relatively slow.

Although children, rather than parents, are the direct consumers of education, their views are rarely taken into account when key educational decisions are made. They are rarely consulted about their experiences of particular types of educational provision. Harris (2005) suggests that in England, health and social work have made better progress than education in taking account of children's wishes, and it is clear that this is an area requiring further thought and development.

2.11. Conclusion

All developed countries use SEN categorisation systems to inform decisions on a range of issues including funding, placement, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Despite moves at international level to promote inclusive education systems, there is still wide variation in which children are identified as having SEN and where they are placed following identification. Data reported in this chapter underline the caution which is needed in making international comparisons based on the proportion of children identified as having special educational needs. There is always a danger that statistics are reified, with the assumption that they reflect an objective social reality in a straightforward manner. Statistics on the proportion of children with special educational needs illustrate different identification practices which often depend on local decision-making. In some countries, SEN identification is mainly used to trigger special school placement, and in countries with a large number of special schools (Belgium, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Finland, Germany) there are relatively high rates of SEN identification. In countries where SEN identification is linked to additional resource allocation (e.g. Norway and Scotland), a relatively large group of children may be so identified. Despite these caveats on data reliability, international comparisons are important and on-going efforts are needed to harmonise definitions and improve data gathering methods. There is a need for on-going scrutiny of underlying definitions and attention to short term fluctuations so that broader trends over time may be identified. Overall, different classification systems make it impossible to make reliable comparisons of educational outcomes for children.

In addition to the broad SEN category, most OECD and EU countries employ many sub-categories. Most of the sub-categories cover physical or sensory disabilities, which are typically low-incidence, and a smaller number of sub-categories relate to learning/behavioural difficulties, which are generally high incidence, accounting for the majority of children with SEN. A minority of countries count children experiencing social disadvantage as having special educational needs. Categorisation systems change over time and are underpinned by discourses with regard to which children merit additional support or special placement. Classifying a child as different from others may be beneficial if this leads to reasonable adjustments and additional resources as a means of promoting more equal outcomes. Conversely, the identification of difference may be coupled with stigmatisation and social exclusion, damaging social identity and life chances. It is important, therefore, to scrutinise all categorisation systems carefully, asking questions about whose interests are being served in the identification of difference, and whether the life chances of particular groups of children are being enhanced or diminished as a result.

Countries vary greatly in their use of special school placements depending on their geography, history and culture. Countries in north-west Europe with hierarchically structured school systems continue to make extensive use of special schools, as do former-Soviet countries influenced by the tradition of defectology. Geographical and historical factors are inter-linked, since in the past special schools were generally built in urban areas only. Because of transport problems, special schools in rural areas were judged to be non-cost effective and local schools traditionally catered for all children in the area. The only other alternative was to send children with SEN living in island and rural communities to residential schools. Such institutions have survived until recently in many parts of Southern, Central and Eastern Europe but are now being disbanded. If parents have the right to choose a school for their child with special educational needs, they are very likely to opt for a mainstream placement, particularly if they are confident that additional resources will be available. Judicial and non-judicial dispute resolution systems allow parents to challenge local decisions on resource allocation and placement, and such systems play an important part in supporting better resourced mainstream placements.

Funding mechanisms may also have an impact on the development of inclusive practices, for example, if special schools receive block grants from government they will almost certainly find pupils to fill all available places. Inclusive practices need to be incentivised rather than discouraged by funding regimes, so that additional funding follows a child with special educational needs into the mainstream school where they are placed. Such a change was introduced in the Netherlands about five years ago and as a result the number of children in special schools placements has fallen. Conversely, large block grants to special schools tend to promote the use of segregated placements, as is the case in Belgium. Finally, there is a growing trend across Europe towards devolved educational governance, whereby decisions on policy and resources are delegated to local level. This poses an increasing risk that schools in socially advantaged areas will be able to cherry pick their pupils, leaving children with special educational needs living in socially deprived areas to be educated together in institutions which become designated as "failing schools". Inclusive education implies that all school will include a diverse pupil population, and it is very difficult to achieve this outcome within systems which are driven by the market rather than social justice concerns.

CHAPTER 3

The Social Characteristics of the Special Educational Needs Population in Different Countries: the problem of disproportionality

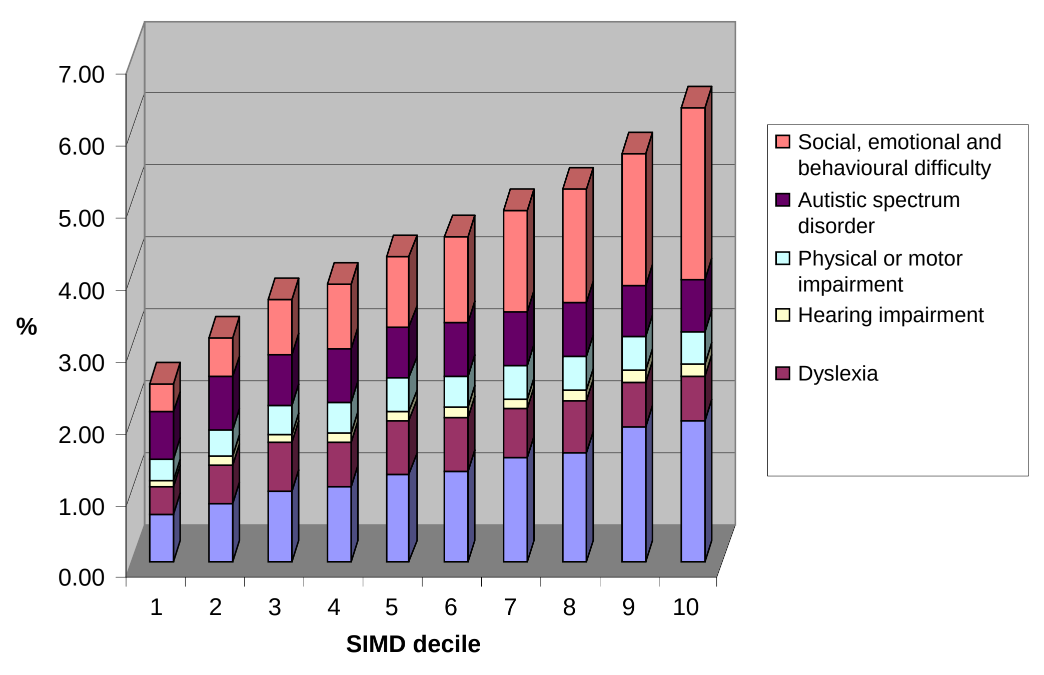
Introduction

In theory, labelling a child as having special educational needs should be used to justify the allocation of additional support and should therefore be advantageous. However, there are concerns across Europe that the disproportionate identification of certain groups of socially marginalised children, for whom SEN identification may lead to further stigmatisation and isolation (Dyson and Kozleski, 2008). In this chapter, we examine which children are particularly at risk of special school placements in different parts of Europe. We also explore some of the consequences of these disproportionalities.

3.1. Social deprivation and identification of special educational needs

Analysis of the identification of additional support needs in Scotland (Riddell et al., 2010a) shows that children living in areas of social deprivation are much more likely to have additional support needs identified than those living in more affluent areas (see figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. Percentage of Scottish pupils within each Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile by type of difficulty (selected categories).



1 = least deprived area
10 = most deprived area
Source: Scottish Government 2009

However, whilst normative difficulties such as hearing impairment and physical or motor impairment are only slightly more likely to be identified in areas of deprivation, non-normative difficulties, in particular social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, are more than four times as likely to be identified in the most deprived areas compared with the least deprived. A very similar pattern has been identified in England (Keslair and McNally, 2009). Writers such as Tomlinson (1985) and Armstrong (2003) have argued that the disproportionate identification of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties amongst children, particularly Afro-Caribbean boys from socially deprived areas, plays a significant part in legitimating their exclusion from the labour market. "Special education", Armstrong maintained, "is a convenient tool for legitimizing discrimination, racism and the lack of opportunities generally for young people" (Armstrong, 2003, p.121). The expansion of the special education category, Tomlinson noted, was particularly marked from the late 1970s onwards, and coincided with the collapse of traditional industries and the disappearance of many jobs undertaken by working class boys. The attachment of the label of special educational needs to socially disengaged young men enables the problem to be located within their orientation towards education and employment, rather than within the labour market.

Given the strong association between social deprivation and the identification of non-normative difficulties, it has been suggested by writers such as Croll (2002) and Dyson and Kozleski (2008) that the expensive system of individual special educational needs assessment should be abandoned, and replaced by funding allocated on the basis of social deprivation, which would channel most resources to schools with the greatest levels of need. However, even if this idea was partially adopted, figure 3.1 above shows that, whilst children with SEN are most likely to be living in areas of deprivation, they are also present in more affluent areas. If resources were allocated solely on the basis of social deprivation, then children with special educational needs in more affluent areas would lose out.

The predominant tradition in social science research has been informed by psychology rather than sociology, and there is therefore only a limited literature on social class and special educational needs. An exception here is a study by Kivirauma et al. (2006), who examined the social class background and other social characteristics of students in special education in one Finnish city. The parents were divided into upper, middle and lower social classes, and whereas 42% of the parents of children in general education had upper class backgrounds, only 20% of the parents of children in some form of special education were from this background.

3.2. Gender and identification of special educational needs

The OECD (2007) has noted that in all countries boys make up more than 50% of children identified as having special educational needs and receiving additional resources in compulsory education. The OECD report suggests that this discrepancy may be attributed partly to boys' greater vulnerability to risks associated with germs, genes and trauma, so that they are more likely than girls to experience childhood illness or inherited conditions, and they are also more likely to be involved in accidents both within and outside the home. Within the OECD analysis, there is a particular emphasis on school bias against boys as an explanatory variable, noting the growing preponderance of women amongst the teaching workforce, leading to the "feminisation" of education. However, such arguments appear to blame women for boys' problems at school and also ignore the difficulties which girls continue to experience. It is interesting to note that whilst the OECD has analysed gender disproportionalities in some depth, far less attention has been paid to race and social deprivation, and there is no inter-sectional analysis, exploring the relationship between gender and particular types of difficulty. Studies in various parts of Europe have highlighted the over-representation of boys amongst those identified as having special educational needs. For example, Kivirauma et al. (2006) note that in one Finnish city three out of four students in classroom-based special education are boys.

Scottish analysis has explored the inter-sections between gender and particular types of difficulty, as illustrated in table 3.1. Boys outnumber girls in all types of difficulty, but the discrepancy is most marked in non-normative categories such as learning difficulty and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, where there are also strong associations with social deprivation (see table 3.1). According to Riddell (1996), the evidence suggests that this disproportionality may be attributed in part to the effects of "germs, genes and trauma". Boys are more susceptible to certain childhood illnesses, diseases with an underlying genetic aetiology such as motor neurone disease and are also more likely to be injured as a result of accidents both inside and outside the home. However, this explains only a small part of their greater risk of SEN identification. Cultural bias amongst teachers and "laddish" behaviour associated with particular constructions of masculinity are also implicated, and, given the disproportionate diagnosis of non-normative conditions amongst boys, cultural factors are probably much more important than organic factors. This suggests the need for much greater awareness of teachers with regard to their own attitudes and assumptions about boys' behaviour, but also indicates the need to support boys to develop a greater ability to manage their own behaviour.

Table 3.1. Categories of additional support needs by gender, 2006, Scotland

Occurrence (Pupils with more than one reason for support will appear in each row)	Number of pupils			Rate per 1,000 pupils		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Pupils for whom category of difficulty is reported	5,744	13,378	19,122	16.6	37.5	27.2
Learning disability	1,581	3,018	4,599	4.6	8.5	6.5
Dyslexia	573	1,717	2,290	1.7	4.8	3.3
Other specific learning difficulty (e.g. numeric)	553	1,108	1,661	1.6	3.1	2.4
Visual impairment	236	340	576	0.7	1.0	0.8
Hearing impairment	226	287	513	0.7	0.8	0.7
Deafblind1	15	15	30	-	-	-
Physical or motor impairment	637	1,033	1,670	1.8	2.9	2.4
Language or speech disorder	643	1,491	2,134	1.9	4.2	3.0
Autistic spectrum disorder	359	2,084	2,443	1.0	5.8	3.5
Social, emotional and behavioural difficulty	875	3,368	4,243	2.5	9.4	6.0
Physical health problem	368	526	894	1.1	1.5	1.3
Mental health problem	26	71	97	0.1	0.2	0.1
Interrupted learning	86	143	229	0.2	0.4	0.3
English as an additional language	143	216	359	0.4	0.6	0.5
Looked after	170	267	437	0.5	0.7	0.6
More able pupil	17	60	77	-	0.2	0.1
Other	1,351	2,474	3,825	3.9	6.9	5.4
Not known/not disclosed	41	67	108	0.1	0.2	0.2

Source: Scottish Government (2007)
1. a dash indicates that it is nil or rounds to nil

3.3. Race/Ethnicity and identification of special educational needs

The disproportionate identification of special educational needs amongst pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds has been a particularly controversial issue in the US since the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act (EHA) in 1975 (Harry, 2007). The EHA was re-authorised in 1990 under the name of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the over-identification of Black pupils, particularly boys, has continued to be noted. As a result, identification risks have been tracked over time, first by the Office for Civil Rights and latterly by the Office of Special Education Programs. Donovan and Cross (2002) have noted that differences between Black and White pupils are most marked in relation to mental retardation (where Black pupils are twice as likely to be diagnosed compared with white pupils) and emotional disturbance. Donovan and Cross also note an "epidemic" of pupils identified as having learning disability, the European equivalent of dyslexia. This is a relatively non-stigmatised category which allows for reasonable adjustments such as extra time in examinations but does not result in placement in special school or class. It is interesting to note that Black pupils are slightly less likely to be identified with this disability compared with Whites, and children of Asian/Pacific Islander origin are very under-represented in this group.

Harry and many other US analysts have maintained that the disproportionate identification of special educational needs amongst Afro-Caribbean boys is not just a reflection of the fact that they are more likely to be poor and deprived of educational support in the home, but rather reflects discriminatory attitudes amongst teachers. Stressing that race in the US is not simply a proxy indicator of poverty, O'Connor and DeLuca Fernandez (2006), argued: "it is schools and not poverty that place minority students at heightened risk for special educational placement". An interesting point which is not greatly discussed in the literature is why Black boys are much more likely than girls to be the victims of such discriminatory attitudes.

Table 3.2. US Office of Special Education Programs: Risk of SEN identification by disability and ethnic group

Ethnic group	Mental retardation: risk index	Learning disability: risk index	Emotional disturbance: risk index
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1.2%	7.3%	1.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.57%	2.25%	0.27%
Black	2.63%	6.58%	1.56%
Hispanic	0.98%	6.81%	0.68%
White	1.12%	6.08%	0.98%
Total	1.33%	6.14%	1.10%

Note: Learning disability in the US is equivalent to specific learning difficulties/dyslexia, the preferred terminology in Europe

Source: Harry, 2007, adapted from Donovan and Cross, 2002

According to Harry, the social marginalisation of disadvantaged groups through placement in special education, often outside mainstream classes, is not a problem which is unique to the USA but is common in many other societies. In New South Wales, Australia, for example, Aboriginal students account for just 5% of total school enrolments, but in some parts of the state constitute 40% of enrolments in special schools (Graham et al., 2010). Indigenous pupils are also at much greater risk of special school placement in Canada and New Zealand (Gabel et al., 2009).

A sophisticated analysis of ethnic disproportionality in identification of SEN in England was conducted by Lindsay et al. (2006). Based on an analysis of the 2005 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data on 6.5 million pupils in maintained schools, the research found both under- and over-representation of some minority ethnic groups relative to White British pupils among the SEN group in general and among certain categories of SEN. After adjusting for gender, socio-economic disadvantage and year group, the research found that:

- Pupils from the two Traveller groups (Traveller-Irish and Traveller-Gypsy/Roma) were 2.5 times more likely to have an identified SEN than White British;
- Bangladeshi, Indian, Asian-Other and Chinese pupils were around half as likely to have an identified SEN as White British;
- Black African pupils were also less likely to have an SEN than White British;
- Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean had similar rates of identification compared with White British.

The researchers sought to identify over and under-representation in relation to particular types of SEN, and used a literature review, survey of local authority representatives and focus groups to identify possible explanations for these patters. Controlling for gender, socio-economic disadvantage and year group, it was found that:

- Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean pupils are around one and a half times more likely to be identified as having behavioural, social and emotional difficulties compared with White British Pupils. Teacher and school factors, including racist attitudes and differential treatment of Black pupils, were suggested as reasons for this over-identification. However, it was noted that the disproportionality applied to only some groups of Black pupils, and therefore more research was needed.
- Bangladeshi pupils were more than twice as likely to be identified as having a hearing impairment, and Pakistani pupils were between two and two and a half times more likely to be identified as having profound and multiple learning difficulties, a visual impairment, a hearing impairment or multi-sensory impairment compared with White British pupils. Genetic factors related to consanguinity (where parents are blood relations) were seen as an important factor in the literature. It was recommended that the Department of Health should engage in a sensitive strategy to engage the community in a consideration of the risk associated with consanguinity.
- Asian and Chinese pupils were less likely than White British pupils to be identified as having moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. An analysis of the literature suggested that this could be because of difficulties in disentangling learning difficulties from issues associated with English as an Additional Language (EAL). The literature suggested that lack of early take-up of health care among EAL groups might be an additional risk factor.
- Traveller of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma pupils were over-represented among many categories of SEN, including moderate and severe learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The literature suggested a number of implicated factors including negative teacher attitudes, racism, bullying, a curriculum which was perceived as irrelevant to Traveller culture, high mobility, poor attendance and early school drop-out.

There has been little research on ethnicity in relation to specific conditions. An exception here is an investigation of autism, education and ethnicity funded by the British National Autistic Society (2007). The report noted that most epidemiological studies do not examine links between particular conditions and ethnicity. In relation to autism, some studies have revealed a higher rate of autism amongst minority ethnic groups (e.g. Goodman and Richards, 1995), some have revealed a lower rate of autism (Croen et al., 2002) and some studies have found no difference in occurrence between different ethnic populations (Fombonne et al., 2001).

Based on surveys of families and interviews with families from black and minority ethnic communities, the study maintained that there was a need to clarify the question of whether there were differences in occurrences between different ethnic groups, and if so, whether these arose from social disadvantage, cultural biases in identification or greater genetic susceptibility amongst some groups. The report noted that some of the developmental milestones used to diagnose autism are culturally specific, for example, failure to make eye contact is often used as a diagnostic criterion, but amongst some groups making direct eye contact may be seen as disrespectful. Professionals' lack of cultural awareness may lead to a mis-diagnosis of children with language difficulties, so that poor language skills may be confused with autistic tendencies or, conversely, children with language difficulties may incorrectly be deemed to be on the autistic spectrum. Attitudes towards disability amongst minority ethnic groups may also contribute to mis-diagnosis. In some communities and cultures, disability and autism may be regarded as private or shameful, with the expectation that the family will cope alone. The report concludes that, in addition to more research on occurrence and diagnosis, there is a need for studies which investigate attitudes to autism amongst specific groups and the attitudes of professionals. Both health and education providers need to be sensitised to the values and beliefs of parents from minority ethnic backgrounds, so that the services provided are culturally appropriate. Similar points have been made in relation to the experiences of immigrant families of children with autism in the US, where culturally specific values and beliefs shape understandings of autism by families and practitioners, leading to misdiagnoses and lack of service provision (Welterlin and LaRue, 2007).

3.4. Children from immigrant backgrounds and identification of special educational needs

In Europe, there are concerns that in the context of increasing immigration, children who have language difficulties or cultural differences may mistakenly be regarded as having special educational needs and placed in segregated settings. Permisán and Fernández (2007) noted that in Spain, there are now half a million immigrant students, defined as those who do not have Spanish citizenship, most of whom come from South America. This represents 7.4% of the total number of young people enrolled in education overall, with a higher proportion living in the major cities. The authors described the compensatory programmes in Madrid aimed at supporting pupils whose mother tongue is not Spanish. These consist of educational compensatory classrooms, maintenance of mother tongue and culture programmes, itinerant support services for immigrant students and external compensatory services outside the school timetable. In Madrid, educational compensatory classrooms are the most common form of additional support, aimed at students between the ages of 14 and 16 who are at risk of leaving school due to family or social problems and who might otherwise not obtain a secondary school diploma. The knowledge of these students must be two years behind the norm for their age, and they must have negative feelings towards formal schooling and have serious difficulties adjusting to formal educational settings. The curriculum on offer consists of vocational courses such as electrical engineering, cooking, hairdressing, gardening and carpentry. The authors are quite critical of this type of provision, noting that it reflects a victim-blaming approach, locating the responsibility for educational failure within the student rather than within the system. They note that no research has been conducted on the employment outcomes of students who have been through these compensatory programmes, and argue that it would be more in tune with the principles of inter-cultural education to provide additional language support in mainstream settings, rather than stigmatising young people by placing them in segregated settings.

Germany also appears to place a high proportion of children without German citizenship in special schools, even if these children were born in Germany (Gabel et al., 2009). Considerable immigration took place into West, but not East, Germany from Southern and Eastern Europe after the World War ll period. Since the mid-1960s, the proportion of non-German special school students has increased more than twenty-fold. Although their percentage of the total school population in 1999 was only

9.4%, almost 15% of all students in special schools did not have German citizenship. This proportion is increasing, rather than decreasing, over time. By way of contrast, ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe (Aussiedler), who came to German in large numbers following reunification, automatically receiving German citizenship, were not disproportionately placed in special schools, even though many children did not speak good German on arrival. They benefited from positive integration policies, including language tuition, and their parents were more highly educated than other immigrants. Table 3.3 shows the risk of special school placement for different immigrant groups (excluding Aussiedler, who do not feature in official statistics).

Table 3.3. Percentage of students receiving special education by ethnic group compared with the percentage in the total student population (Germany, 2003-2004)

Ethnic group	Total students in all schools & as percentage of school population	Total students in special schools & as percentage of special school population	Relative risk *
Serbia & Montenegro	61,542 (0.63%)	9,284 (2.16%	3.42
Italy	65,987 (0.68%)	5,876 (1.37%)	2.02
Portugal	13,256 (0.14%)	960 (0.22%)	1.64
FYROM	7,134 (0.07%)	507 (0.12%)	1.61
Turkey	418,065 (4.30%)	28,928 (6.59%)	1.53
Other non-German	315,284 (3.24%)	19,369 (4.51%)	1.39
Bosnia & Herzegovina	20,398 (0.21%)	1,240 (0.29%)	1.38
Greece	33,760 (0.35%)	1,856 (0.43%)	1.25
Spain	7,200 (0.07%)	381 (0.09%)	1.20
Croatia	20,209 (0.21%)	892 (0.21%)	1.00
German	8,764,199 (90.10%)	360,662 (84.01%)	0.93
Total	9,727,034 (100%)	429,325 (100%)	1.0

*Relative risk is calculated as the percentage in special schools divided by the percentage in the total school population

Source: Gabel et al., 2009.

There is also evidence from Slovenia that rigid approaches to the curriculum lead to the educational and social exclusion of a range of marginalised groups. Peček et al. (2008) carried out a survey with a representative group of Slovenian primary school teachers to explore their attitudes to the following four groups deemed to be at risk of marginalisation: children with special educational needs, migrants from former Yugoslavia, children from Roma/Gypsy backgrounds and children from poor families. It emerged that the teachers did not consider it necessary to differentiate their teaching methods to acknowledge the cultural and language differences of the children of migrants or those from Gypsy/Traveller backgrounds, thus misidentifying learning difficulties or potentially contributing to their emergence. According to Peček et al. (2008), legislation in Slovenia states that children assessed as having special educational needs should only be included in mainstream schools if they are capable of achieving the same educational standards as other children, a policy endorsed by the teachers in the study. Rather than helping children with special educational needs participate in the classroom activities by differentiating the learning materials they used, they responded to the challenge of inclusion by lowering the standards of discipline and academic work which they expected. They were also doubtful as to whether they had the knowledge and skills to accommodate children with special educational needs within the mainstream classroom. By way of comparison with the other three groups, teachers were willing to make efforts to include children from poor families, did not lower academic or behavioural standards and considered that children from poor backgrounds should be able to achieve the same as others. A weakness of this study is that the four groups of children identified are treated as falling into discrete categories, with possible overlaps not being considered.

3.5. Roma children and identification of special educational needs

The over-representation of Roma students in special education has been identified in many European countries, including England (Dyson and Gallannaugh, 2008; the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania (European Roma Rights Centre, 2007a, 2007b; Burke, 1994). In some countries, the disproportionate use of special schools is particularly marked, for example, in the Czech Republic, 50% of Roma students are placed in special schools, compared with 1.8% of non-Roma students (European Roma Rights Centre, 2007a). Roma children are over-represented in the special education system in Serbia, and in Bulgaria, 44 -70% of Roma children are taught in special schools, and 51% of all children in special schools are Roma (Open Society Institute, 2007, 2010). In a report on education in central and eastern Europe (UNICEF, 2007), it was noted that separate provision for disabled children and ethnic minorities, particularly Roma children, is still commonplace.

NGOs have continued to monitor the position of Romany children in Central and Eastern Europe and have made recommendations to governments in relation to policy and practice. For example, Amnesty International (2010) provided advice to the Government of Slovakia on steps to end segregation for Romany children, following research which suggested that problems identified earlier had not been resolved. Key recommendations included the need to:

- immediately make and widely publicise a commitment to eradicate and reverse segregation in education;
- start collecting data disaggregated by the prohibited grounds of discrimination as an essential tool in monitoring the segregation of Romany pupils in schools, as well as for assessing the impact of measures taken by the government in this area;
- strengthen the use of support measures such as preliminary classes and teaching assistants;
- ensure that the content and means of education are consistent with human rights legislation;
- develop outreach programmes to raise awareness among Romany parents.

Similarly, a report by the Open Society in 2010 confirmed that in Serbia Roma children continued to be over-represented in special schools for children with learning difficulties. In the light of the Serbian Government's quest for accession to the European Union, the report recommends, amongst other things, that:

- rapid action should be taken to operationalise anti-discrimination measures, including a review of all existing legislation;
- the relationship between special and mainstream educational institutions should be clarified;
- children who are inappropriately placed in special settings should be transferred to mainstream schools;
- the Ministry of Education and its regional departments should focus on preventing new ways of excluding and segregating Roma children once they are placed in mainstream schools;
- local government and civil institutions should be more proactive in ensuring the right to quality education for all children, and in ensuring inclusion in schools and society.

Researchers have illuminated the social processes which underpin the pervasive segregation identified by NGOs. For example, Tsokova and Becirevic (2009) argued that the over-representation of Romany children in special schools in Bulgaria and Bosnia Herzegovina was a reflection of Roma parents' social and economic disadvantage, which lead them to accept any educational provision which was offered, despite having formal rights to choose their child's school. Interviews with policy makers in Bulgaria and Bosnia Herzegovina conducted by these researchers were used to explore how the policy of inclusion was understood and implemented and to assess the reliability of government statistics. The following quote from a Bulgarian NGO worker reveals their perception of why so many Roma children continue to be placed in special schools, and also the unreliability of statistical data due to confusion between disabled and Romany children:

> …parents of Romany children which are socially disadvantaged prefer to place their children in special schools because in such kind of institutions the State is entirely responsible for the children. When such children are placed in those institutions they are treated like disabled children. And this is one of the reasons why statistics are not very clear on the number of children placed in institutions – who are disabled, who are not (NGO worker, Bulgaria, quoted in Tsokova and Becirevic, 2009, p.401).

Closs (2001) contrasted the situation of children with complex difficulties and Romany children in the Czech Republic after the Velvet Revolution in 1989. During the Soviet era, children with complex difficulties had either been institutionalised or looked after at home, but during the 1990s there was a rapid process of de-institutionalisation supported by NGOs and churches.

Special schools were developed, although, as in many parts of the world, few children with very significant difficulties were included in mainstream schools. By way of contrast, there was little improvement in the education of Romany children, with the majority continuing to be educated in special schools for children with learning difficulties. According to Closs, there was a public perception that Romany people had been "favoured" under Communism in relation to housing and employment, whilst disabled children had been wrongly "shut away". Whereas disabled children were seen as victims of past wrongs, Roma people, whose numbers were increasing, were portrayed in the press as a social threat and continued to be socially stigmatised and excluded.

Whilst educational segregation of Roma people has been recognised as a particular problem in Central and Eastern Europe, where the majority live, Roma children are also likely to be educated in segregated settings in parts of Europe where they represent a small minority of the population. In the Spanish Basque country, for example, there are approximately 9,000 Roma (0.5% of the population). Etxeberria (2002) provides an overview of their position in relation to formal education. During the Franco regime, the Roma were excluded from education and society. In the post-Franco era, Roma children were provided with remedial education in special classes and more recently have been formally "integrated" into mainstream schools. However, they are generally confined to the most marginalised schools within the public sector, which tend to be located in the social disadvantaged areas in which they live. Schools with a predominance of Roma children are shunned by local Basque parents. In part, this is because schools favoured by Romany parents generally use Spanish rather than Euskara as the medium of instruction, whereas Basque parents prefer bilingual schools or those where Euskara is the medium of instruction. Grant maintained and grant aided schools, which are classified as private, although supported by the Basque government, are permitted to charge fees which act as a deterrent to Roma parents. This concentration of Roma children in the most disadvantaged geographical areas and schools means that only 15% successfully complete primary education. Only a small proportion reach secondary school and almost none receive a university education. Etxeberria underlines the lack of simple solutions to deep-rooted social problems. He suggests that there is a need to challenge the racism of Basque teachers and parents and their lack of respect for Romany culture. At the same time, he considers that some aspects of Romany culture have to be challenged, including what he describes as a sense of victimisation and a failure to value education beyond the acquisition of basic skills. Whether schools should teach the Romany language remains a moot point, since this might contribute to the on-going segregation of Romany children.

3.6. Conclusion

Overall, it is evident that the disproportionalities identified above raise serious questions about the role of special education systems in further isolating pupils who are already socially marginalised, depressing rather than enhancing their future life chances. As Tomlinson noted (1982) special education professionals have always claimed to make dispassionate judgements about which children will benefit from special education provision, but benign professionalism may also serve as a covert means of social control. Across many countries, gender and social class are the strongest risk factors in the identification of special educational needs. Boys and children form socially disadvantaged backgrounds are much more likely to be identified with mild/moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and children who are labelled in this way have poor educational and social outcomes. In Australia, a "school to prison pipeline" for boys identified as having learning and behavioural difficulties has been identified (Graham et al., 2010, p. 243; Wald and Losen, 2003). With regard to ethnicity, there is a mixed picture. In England, for example, Lindsay et al. show that amongst ethnic groups, only Travellers are at greater risk of SEN identification compared with White pupils, whereas in the US Black pupils are at greater risk. Across many European countries, but particularly in South East Europe, Roma children are at greater risk of being placed in special schools or classes, or in ethnically segregated schools, where they receive limited education leading to restricted future work opportunities. Based on a study of disproportionalities in special school placement in New Zealand, Canada, the USA and Germany, Gabel et al. (2009) have identified a phenomenon which they refer to as "the globalization of disproportionality". They comment:

> In the case of immigrant and indigenous students special education is employed as a tool for assimilation into the dominant society but functions as a tool for exclusion from the dominant society. The result is the alienation of immigrant children from their new homeland and an additional barrier faced by indigenous and disabled children as they attempt to participate fully in their native lands. (Gabel et al. 2009, p.636)

They call for a reappraisal in all countries of the ostensible purposes of special education compared with the way it is used by educators and politicians.

It is interesting to note that the problem of disproportionality in identification of special educational needs is constructed and measured differently in a range of countries. In the US and the UK, the focus has been on ethnic/racial differences, with an additional focus in the UK on social class which is largely absent from the US literature. In the UK, Gypsy/Traveller pupils are treated as a minority ethnic group, although in many other parts of Europe, where data on ethnicity are not routinely collected, they are regarded as a separate group. Immigrant status is a focus of analysis in many countries, although there is no agreement across Europe about the definition of immigrant. In many countries, people who do not have citizenship are considered to be immigrants, whilst in other countries children of parents who were born elsewhere are classified as immigrants, even if they even if they have lived in the country for several generations and have obtained citizenship. The UK analyses data by ethnicity/ethno-religious status rather than immigrant status. To enable reliable international comparisons to be made on the identification and placement of children with special educational needs across Europe by ethnicity, there is a need to develop shared understandings and common definitions of immigrant and ethnic status.

It is evident that there is a dearth of inter-sectional analysis with regard to the factors affecting children's identification with particular types of special educational needs, subsequent placements and educational outcomes. Studies informed by sociological analysis are less prevalent than those informed by psychology and some sociologically informed studies fail to explore the inter-connections of variables such as social class, ethnicity, gender and disability. Drudy and Kinsella (2009), for example, use Ireland as a case study to examine progress towards an inclusive education system. The authors conclude that whilst progress has been made in including more children with special educational needs into mainstream schools, large parts of Ireland's education system are still strongly divided along social class lines. However, the intersections between social class and gender are not explored.

One reason for this dearth of inter-sectional analysis is the lack of reliable comparative data in many areas. For example, many European countries do not gather data on ethnicity and data on immigration status of children is non-standardised and unreliable. Data on children's social class background is not available in many European countries. These are clearly areas where work in needed to harmonise definitions and improve methods of data collection and comparison. Finally, there is a need for more studies which identify the reasons for the various over- and under- representations which have been identified, and which seek to understand the types of practices which erode disproportionalities and improve the life chances of children identified as having special educational needs.

Developing the analysis in chapter 2, this chapter has highlighted significant national differences in the use of special settings for particular groups of children. Clearly, for some children with very significant physical and cognitive difficulties, placement in a special setting may be a sound educational decision, enabling them to receive intensive support from specialist staff. For many children, however, placement in a special setting may reinforce their social marginalisation and may act as a covert means of social control. In some countries, the disproportionate use of special placements for children from specific minority ethnic groups -particularly Roma children and those from immigrant backgrounds- raises particular concerns. Research suggests that such children could be included in mainstream schools if there were greater investment in the development of their language skills and a higher level of sensitivity to cultural differences. Careful scrutiny of disproportionalities in the identification of special educational needs and placement in special settings is needed to avoid discriminatory treatment which reinforces pre-existing problems of social marginalisation. Increasing the proportion of funding allocated to schools on the basis of social deprivation might also help to ensure that socially disadvantaged children are not inaccurately labelled as educationally deficient. An important point to note is that researchers do not always agree on ways of remedying identified disproportionalities. For example, Adelantado (2003) recommends that schools in Spain which teach Romany children should teach their language, whereas Etxeberria (2002) questions this on the grounds that it would lead to ethnic segregation. Similarly, whereas Adelantado (2003) recommends the implementation of additional assistance in the form of scholarships, school resources, catering and nursery provision, Etxeberria (2002) suggests that Romany parents should be required to make a financial contribution to additional support services, on the grounds that charity is disempowering and leads to abuse of the system. There is therefore not a simple read-off between the identification of a problem and the discovery of a solution, and there is a lack of empirical data on "what works" in this area.

CHAPTER 4. School Inclusion in Practice: what works?

Introduction

In this chapter, we begin by commenting on the quality and status of research on inclusion, before examining data on educational outcomes of pupils with special educational needs and international systems of accountability. Different approaches to diagnostic assessment and the assessment of pupil progress are examined. Subsequently, we review approaches to and practices of classroom support which are adopted in different European countries and consider the part played by teacher education in promoting inclusive education.

4.1. The empirical basis of inclusion

As we have noted already, since the 1970s, the dominant discourse across Europe has been that of inclusion, with commitment to the implementation of these principles across Europe and internationally. However, as noted by Lindsay (2003), this commitment has been based on a growing recognition that the human rights of disabled people are often infringed in segregated institutions, such as schools, care homes, workplaces or hospitals. An example of work providing the ethical underpinning for inclusion is that of Dr John Tsiantis, a psychiatrist, who campaigned against the inhumane conditions in the children's asylum on the Greek island of Leros during the 1980s. Tsiantis and colleagues found community placements for the children and young adults who had been institutionalised at Leros and retrained the staff to educate and care for the children rather than simply warehouse them (Kordoutis et al., 1995; Tsiantis et al., 1995a, 1995b).

Despite widespread public endorsement of the ethical principles of inclusion, there is a dearth of research demonstrating its superiority in terms of experiences and outcomes. Lindsay (2003) is critical of the quality and scope of research on inclusion, commenting that particularly in the UK much research is small scale and conducted by teachers. He calls for a greater use of quasi-experimental design as advocated by Gersten et al., 2000, but acknowledges the need for quantitative findings to be supplemented with qualitative work designed to access students' voices. Since mainstreaming is now so widely implemented, Lindsay suggests that future research should focus on the benefits of particular interventions for particular groups. This suggestion was picked up by researchers in the Netherlands (Ruijs et al., 2010), who examined the academic and social outcomes of students with special educational needs with regard to whether they were the only student included in a mainstream class, or were part of a larger group of students included in a mainstream class. The researchers noted that their findings did not allow unequivocal conclusions to be drawn, but that overall it appeared that, with regard to academic achievement and social-emotional functioning, it did not appear to matter whether a student was the only one with special educational needs in a class, or whether they were part of a wider group of students with special educational needs. As suggested by Pawson (2006), when examining competing systems for teaching children with special educational needs, we have identified their underlying theoretical assumptions. Broadly speaking, pedagogies are based either on the idea that it is important to change or cure the individual child, or to adapt their learning environment (see sections 4.6 and 4.7).

4.2. Comparing the academic and social outcomes of children with special educational needs in mainstream or special settings

Topping and Maloney (2005), summarise the small number of meta-reviews assessing the social and academic outcomes of children in mainstream schools, drawing on studies by Madden and Slavin, 1983; Baker at al., 1994; Staub and Peck, 1994; and Manset and Semmel, 1997. Topping and Maloney conclude:

> The evidence suggests that any differences in outcomes for children with special needs between special and mainstream schools are small, but tend to favour mainstream school, in terms of educational attainments and social integration. Socially, children with special needs in mainstream school tend not to be as well accepted as "normal" children, but they nevertheless enjoy a fair degree of social integration, while learning to cope with a social situation more akin to the outside post-school world than the protective environment of a special school (Topping and Maloney, 2005, p.7)

The reviews by Manset and Semmel suggested that there were benefits for non-disabled children of having disabled children in the class, since activities such as peer tutoring assisted their own development. Few studies have been conducted with matched-pair pupils. An exception here is research by Peetsma et al., 2001, which showed that pupils with SEN in mainstream schools outperformed the special school pupils over the period.

The social integration of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools appears to be an ongoing source of anxiety. Pijl (2007) reported on three studies which used socio-metric data to explore the social integration of pupils with special educational needs in Norway (Frostad and Pijl, 2007), Germany (Mand, 2007) and the Netherlands (Koster et al., 2007). In all three countries, children with special educational needs in mainstream classes refused fewer positive nominations and the social isolation of pupils with behavioural difficulties was particularly marked. The German study investigated the position of pupils with behavioural difficulties in both mainstream and special settings, where they were educated alongside pupils with learning difficulties. In both mainstream and special settings, these pupils were regarded negatively by their peers, demonstrating that placing children in special settings does not necessary solve problems of marginalisation. It was hypothesised that Norway, with its long experience of inclusion, would be more successful than the other two countries in supporting the social integration of children with special educational needs and behavioural difficulties. However this was not borne out by the findings, suggesting that all countries pursuing a policy of inclusion need to think about the best means of integrating children with special needs into the social fabric of the classroom, so that they are not simply there on sufferance.

4.3. What are the limits of inclusion?

Inclusion has been adopted as a blanket policy for all children with special educational needs, but it is important to ask which children are more or less easily included. Evans and Lunt (2002) used a questionnaire survey to explore the views of local authority staff in England with regard to the limits of inclusion. There was a high level of agreement amongst respondents that the nature of a child’s impairment had a strong impact on the ease with which they could be accommodated into a mainstream classroom (see table 4.1, next page).

Table 4.1 Children deemed easy or difficult to include by type of difficulty

Easy to include	Difficult to include
Physical difficulties	Emotional and behavioural difficulties
Sensory difficulties	Low-incidence SEN needing high levels of expertise
Speech and language difficulties	Profound and multiple difficulties
Moderate or general learning difficulties	Severe learning difficulties
Autistic spectrum disorders	Autism
Specific learning difficulties	Those needing health service input

Source: Evans and Lunt, 2002

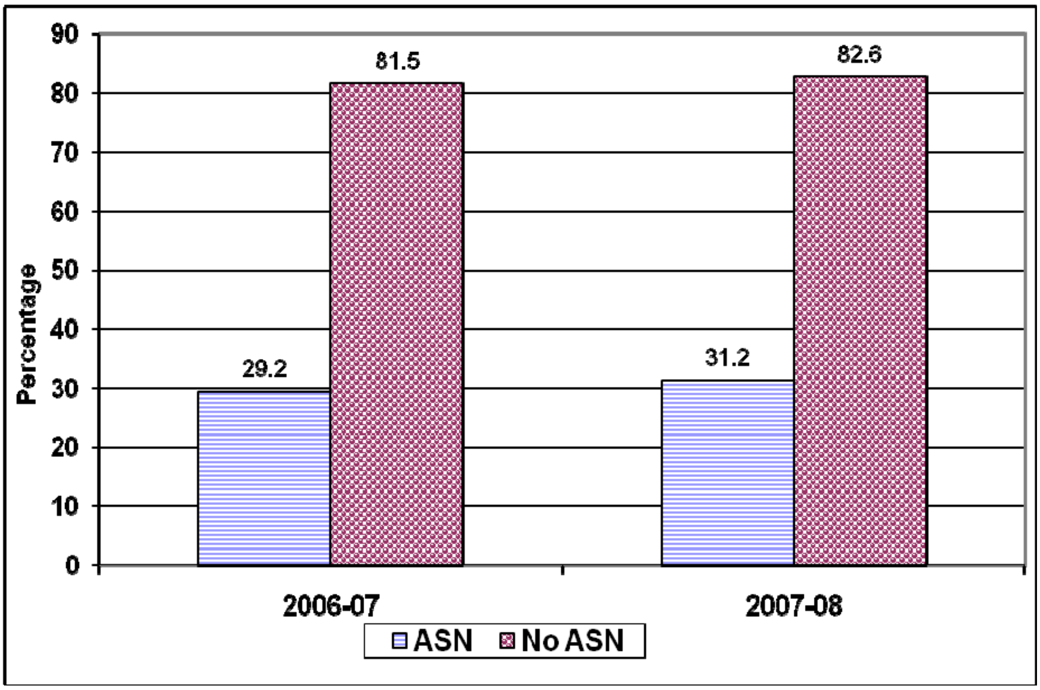
Supporting these findings, Closs (2003) found that Czech educators believed that pupils with complex learning difficulties were difficult to include in mainstream schools, and in Ireland, Ring and Travers (2005) documented the difficulty of including a child with severe learning difficulties in a mainstream rural primary school in Ireland. In the latter case, problems concerned: the lack of specialist teaching materials; mainstream teachers' perceptions that meeting the needs of a pupil with severe learning difficulties required esoteric knowledge which they lacked; non-disabled pupils' lack of knowledge of learning disability; and concerns about the lack of social inclusion. These studies underline the need for an honest recognition of the problems which are likely to arise in relation to the inclusion of some pupils. Because the social model of disability emphasises the importance of the child's environment, some educators may be reluctant to acknowledge that impairment itself may constitute a very real barrier. Whilst many of these difficulties may be surmountable, it is evident that the difficulties need to be addressed to ensure that children's inclusion is meaningful rather than tokenistic.

4.4. Comparing the educational outcomes of pupils with and without special educational needs

Just as there are few studies comparing the educational outcomes of children in mainstream and special settings, so too is there a dearth of research on the educational outcomes and participation rates of disabled and non-disabled children. With regard to participation rates, the Ad Hoc Module of the European Labour Force Survey of 2002, found that the non-participation rate of those in the 16-19 age group reporting considerable restrictions was only 37%, compared with 25% for those who reported that they experienced some restrictions and 17% of those who said they were not restricted at all.

Most European countries have not conducted detailed comparisons of the attainment of children with and without special educational needs. One reason for this is the basis of the comparison – clearly it would not be reasonable to expect a child with a severe learning difficulty to attain the same educational outcome as a child who was not disabled in this way. It is evident that children with special educational needs have much lower levels of attainment than those who have not been so identified, as shown in figure 4.1 (next page), which presents data for Scotland, revealing that whereas 80% of children attain ISCED Level 3, less than a third of children with special educational needs attain this level. What is unclear is the extent to which the gap in attainment may be attributed to the barriers posed by the child's impairment, or other factors such as poor teaching, inaccessible buildings or lack of access to additional aids and services. Working with English data, Keslair and McNally (2009) have begun to address these questions by assessing the extent to which children's attainment at the end of secondary school is explained by their attainment at the end of primary school. They found that the progress of children with sensory or physical impairments by the end of secondary school was largely predicted by attainment levels at the end of primary school. By way of contrast, children identified as having behavioural social and emotional difficulties, a much larger group, fell further behind during secondary school. They suggest that the additional support targeted at children with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties is failing to help them, and in some circumstances may be hindering their progress, possibly due to stigmatisation associated with the label. Hills et al. (2010) found that the only minority ethnic group who were failing to make progress as the moved through the education system were Gypsy/Travellers. Given their greater likelihood of being identified as having SEN, this finding suggests a need for a closer analysis of the factors which are currently impeding educational progress and the actions which may be taken.

Figure 4.1. A comparison of school leavers with and without ASN attaining 5+ at SCQF[1] level 4[2] or higher qualifications, Scotland, 2006-2007 and 2007-08



Source: Scottish Government (2009b).

1. SCQF refers to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
2. This includes Intermediate 2 at A-C grade and Standard Grade 3-4, equivalent to ISCED Level 3

4.5. Special educational needs and international accountability regimes

Data gathered by the OECD in relation to PISA assessment show that on average only 2% of participants were identified as having special educational needs, whereas OECD analysis consistently suggests that up to 15% of pupils in member states have special educational needs (OECD, 2007). This suggests that a high, and varying, proportion of pupils are being excluded from international testing regimes, potentially providing some countries with an advantage over others in terms of the levels achieved and their position in international league tables, but also arguably disadvantaging the pupils concerned by placing them on the educational sidelines. It is therefore important for countries to accurately identify pupils with special educational needs and honestly record which are excluded from assessment. Furthermore, the OECD and other bodies organising international testing regimes need to publish clear inclusion and exclusion criteria. If this is not done, then countries may procure a competitive advantage by excluding significant numbers of children with special educational needs from international tests.

4.6. Educating children with special educational needs: changing or managing the individual child

Although, as we have noted throughout this review, inclusion is currently the dominant discourse within Europe and globally, there continues to be a strong parallel discourse within which disabled children are constructed as essentially different from their peers, with some requiring special placement and special pedagogy. Such approaches are based on child-deficit assumptions so that teaching efforts are geared towards changing or managing aspects of individual behaviour. This discourse is stronger in some countries than others, attested to by the varying use of special placement in different EU member states, ranging from about 1% to about 5% of the age group. The discourse of difference is also stronger in relation to some types of impairment than others, particularly those which may be located within a psycho-medical model, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Stead et al. (2006) comment:

> ADHD is a global phenomenon, spreading rapidly as a result of the increased dominance of US psychiatric models, the need for new markets for major pharmaceutical companies, the increasing use of the Internet by parents and professionals and changing attitudes to schooling. In the Western world, increasing recognition of the political and social construction of disability and moves to educational inclusion are paradoxically paralleled by ever-increasing use of psychotropic medication for children (Stead et al., 2006, p.2)

Janhukainen (2010) notes that ADHD is equally likely to be diagnosed within the Canadian system, with its "psychomedical" orientation, as it is within the Finnish system, which uses observation of educational needs and classroom behaviours for the purposes of SEN identification. In Sweden, diagnosis of ADHD or DAMP (Swedish terminology) is becoming increasingly popular. Hjörne (2006) notes that about 10% of children are officially classified as having ADHD/DAMP (Socialstyrelsen, 2002). Identification of ADHD/DAMP generally rests on teachers' subjective assessment of children's classroom behaviour (Hjörne and Säljö, 2004), but then assumes the status of a medical diagnosis. Children who are so classified are likely to be taught in separate classes within mainstream schools using teaching techniques based on behaviour modification. They are also often prescribed the psychotropic drug Ritalin to control their behaviour, a practice which appears to be condemned and extolled in equal measure. Advocates of its use argue that it facilitates concentration so that pupils who would otherwise be excluded are retained in mainstream classes. Critics maintain that Ritalin has many known adverse consequences including growth restriction and that it may have additional unknown side effects in terms of children's long-term cognitive development (Stead et al., 2006). The growth in ADHD diagnosis is also found in such disparate countries as Turkey (Öngel, 2006) and Italy (Bonati, 2006).

Some pedagogies associated with physical impairments also emphasise the need for special treatment. For example, conductive education was developed at the Peto Institute in Budapest in the 1970s during the heyday of Soviet defectological thinking. The aim was to teach mobility skills including walking to children with physical difficulties arising from conditions such as cerebral palsy or spina bifida. Social model theorists such as Oliver (1989) were highly critical of this approach on the grounds that children with severe physical impairments needed to focus on gaining the best possible academic qualifications in order to maximise their chances of finding employment. Spending the majority of their time attempting to walk was likely to cause undue pain and distress and stymie their future life chances by depriving them of more worthwhile educational opportunities. Despite these criticisms, conductive education continues to enjoy a degree of popularity, with schools adopting this pedagogy in many European countries, including Scotland.

There are also strong advocates of specialist pedagogies in the field of autism. Jordan (2005) summarises some of the specialist techniques that have been used, most of which use individualised approaches to implement behaviour modification principles, with rewards for "good" behaviour and punishments for "bad" behaviour. Although there are many independent special schools across Europe and the US which promote particular regimes, Jordan concludes that the general principles of personalised teaching based on behaviour analysis can be implemented in mainstream classrooms, as long as support individual is available. It is worth noting that some quite disturbing pedagogical approaches for children with special educational needs continue to exist.

For example, at an extreme end of the behaviourist spectrum lies the Judge Rotenberg Centre in Boston, USA, which is licensed to use "aversive therapies", including electric shocks, to train children with learning and behavioural difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders (Pilkington, 2011). Based on Skinnerian principles, the school has been condemned by the American human rights organisation Mental Disability Rights International, which on April 29th 2010 lodged a request for investigation with the United States Special Rapporteur on Torture stating that the residents of the school were being subjected to human rights abuses.

4.7. Educating children with special educational needs: changing or managing the learning environment

A somewhat different approach is taken by those who contend that children with special educational needs are essentially the same, rather than essentially different, from their peers, and that the aim of intervention should be to modify the learning environment rather than the individual child. Much of the literature associated with inclusive teaching maintains that there are no distinctive pedagogies that are effective for all pupils with one type of disability (Lewis and Norwich, 2005; Davis and Florian, 2004). Rather, children with special educational needs benefit from an enhanced learning environment which is likely to benefit all children.

This position is somewhat qualified by the recognition that some pupils need more intense and focused teaching and adaptations greater than the normal range of adjustments (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). These are sometimes called specialised adaptations or "high density" teaching (Norwich and Lewis, 2001, p.313). In addition, it is generally recognised that some deaf and blind children benefit from particular approaches to teaching and learning, using Braille or Sign Language, and that children with autistic spectrum disorder may similarly benefit from distinctive "high density" teaching strategies. It should also be noted that thinking in the US context is rather different, where the edifice of special teacher education programmes is based on the premise that children with particular categories of difficulty require specific approaches to teaching, and children with conditions such as autistic spectrum disorder are often taught in special schools with very distinctive pedagogies.

According to Davis and Florian (2004) and Swanson (2004), the following strategies aimed at providing a conducive learning environment may be used with all pupils, not only those with special educational needs, to encourage effective learning across the curriculum:

- providing pupils with a type of mental scaffolding on which to build a new understanding
- directing students to stop from time to time to assess their understanding
- encouraging pupils to think about the material to be learned in a way that connects the material to information or ideas already in the mind
- helping pupils to make sense of what they are learning by summarising the information
- developing general study strategies, such as underlining, note-taking, summarising, having student generated questions, outlining and working in pairs to summarise sections of materials
- helping pupils to think about and control thinking processes (metacognition)
- evaluating the effectiveness of a strategy.

Strategies which foster collaboration between pupils such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring (Vaughn et al., 2000; Wilson, 2004; Harrower and Dunlap, 2001) are viewed as effective in enhancing learning. Peer tutoring refers to the practice of two pupils working together with one pupil providing assistance, instruction and feedback to the other. This approach is particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs when they adopt the role of tutor and can be used for a variety of purposes in the classroom, for example, to review previously learned skills, to provide direct teaching on new concepts and to help pupils to complete daily activities.

Small interactive groups are noted as having positive effects for all pupils (Vaughn et al., 2000; Swanson, 2001). Cooperative learning fosters such interaction, however, McMaster and Fuchs (2002) note that merely placing students with disabilities into groups with their peers does not ensure that they will interact in socially appropriate and instructionally beneficial ways.

4.8. Inclusive curricula

In most European countries there is broad acceptance that all children should have access to a common curriculum, contrasting with earlier practice where children in special schools had access to very limited programmes of study often preparing them for low-level employment. However, curricula for children with special educational needs vary greatly. In some countries such as Belgium (both Flemish and French communities), with a large special sector, curricula for children with particular types of difficulty in special schools still tend to be strongly differentiated from programmes of study in mainstream schools. In order to be included in mainstream schools in Flanders, Ghesquière et al. argue that the onus is on the child to adapt to the curriculum, rather than the curriculum adapting to the child. They note that in order to be included:

> The gap between the capacities of the pupil with special educational needs and those of other pupils in the same group must not be too large. The pupil should to a certain extent be able to follow the regular classroom curriculum (Ghesquière et al., 2002:51).

Grade repetition has also recently been introduced in Flanders, and this is a practice which is known to discriminate against pupils with learning difficulties, who may be caught in a permanent cycle of non-completion, becoming increasingly removed from age-appropriate study.

In countries such as Greece, provision for children with special educational needs was slow to develop, and parents often kept disabled children at home because of shame associated with having a disabled child. Since the 1980s, it has been accepted in Greece that children with special educational needs should attend mainstream schools. However, the strong central control of the system and adherence by teachers to a tightly specified national curriculum has led to a situation in which, according to Vlachou (2004), disabled children are often present but not included in any meaningful way.

In more decentralised systems, such as Sweden, where specification of the curriculum is devolved to local authority and school level, there appear to be greater opportunities for devising creative forms of inclusion (Persson, 2000). In many countries including Sweden, England and Scotland, extensive use has been made of Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), which are documents setting out long term and short term learning targets for pupils with special educational needs, enabling teachers to consider how the mainstream curriculum might be adapted and personalised. IEPs are also capable of being used to include children with special educational needs in accountability regimes, for example, when IEPs were first introduced in Scotland, guidance produced by government in 1999 suggested that performance in relation to targets should be aggregated and centrally reported, with the expectation that 80% of children would achieve 80% of learning targets each year. Research on the implementation of IEPs in Scotland (Kane et al., 2003) indicated that teachers were sympathetic to the charting of children's progress against individually specified goals, although they questioned the suitability of targets for children with the most profound difficulties, including those with terminal conditions. They also disliked the bureaucracy involved in constructing IEPs and were hostile to the idea that these could be used to hold schools to account for the performance of children with special educational needs. The accountability targets associated with IEPs were subsequently dropped by the Scottish Government.

4.9. Support for children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms

The way in which inclusion is conceptualised in different countries has a bearing on the type of support which is offered. Analysis conducted by Winterman and Sapona (2002) shows that across many developed countries support is frequently given to the mainstream class teacher by a specialist teacher, who may be peripatetic or based in the school. In Germany, with large numbers of special schools, the growing demand for mainstream placements has led to a rethink in relation to the role of special school staff (Reiser et al., 2003). Increasingly, special school teachers are spending part of their week in mainstream schools, undertaking consultancy work with class teachers or directly supporting children. In Sweden, special teacher training was replaced in 1990 by special educator training. Mattson and Hansen (2009) used a survey to investigate Stockholm head teachers' views of the new support role and the way in which they deployed special educators in their school. Some head teachers used the special educator to work directly with children, often withdrawing them from the mainstream class for small group of individual tuition. Other head teachers encouraged the special educator to spend most of his or her time working with teams of teachers to develop inclusive pedagogies. Mattson and Hansen reported that the team support approach was much more likely to lead to inclusive practices than the individual-child focussed approach.

Since the advent of inclusive education, there has been a growth in the use of classroom assistants, although their role is controversial. In Iceland, for example, there are arguments that the use of classroom assistants to support pupils with physical disabilities tends to limit the use of the child's strengths and promote dependent relationships (Egilson and Traustadottir, 2009). Stead et al. (2007) express concern at the use of the least qualified personnel in school to work with the most challenging and vulnerable children. Italy has tended to use additional learning support teachers rather than classroom assistants to support children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms.

An important effect of inclusion is that many classrooms are now likely to contain a range of adults in addition to the class teacher, who used to work in relative isolation. The presence of additional adults clearly has a number of benefits, helping teachers to differentiate learning and manage small group activities. However, there are also additional challenges, particularly the need for the class teacher to be able to manage diverse inputs effectively (Dyson et al., 2002; Groom and Rose, 2005; Hunt and Goetz, 2004). Although additional adult support is viewed as key to the inclusion of pupils with SEN, it has to be provided in ways that do not remove responsibility from the class teacher, or inadvertently block interactions between peers (Wilson, 2004).

4.10. Teacher attitudes to inclusion

There is some evidence that learning and teaching strategies may be less important determinants of educational experiences and outcomes than teacher attitudes and interactions with pupils, for example, teacher expectations of pupil performance. Florian and Black Hawkins (2010) note that for inclusion to work effectively, teachers need to feel confident in their ability to meet the needs of all pupils in their class, supported where necessary by specialist input. Studies in a range of countries such as Greece (Kotrouba et al., 2008; Avramidis and Kalyva, 2007) and Cyprus (Koutrouba et al., 2006, Hadjikalou et al., 2008) suggest that teachers are likely to be broadly in favour of inclusion as long as they have access to continuing professional development (CPD) and can build up their confidence of working with children with particular types of impairments, such as those who are deaf and hard of hearing. The writers listed above also draw attention to the ongoing barriers to inclusion, such as lack of knowledge of particular impairments, prejudice against disabled children and lack of support from specialist learning support teachers. In addition, mainstream teachers' insistence on impairment-specific training may be an additional barrier, since knowledge of generic approaches to learning support is likely to be more useful than an encyclopaedic knowledge of diverse medical conditions.

Beyond the organisation of the curriculum, Davis and Florian (2004) stress the importance of the social and cultural context within which schools function and which influence the capacity of teachers and schools to provide well for a diverse range of pupils. A commitment from national and local government to building cohesive communities and avoiding the reproduction of social hierarchies within the school system are important elements in the nurturing of inclusive schools. Davis and Florian (2004) argue that acknowledgement of context is a particularly important consideration in understanding how to replicate successful initiatives in schools. What works in one country, region or school may fail abysmally in another on account of the different political, social and cultural context.

4.11. The involvement of parents

The involvement of parents of children with special educational needs is highlighted as a vital factor in inclusive schooling (Hunt and Goetz, 2004). However, despite the widespread endorsement of the discourse of partnership with parents, it is often the case that parents are pitted against schools and local authorities in struggling for additional resources and adjustments for their child (Riddell et al., 2010b). Even when schools, local authorities and national government make an explicit commitment to engaging with parents, as in the formulation of Individualised Educational Programmes, teachers often find that time constraints make it impossible for them to involve parents very much in practice (Kane et al., 2003).

A study conducted in Flanders (Mortier et al., 2009) explored the possibility of securing parental engagement in the delivery of inclusive education through their involvement in constructing and monitoring Unified Plans of Support (USPs), which are broadly similar to IEPs. Flanders has a highly developed network of special schools and a relatively low proportion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. Mortier et al. present three case studies of children with cognitive difficulties (two with Down's Syndrome and one with severe developmental delay) in the city of Ghent. In each of their schools, these children were the only ones with cognitive difficulties, and their parents had rejected professional advice that the child should be placed in a special school. One child was placed in a Catholic kindergarten school, one in a Freinet school and one in a Catholic elementary school. Parents of all three children, who were accorded equal status with professionals, took part in a series of team meetings to establish social and academic goals for their children and to monitor their attainment. This experimental involvement with parents was deemed to be successful, partly because having a written plan meant that a far more pro-active approach was taken to monitoring the outcomes of the placement, rather than simply waiting to see if it worked. However, Mortier et al. acknowledge that the time input from parents and teachers was considerable, and raise questions about whether this could work as a general model with less enthusiastic and committed participants.

4.12. Inclusion and teacher education

According to Florian and colleagues (Florian et al., 2011), inclusive education needs to be underpinned by an inclusive theory of learning, which should underpin all aspects of teacher education. Florian et al.'s notion of inclusive pedagogy draws on the work of Hart et al. (2004), which suggests that the focus should be on the capacity of all children to learn and develop in different ways, so that deterministic concepts of ability are replaced by notions of transformability. Inclusive pedagogy, according to Florian and Black-Hawkins, is opposed to practices which address education for all by offering provision for most with additional or different experiences for some. Instead, it demands that teachers extend what is ordinarily available so that it is accessible for all. Whole class teaching methods are seen as antithetical to inclusive education, since they purport to provide identical and therefore equal learning experiences for all children. Rather, it is important to provide a range of options which are equally available to all children.

A recent initiative in teacher education in Scotland based at the University of Aberdeen (Spratt et al., 2010) has focused on developing teachers whose implicit and explicit theories of learning are likely to promote inclusive practices in school. An evaluation of the programme suggests that teachers are more likely to be successful in creating an inclusive classroom environment if they hold non-deterministic notions of pupil ability, avoid rigid pupil groupings and differentiate learning tasks in a flexible way (Florian and Black Hawkins, 2010).

In-service development of teachers is also clearly of central importance. Tangen (2005) describes the development and impact of an in-service programme (Education for All) in Norway aimed at promoting awareness of generic teaching strategies to support inclusive practices, but also to develop disability-specific knowledge. Since its initial development, the programme has been extended and is now widely available to teachers in mainstream schools. Hausstätter and Takala (2008) compared the special teacher development systems of Norway and Finland. They note that inclusion is the fundamental discourse in the development of special educators in Norway, with a focus on the attainment of generic teaching approaches and less focus on special pedagogies. In Finland, by way of contrast, the one year special teacher programmes, which are undertaken after Masters level study, have less focus on inclusion and a greater focus on special pedagogies geared to specific impairments. Hausstätter and Takala (2008) argue that the approach in Norway has clear advantages in terms of embedding inclusive discourses in teachers’ thinking, whilst the approach in Finland develops special educators with a stronger sense of their distinct professional identity, which may be inimical to inclusive practices. There is no research which has explored any ensuing differences in the attainment of pupils with special educational needs.

Teacher education is also seen as making a major contribution to the building of more inclusive societies in former Soviet countries. The European Training Foundation commissioned a study (European Training Foundation, 2011) of approaches to teacher education in the Western Balkan region, including the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo under united National Security Council Resolution 1244, Montenegro and Serbia. All of these countries have ambitions to join the European Union, but have faced major conflict in their recent history leading to loss of social trust, poverty and uncertainty. The report provided an overview of the problems which need to be addressed within teacher education, which are both reflections and causes of on-going social conflict. For example, the report notes that segregated education of minority ethnic groups, including Romany children, persists, sometimes justified in terms of protecting minority languages but in fact reinforcing social exclusion. Although all seven countries have embraced the discourse of inclusion, the existence of special schools and residential institutions catering for particular groups continues to reflect Soviet adherence to the identification and segregation of children with specific "defects". Furthermore, although efforts had been made to raise the status of teacher education by closing colleges of education and creating university faculties of education, education continues to be regarded as a low status subject and profession. Little research is conducted and there are few opportunities for lecturers to engage in professional development. The report includes recommendations for many different bodies including national governments, schools and teachers, NGOs and external development partners and teacher educators. Overall, it is argued that recognition of linguistic, cultural and social diversity should lie at the heart of university education programmes, so that all teaching is geared not towards the average child, but towards the wide range of children to be found in any classroom.

4.13. Conclusion

Inclusive education appears to have attained hegemonic status across Europe and the rest of the developed world, but there is still little research on the relative attainment of pupils with special educational needs in different settings and in comparison with non-disabled pupils. Research on inclusive pedagogy and curriculum has also been slow to develop. For children with SEN to be included in a meaningful way, differentiation of the curriculum and pedagogy is essential, but a variety of tasks should be available to all, not just to pupils singled out as having special educational needs. In addition, differentiation should not be based on the assumption that all pupils with a particular type of difficulty, such as autistic spectrum disorder, learn in the same way. At the same time as generic approaches are developed, children with low incidence disabilities, such as visual or hearing impairments, may require support from specialist teachers. Teaching assistants are used in many countries to support children with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms, but there continues to be controversy in relation to their role, with some arguing that they create dependency and therefore disempower disabled children.

Teachers' beliefs about the nature of ability and learning play an important role in determining whether they adopt inclusive practices in their classrooms and therefore teacher education is seen as playing a critical role in building knowledge of and commitment to inclusive practices. Developing teachers who have a deep understanding of inclusive education is also likely to promote the development of less conflictual and more cohesive societies across Europe.

Overall, it is clear that teaching approaches for children with special educational needs are, to quite a large extent, ideologically driven rather than based on empirical findings in relation to which approaches produce the best outcomes. The existing (and now quite dated) empirical research suggests that inclusion produces slightly better academic and social outcomes than separate provision, but there are very few quasi-experimental studies, not least because of ethical considerations. Inclusive practices tend to be informed by human rights concerns, rather than scientific analysis of what works best for particular children. Pedagogical approaches tend to be geared either towards modifying or managing the individual child or towards modifying the learning environment. Pedagogies informed by child-deficit approaches reflect the view that children with special educational needs are essentially different from their peers, and are promoted by those advocating special provision in segregated environments.

Pedagogies informed by environmental-deficit approaches are based on a view that children with special educational needs are essentially the same as others, and the learning environment must be adapted to include all children. There is an absence of studies comparing these two approaches. Nevertheless, advocates of inclusion have identified the types of approaches within inclusive environments which are helpful for all children, not just those with special educational needs (see section 4.7).

CHAPTER 5. Disabled People and Post-16 Education and Training

Introduction

In previous chapters, we discussed inclusion policy and practice across Europe in relation to which school-age children are identified as having special educational needs, the disproportionalities which are evident and subsequent cross-country differences in patterns of placement in mainstream and special schools. We also considered what research has to tell us about the development of inclusive systems with regard to pedagogy and curriculum, and the implications of this research for the development of more inclusive teacher education systems. In this chapter, we consider the post school experiences and outcomes of disabled people as they navigate the education, training and employment systems. We consider the types of support which are available for disabled people in different countries, including support in university and in the labour market.

At the time of writing, Europe is emerging from a major economic crisis, and groups at the margins of the labour market are particularly vulnerable to exclusion. The Europe 2020 strategy is based on the principles of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Particular targets include raising the employment rate for the working age population (20-64) from 69% to 75%. In addition, there is a target of reducing the number of early school leavers from 15% to 10% whilst increasing the share of the population aged 30-34 who have completed tertiary education from 31% to at least 40%. The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (European Commission, 2010c) notes that disabled people are much less likely to participate in post-school education and to obtain employment than non-disabled people, so removing barriers and improving outcomes for this group is critical to the overall economic and social objectives of the EU.

5.1. Conceptualising and measuring disability amongst the adult population in Europe

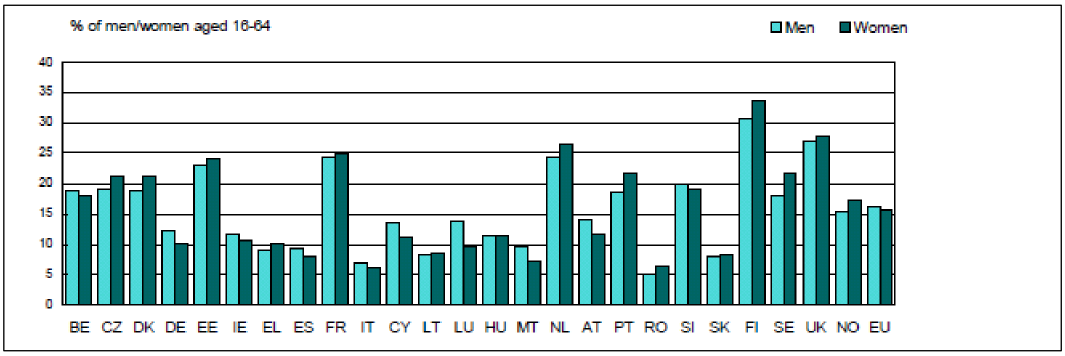
Recent EU policy documents relating to disabled people, including the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (European Commission, 2010c), draw on analyses of two data sources, the LFS ad hoc module conducted in 2002 and EU Statistics on Incomes and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), conducted in 2004 (Applica & CESEP & Alphametrics, 2007). These data sources are also used in this report. Whilst they provide the most recent European wide comparative data sets, they are limited in a variety of ways. First, the data are now almost a decade old and were gathered before the economic crisis. Post-crisis unemployment levels have risen rapidly across Europe and now stand at 10%, with much higher rates for disabled people. Secondly, the surveys use self-report data on whether a person has a long standing health problem or disability (LSHPD). This means that responses are liable to be influenced by the way disability is viewed in different countries and how it is defined in terms of qualification criteria for particular benefits. LFS questions ask people to report not only whether they have a disability, but also the degree to which they are restricted in accessing employment. The analysis therefore compares people who are considerably restricted or restricted to some extent in accessing employment with people who are not restricted. The SILC analysis asks people about the whether they are limited in their daily activities and the extent of any limitation. Although this language is somewhat cumbersome, it reflects the way in which questions were posed and therefore has been adopted in this analysis. In most countries the degree of restriction and limitation is associated with the severity of the impairment, although, as noted above, impairment is understood differently across countries and cultures. The categories used in relation to disabled students in higher education also vary greatly across countries.

It should also be noted that administrative data on disabled people and employment are unreliable in terms of making international comparisons. This is because in their official statistics some countries include disabled people who are either registered unemployed or economically inactive, whereas other countries only include those who are registered unemployed (Greve, 2009).

In many countries, data on post-school transitions for disabled young people is extremely limited. In Norway, for example, registration of the medical conditions, impairments or learning difficulties of students in primary, secondary and tertiary education is prohibited by legislation on privacy. As a result, there is little data on pupils and students with impairments in upper secondary education, nor on participation and completion. In relation to disabled students in higher education, failure to validate and harmonise the question on disability in the Eurostudent Survey means that it is difficult to make comparisons on participation rates across countries (see below for further discussion).

Figure 5.1 shows the proportion of adults reporting a long standing health problem or disability (LSHPD) in different European countries. People living in more affluent countries where welfare systems are more generous are more likely to report having LSHPD than those living in poorer countries with less generous welfare systems.

Figure 5.1. Incidence of long standing health problem or disability (LSHPD) reported by people aged 16-64 in different European countries, 2002



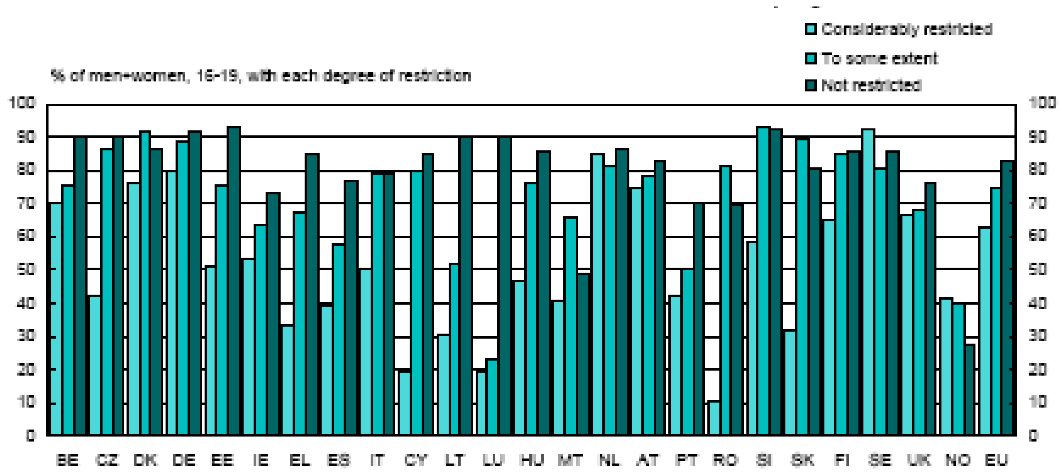
Source: Applica & Cesep & Alphametrics , 2007, drawing on Labour Force Survey data, 2002

The figure above shows lower rates of self-reported LSHPD in poorer countries such as Romania (8% of people with LSHPD) compared with more than 30% in Finland and around 25% in France, the Netherlands and the UK. This distribution is counter-intuitive, since poverty is strongly associated with disability, suggesting that the incidence of LSHPD should be greater in poorer rather than richer countries. These data reflect not only different national understandings of what constitutes LSHPD but also different qualification criteria for particular types of disability benefits and in-work support. Cross-country comparisons of this support are important, but should be treated with a considerable degree of caution.

5.2. Participation by disabled people in post-16 education

As shown in figure 5.2, across Europe in 2002 only 63% of 16-19 year olds who were considerably restricted in their ability to work participated in education and training. This compared to 75% of those who were limited to some extent and 83% who were not restricted at all. Participation in education and training is generally lower for those in the 20-24 age group, but again the differences between disabled and non-disabled people is marked, with only 23% of those with considerable restrictions participating in education or training, compared with 36% of those with some restrictions and 43% of those who were not restricted at all.

Figure 5.2. Proportion of men and women aged 16-19 in different European countries participating in education or training by degree of restriction, 2002



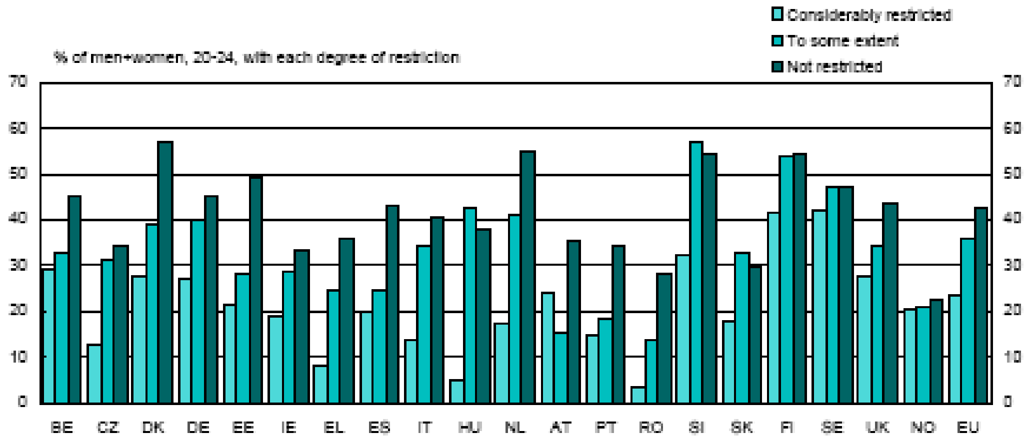
Note: FR: no breakdown available

Source: LFS ad module, 2002

Across Europe, 70% of non-disabled people aged 25-64 have some educational qualifications which they gained after leaving compulsory schooling. By way of contrast, 60% of those with some restrictions and 50% of those with considerable restrictions have no qualifications gained after the end of compulsory education. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate some interesting national variations. For example, Norway has lower post-compulsory age participation rates than some other countries, but there are fairly similar participation rates for those with and without restrictions, and for the 16-19 age group, those without restrictions are, counter-intuitively, less likely to be undertaking education and training than those who experience work-related restrictions. This is presumably because non-disabled young people in Norway who do not progress to higher education are more likely to find work than their disabled peers. In Romania, by way of contrast, people experiencing work related restrictions have very low participation rates both overall and in comparison with people who do not have restrictions. This lack of provision in Romania may reflect a historical legacy of neglect of disabled people's right to education and social participation.

It is important to take into account not only access issues, but also the type of further education young disabled people are engaged in, since this is likely to have a profound effect on their future life chances. There is very little European research which provides a breakdown of post-school education, training and labour market destinations of young disabled and non-disabled people. Analysis of Scottish data (figure 5.3, next page) shows that a lower proportion of disabled school leavers move into higher education or employment compared with their non-disabled peers, whereas the proportions are reversed in relation to further education. Whilst participation in further education might appear to be a positive outcome for young disabled people, many are placed in special classes providing life skills rather than employment training, whereas non-disabled school leavers in further education generally participate in vocationally orientated programmes designed to lead to accreditation and employment. A higher proportion of disabled young people are also unemployed or undertaking voluntary work.

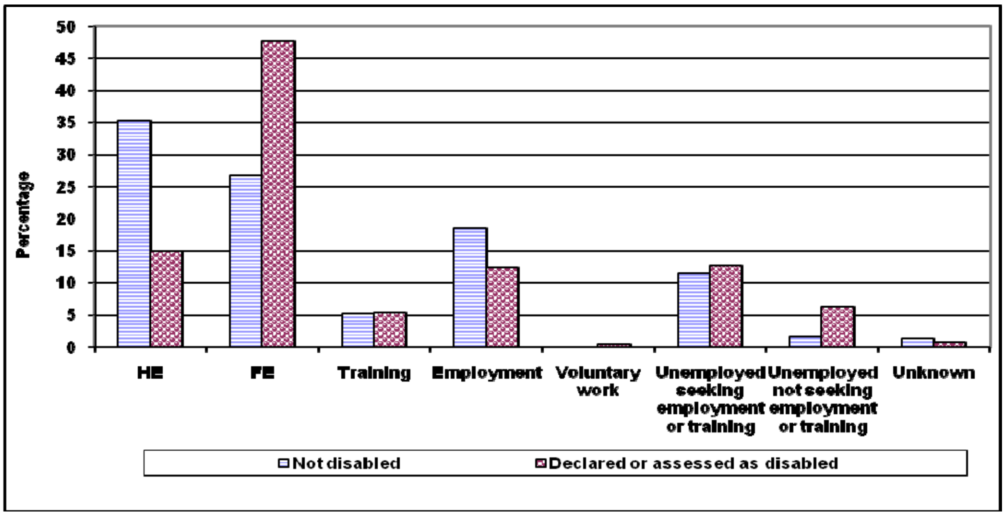
Figure 5.3. Proportion of men and women aged 20-24 in different European countries participating in education or training by degree of restriction, 2002



Note: FR: no breakdown available; CY, LT, LU, MT: numbers very small

Source: LFS ad hoc module, 2002

Figure 5.4. Destinations of disabled and non-disabled school leavers, 2008-09, Scotland



Source: Scottish Government (2009c)

5.3. Post-school experiences of young disabled people who do not enter HE

The analysis of LFS data (Applica & CESEP & Alphametrics, 2007) suggested that, across Europe, young people with mental, nervous or emotional problems, together with those with a diagnosis of epilepsy, had lower levels of education than other impairment groups. These findings are interesting, but it is always important to bear in mind that categories are, at least to some extent, socially constructed. Scottish research suggests that the post-16 experiences and outcomes of disabled people are strongly associated with the nature of their impairment, their social class background and whether they access higher education. A study carried out as part of the UK Economic and Social Research Council's Learning Society Programme (Riddell et al, 2001) underlined the problematic nature of post-school transitions for young people with learning difficulties. Education, training and employment opportunities, including special education and training courses in further education or delivered by private training providers, tended to channel people away from the labour market and often involved ongoing cycles of retraining. Supported employment programmes, developed to help disabled people participate in "real work", rarely led to mainstream employment or allowed progression beyond entry-level work such as shelf-stacking in super markets (Ridley, 2001). Young disabled people were forced to stay in the parental home or else lived in supported accommodation or hostels, reinforcing the status of perpetual child. Very few succeeded in developing independent autonomous friendships and relationships, and as a result were only able to access a very restricted form of social capital (Riddell et al, 2001). Even those from relatively privileged social class backgrounds failed to develop autonomous lives. Across Europe, there are concerns about early school leavers (European Commission, 2011), including young people who are not in post-school education, training and employment, who typically make up at least 14% of the age group. There is some degree of ambiguity about the designation of this group, but many have social and behavioural difficulties and therefore in many countries would be categorised as having special educational needs. In many countries there is a lack of clarity about which agency has responsibility for helping young people requiring additional support to make a smooth transition into adulthood. The Scottish Government has advised local authorities to appoint key workers to devise transition plans for young people with additional support needs, but to date there appears to have little progress, with local authorities pleading a lack of funds and other priorities. There are particular concerns about access by young disabled people to mainstream training programmes. For example, disabled young people make up only 1% of participants on the Skillseekers training programme, the main post-school training programme for young people funded by the Scottish Government. Many disabled young people who succeed in accessing some type of training programme encounter the "rotating door" phenomenon, where one cycle of training leads into another work preparation programme, rather than into a job.

Dee (2007) indicates that the problems described above for young disabled people who do not progress to higher education are common across all developed countries, suggesting the need for a greater focus on improving individuals’ quality of life, rather than focusing on those who are closest to the labour market. She suggests that difficulties may be particularly acute for those with the most significant impairments. By way of contrast, Carroll and Dockrell (2010) report on post-16 outcomes for young adults with specific language impairment (which is sometimes referred to as autism). They administered a survey to 60 people aged 17 – 22 who had attended a residential special school in the south of England. As a cohort, the young people had adapted well to the demands of adult life and a significant minority had entered higher education. It might be assumed that young people who have attended a residential special school will have difficulty in making the transition to adult life, particularly if they have some type of communication disorder. However, this study, along with others (Whitehouse et al, 2009; Palikara et al., 2009; Durkin et al., 2009; Dockrell et al., 2007) provides a much more positive picture of transition. In all these studies, level of education qualification appears to have been extremely important suggesting that, at least to some extent, the limitations of a person’s impairment may be offset by the level of qualification obtained. However, there are a number of interacting factors, since, people with mental health difficulties and learning difficulties are particularly likely to come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and to have low qualification levels. Research in other countries than the UK and with young people with a range of impairments is needed to identify the conditions which are associated with more or less successful transitions.

There is also a need to conduct research on the quality of the educational provision that is made for those who do not progress to higher education. In Denmark, recent legislation provides a right to special teaching for school leavers "with a physical or psychological handicap" who require additional support in the transition to adult life (The Danish Ministry of Education and Rambøll Management, 2009), whilst in Norway there is a three year upper secondary school programme for young people with special educational needs (Legard, 2009). However, these programmes have not been evaluated with regard to their success in enabling young people to progress into adult life and employment and whether they are regarded positively by the young people themselves.

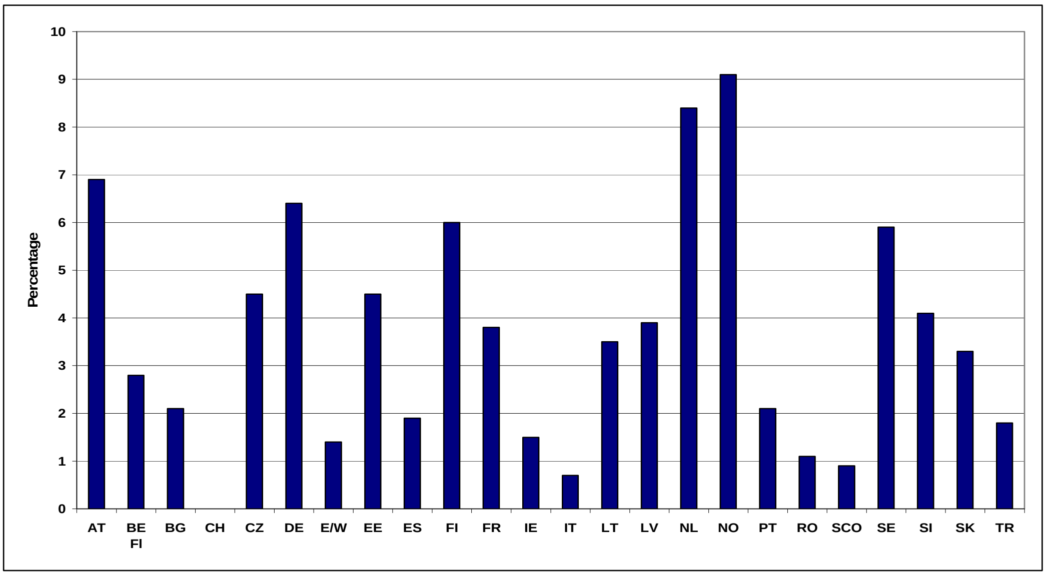
5.4. Disabled students in higher education

Young disabled people who progress to higher education have much better employment outcomes than those who do not, so it is important to explore their characteristics, experiences and outcomes. The Eurostudent survey (Orr et al, 2008) examines social and economic conditions of student life in Europe, with a view to developing a set of social inclusion indicators, including participation rates of disabled students. However, the survey was informed by a rather narrow understanding of disability, requesting students to report on any physical disability or chronic disease which had an impact on their studies. The question did not include mental health problems and general learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

Figure 5.5 shows wide variation between European countries in self-reported physical disability and chronic illness by university students, with around 10% of Norwegian and Danish students reporting this type of disability, compared with around 1% of students in Italy and Romania. Orr et al. (2008) note in their report that there are problems in reliability and interpretation of the data and no further attempts to analyse this data will be made. They explain:

> Discussions within the EUROSTUDENT Network have shown that comparability of the data is limited due to different traditions and divergent contextual factors – especially the way disability is defined in order for a student to receive particular state support. However, those countries which commented on their own data in their respective national profiles generally argue that increasing their share of disabled students remains a priority issue for policy (e.g. Bulgaria, Estonia, France) (Orr et al., 2008, p.35).

Figure 5.5. Percentage of students whose physical disablement or chronic disease impairs their learning



Source: Orr et al, 2008

It is interesting to note that in the UK, in 2008-09, the majority (almost 60%) of disabled students reported that they had a diagnosis of dyslexia (specific learning difficulties) and a very small proportion reported that they had a visual impairment (2%), a hearing impairment (3%), autistic spectrum disorder (2%) or mental health difficulties (6%). A tiny proportion (0.1%) required personal care support, the most expensive type of assistance for universities to provide. Until recently, students with significant learning difficulties have been entirely absent. However Boxall et al. (2004) report on an innovative programme to include people with learning difficulties as teachers, researchers and learners on a university Disability Studies programme.

Table 5.1. Full-time first degree disabled students in the UK by type of impairment as a percentage of all those who declared a disability over the period 1994 to 2009

Impairment	1994-95	2000-01	2005-06	2008-09
Specific Learning Difficulties[1]	16%	44%	54%	56%
Visual impairment	4%	3%	2%	2%
Hearing impairment	6%	5%	4%	3%
Mobility/wheelchair user	3%	3%	3%	3%
Personal care support	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Mental health difficulties	1%	3%	4%	6%
Autistic spectrum disorder	-	-	1%	2%
An unseen disability2	57%	27%	16%	14%
Multiple disabilities	3%	3%	5%	6%
Other disability	9%	12%	11%	10%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), accessed 27.08.10
1. includes dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia; prior to 2007 the term used was dyslexia
2. includes diabetes, epilepsy or asthma

The proportion of UK students claiming the Disabled Students' Allowance has increased over time, and is particularly high in Wales, where the proportion of disabled people in the student population is higher than the proportion of young people aged 20-24 in the general population according to Labour Force Survey data. However, as noted above, higher education students are likely to have the type of impairments which are only slightly, rather than extremely, limiting in terms of normal day to day activities. University students in the UK are therefore far from typical of disabled people in the wider population.

Table 5.2. Percentage of undergraduate students in the UK claiming Disabled Students Allowance

	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
UK	2.6	3.1	3.6	4.1	4.4	4.5	4.7
England	2.6	3.1	3.7	4.1	4.4	4.6	4.8
Wales	4.0	4.4	4.7	5.2	5.4	5.8	5.8
Scotland	2.2	2.5	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.6
Northern Ireland	1.7	2.4	2.7	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.7

Source: Higher Education Statistic Agency, 2010

It is also worth noting that analysis of data gathered by the UK Higher Education Statistics Agency shows that disabled students tend to be from socially advantaged backgrounds, with 80% of disabled students in older (pre-92) universities from professional/managerial backgrounds. Their social profile is slightly more advantaged than that of non-disabled students, and they are slightly less likely to come from minority ethnic backgrounds compared with non-disabled students (Riddell et al., 2005). Here again the interaction between disability and social class is apparent.

The increase in representation of disabled students in UK universities may be attributed to the positive impact of policies which have actively promoted participation and disclosure and should be seen as an example of good practice. The Disabled Students Allowance was established in 1990 and provides funds for individual students to purchase the support they need, reflecting the additional costs of living and studying which they incur. Whilst the funds available are inadequate to meet the needs of those with very significant impairments, such as those requiring 24 hour care, for the majority of students with less significant impairments, including those with dyslexia, the financial support is important both symbolically and practically. Disabled students' support services now exist in all higher education institutions in the UK, and these provide assessment services and emotional support, as well as encouraging academic staff to adapt their teaching and assessment practices. Since 2000, institutions have received premium funding from the Funding Councils in relation to the proportion of students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance. This incentivises the recruitment of disabled students, and also encourages a more rigorous approach to assessment of need. Finally, equality legislation implemented in 2002 prohibited discrimination against disabled students by post-16 educational providers. Discrimination was defined as the failure to make a reasonable adjustment, or the provision of less favourable treatment.

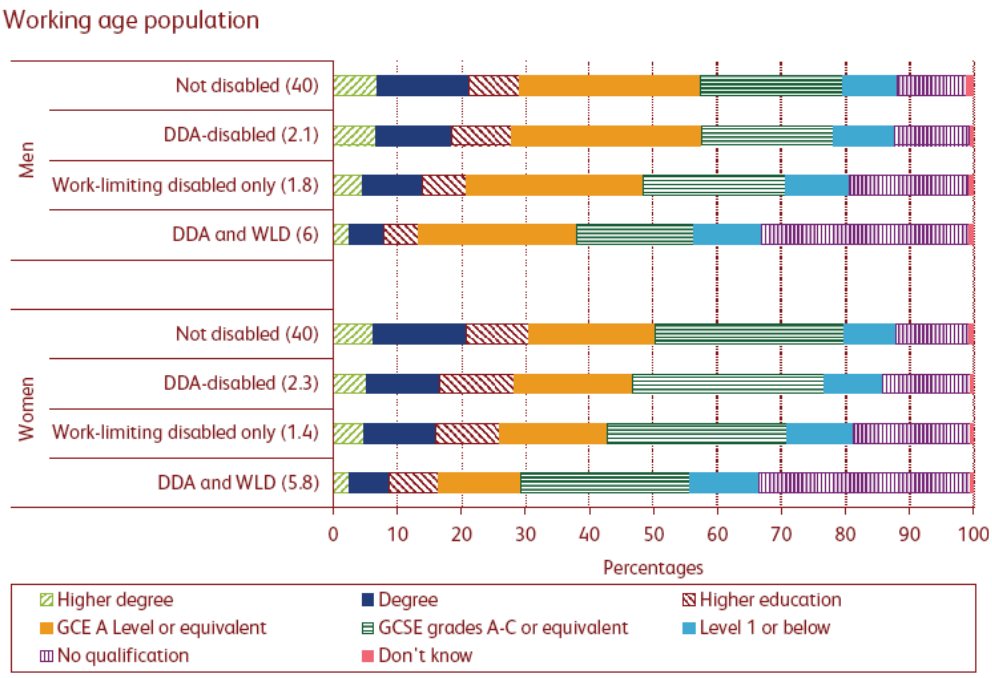
Despite their relative social advantage, disabled students encounter difficulties in transition to and experience of university, frequently suffering from restricted social networks, limited physical access and academic pressure due to inaccessible learning materials (Riddell et al, 2005; Fuller et al., 2009). They tend to be concentrated in particular disciplinary areas, for example, dyslexic students are likely to study art and design subjects and are also less likely to obtain the highest degree awards. On the positive side, their chances of obtaining employment are only slightly worse than those of non-disabled graduates, although there are marked differences by impairment, with students with mental health difficulties having particularly poor employment outcomes (Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, 2009). Studies of the experiences of dyslexic students in Greece (Stampoltzis and Polychronopoulou, 2009) and the Netherlands (Hellendoorn and Ruijssenaars, 2000) suggest that even when they are relatively successful in education and employment, they may still experience lower self-esteem, greater anxiety, lack of confidence, frustration and insecurity. Whilst universities in the UK are now under a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to assessment methods, dyslexic students report that lecturers are suspicious of requests for alternatives to traditional forms of assessment, questioning diagnoses and worrying about the maintenance of academic standards (Riddell and Weedon, 2006).

5.5. Labour market outcomes of disabled people.

Over the past thirty years in Europe, there have been major changes in the composition of the labour market, with the expansion of the knowledge economy and service sectors and the decline of the manufacturing sector, coupled with the growth of skilled as opposed to unskilled jobs (European Commission, 2010a; Giddens, 2006). The latter shift has been described as "skill biased technical change" by Brakman (2006), who has argued that production technology has favoured skilled over unskilled labour by increasing its relative productivity, and, therefore, its relative demand. Globalisation clearly plays a part here too, with routine production processes increasingly taking place in less developed countries where labour is cheaper.

The reduction in low-skilled jobs across Europe poses a particular problem for disabled people, who are disproportionately represented amongst the low skilled population. Analysis conducted by Hills et al. in the UK (2010) shows that disabled people in the working age population have much lower levels of educational qualification than non-disabled people (see figure 5.6 below). The researchers looked at disability status in two ways - whether people were disabled under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA-disabled) and whether they reported a long term problem restricting the kind or amount of work they were able to do (work-limiting disabled (WLI). The better qualified groups are those classed as not disabled or DDA-disabled only. Nearly a third of both men and women who are both work-limiting and DDA-disabled have no qualifications (although this is partly an age effect, as older people are both more likely to be disabled and to have no qualifications).

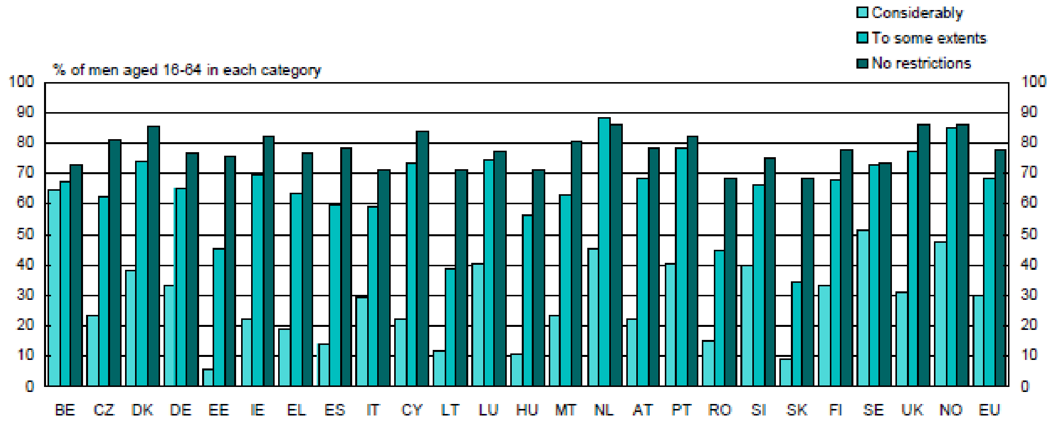
Figure 5.6. Highest qualification by disability status, UK, 2006-2008 (percentages)



Source: NEP, based on LFS 2006-2008.

These lower levels of qualifications, coupled with the barriers posed by impairments per se, contribute to the much lower employment rates of disabled people compared with non-disabled people across Europe, as shown in figure 5.7. People reporting more restrictive conditions are the most disadvantaged in terms of employment.

Figure 5.7. Employment rates of disabled people with different levels of restriction and non-disabled people in Europe

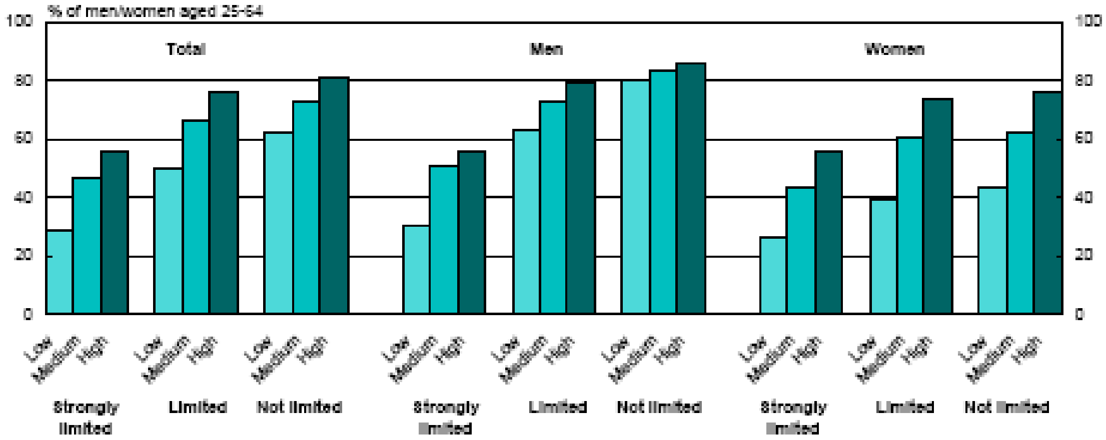


Note: FR: no breakdown available; EU excl. FR

Source: LFS ad hoc module 2002

As noted above, employment rates for disabled people in Europe are closely associated with level of qualification (see figure 5.8). Of those with higher education, 48% of those who were considerably restricted were in employment, compared with 85% of those who were not restricted. This is clearly a major employment gap between the most severely disabled and non-disabled population, but prospects are much worse for those with only basic schooling. Only 20% of those who were considerably restricted were in employment, compared with 62% of those who were not restricted.

Figure 5.8. Employment rates of men and women aged 25-64 by degree of restriction and education level in the EU, 2004



Excluding FR

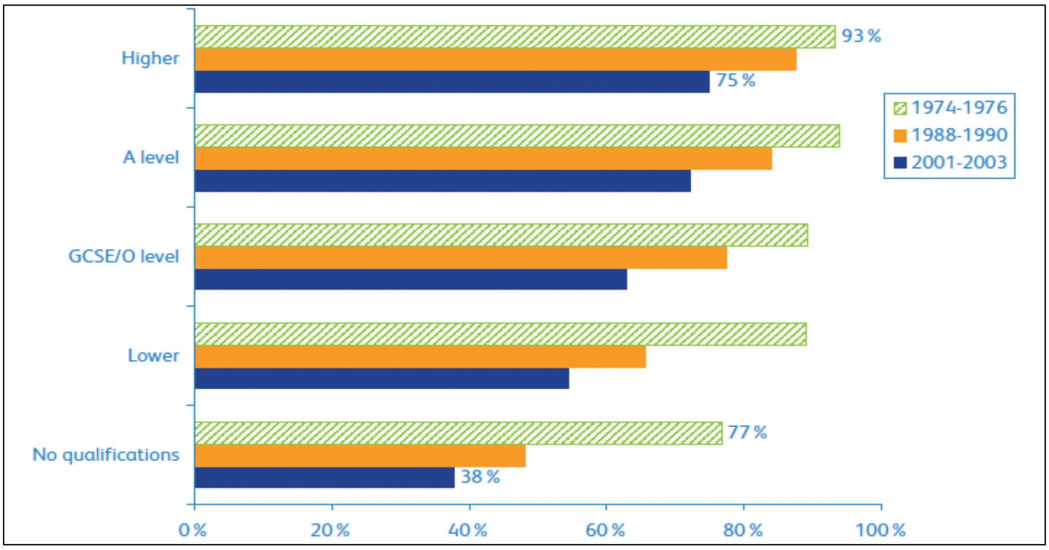
Source: EU-SILC

There is evidence from the UK that employment prospects for unskilled workers, particularly those who are disabled, have been worsening over three decades (see figures 5.9 and 5.10, next page) which are drawn from analysis by Berthoud (2008), reported in Hills et al. (2010). It is evident that employment rates for men across all qualification levels has declined over time, and is strongly associated with level of qualification. For example, 98% of men without LLI were in employment in 1974-76, compared with 93% in 2002-03. The slight decline in the graduate employment rate reflects the growth in higher education participation, which increased from 10% in the 1970s to 40% three decades later. The decline in employment rate for non-LLI men with no qualifications is more marked, falling from 95% to 85% over the same period.

Employment rates for disabled men (in this case, the measure is of limiting long-standing illness) are, across the piece, lower than for non-disabled. However, the decline in employment rates for disabled men with no qualifications over three decades from 1974-76 to 2002-03 has been catastrophic, falling from 77% to 38%. This underlines the particular importance of qualifications for disabled people, which appears to offer some protection against the additional risks imposed by disability. However, this is only part of the story, since leaving school with no qualifications is an indication of marginalisation and poverty, which are the underlying problems.

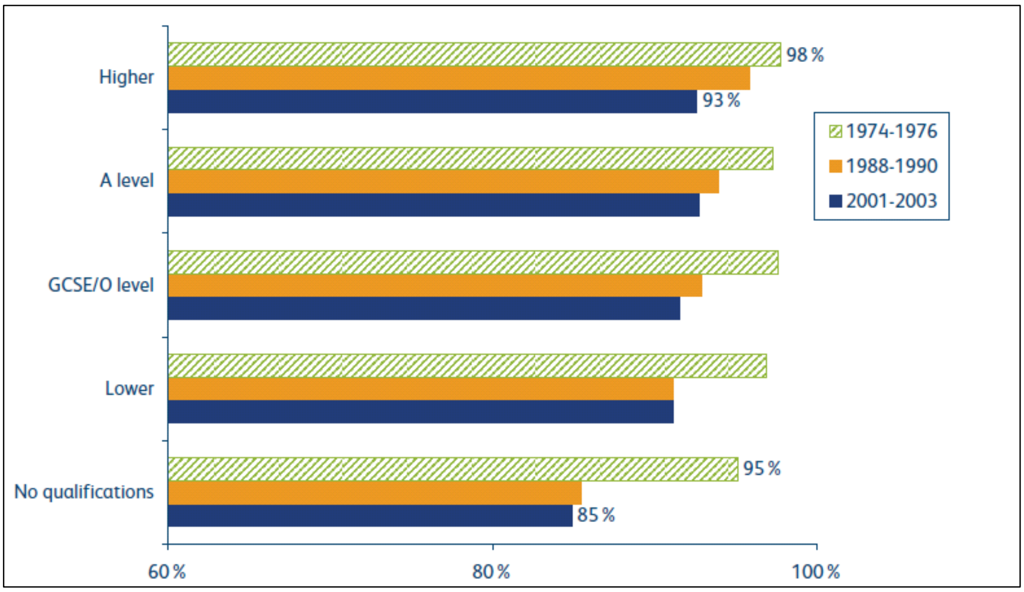
This growing labour market penalty for unskilled workers, who are disproportionately likely to be disabled, is particularly serious given European forecasts of labour market growth and decline. Estimates of future skills needs across the EU by 2020 are that there will be 15.6 million new jobs for tertiary graduates and 3.7 million new jobs for secondary level graduates (European Commission, 2010a). In contrast, there will be a decline of 12 million jobs for those with no or low qualifications. Clearly, the impact of the changing structure of the labour market on disabled people needs to be analysed over time in different parts of Europe with a view to mitigating deleterious effects.

Figure 5.9. Proportion of UK men *with* limiting long standing illness who are in work, by highest educational qualification



Source: Hills et al., 2010

Figure 5.10. Proportion of UK men *without* limiting long standing illness who are in work, by highest educational qualification

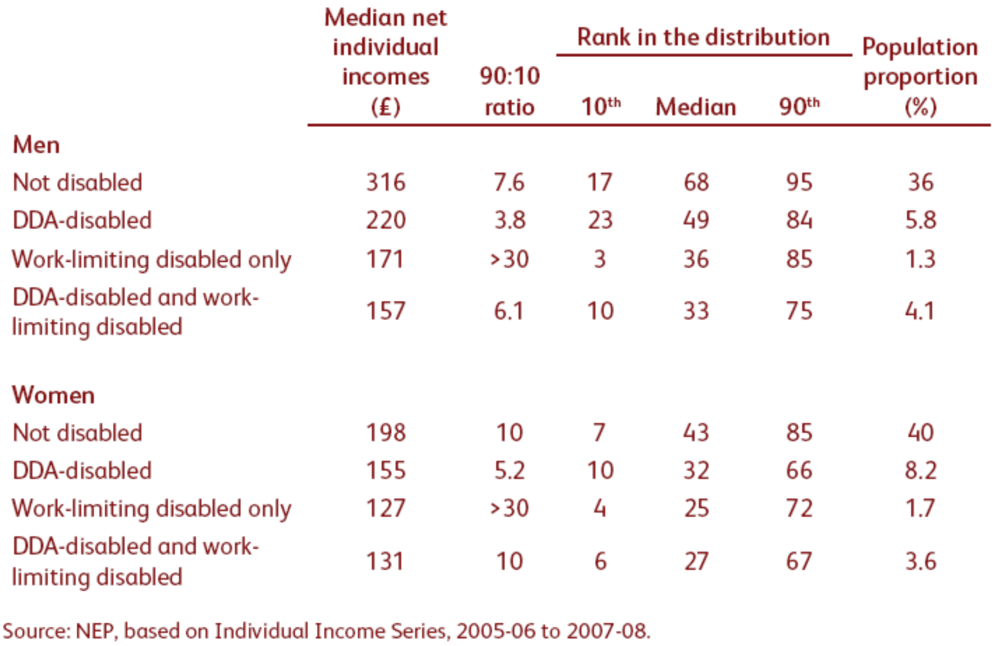


Source: Hills et al., 2010

5.6. Social categories used in analysing employment outcomes

UK data shown in Table 5.3 (next page) compiled by Hills et al. (2010) show that disabled women have lower median weekly incomes than men. It is important to note that whilst European-wide surveys routinely ask for information with regard to a person's degree of impairment, sex, age and level of qualification, other social variables are neglected, in particular ethnicity and migrant status in some countries.

Table 5.3. Net individual weekly income by gender and disability status, UK, 2005-06 to 2007-08 (£), all adults



	Median net individual incomes (£)	90:10 ratio	Rank in the distribution			Population proportion (%)
			10th	Median	90th	
Men						
Not disabled	316	7.6	17	68	95	36
DDA-disabled	220	3.8	23	49	84	5.8
Work-limiting disabled only	171	>30	3	36	85	1.3
DDA-disabled and work-limiting disabled	157	6.1	10	33	75	4.1
Women						
Not disabled	198	10	7	43	85	40
DDA-disabled	155	5.2	10	32	66	8.2
Work-limiting disabled only	127	>30	4	25	72	1.7
DDA-disabled and work-limiting disabled	131	10	6	27	67	3.6

Source: NEP, based on Individual Income Series, 2005-06 to 2007-08.

5.7. Disabled people, risk of poverty and low income

As demonstrated by Applica & CESEP & Alphametrics (2007), people who are limited in what they can do are more at risk of relative poverty than others. The measure of relative poverty is defined as having disposable income which is below 60% of the median in the country in which they live, income being measured on a household basis and equivalised for differences in household size and composition. Of those aged 16-64 and strongly limited, 17% had incomes below this poverty line (20% men, 16% women), compared with 15% for those limited to a lesser extent and 10% of those not limited at all. Among EU member states, only in Finland and Sweden were there virtually no differences in the risk of poverty for disabled and non-disabled people, partly due to better paid lower level jobs and partly due to more generous benefit systems.

Average disposable income levels are also significantly lower across Europe for disabled people. Those experiencing strong limitations on daily activities had average disposable incomes which were 17% lower than those with no limitations. A similar pattern is evident in the UK in analysis conducted by Hills et al. (2010) for the National Equality Panel (see table 5.3). The average weekly income for men who are both DDA-and work-limiting disabled is only half that of men who are not disabled. For women, the gap is slightly less but still apparent.

5.8. The effect of disability benefits

The analysis conducted by Applica & CESEP & Alphametrics (2007) notes that social transfer benefits, which are available in many European countries, have a significant effect in raising the income of those with limitations relative to others. The average income of those who were strongly limited was almost 44% less than the incomes of those not limited before taking account of benefits received, which included all benefits, whether for disability or not. This underlines the importance of social transfers for disabled people in alleviating poverty and low income. However, there were marked differences across a range of countries. In Finland, for example, benefits almost entirely eliminated the differences in income levels between those who were or were not limited in their daily activities. In Sweden, France and Austria, the effect of social transfers was to reduce income differences by 75%. In Portugal, differences were reduced by half, in Ireland by 40% and in Estonia, by only around 30%.

At the same time, for at least ten years governments of developed countries, including those of European countries, have expressed anxiety with regard to public expenditure on disability benefits. Van Oorschot and Hvinden commented:

> The governments in many modern welfare states came to see their levels of expenditure on disability benefits as excessive and as threatening the sustainability of income maintenance systems in general. Disability benefits were viewed as being too accessible and generous, to the extent that they contributed to undesirable exit from the labour market, especially among middle aged and older workers. Governments therefore sought to tighten up disability benefits schemes by making eligibility rules stricter and lowering benefits levels, as well as emphasising strongly active measures to promote the employment of disabled people (Van Oorschot and Hvinden, 2000, p. 294)

These anxieties have led to reforms of employment support programmes, with attempts to create quasi-markets through the involvement of the voluntary and private sector in service provision. There have also been many efforts to create more flexible benefits systems, which support, rather than deter, attempts to find work. Rather than assessing an individual as permanently incapable of working on grounds of disability, many European governments are seeking ways of measuring the amount of work disabled individuals are capable of performing, so that they can undertake part-time work without risking the entire loss of their benefits package (Greve, 2009). This combination of work and benefit is clearly difficult to manage for individuals who have fluctuating conditions such as mental health problems. In the UK, disabled people who have some restrictions on the type and amount of work they can do are being moved on to an Employment Support Allowance, with compulsory capability assessments. Whilst movements of and for disabled people agree with the principle of flexicurity, in this case, enabling disabled people to combine work and benefits if necessary, there are anxieties that these changes are taking place at a time of major cuts in the social security budget, with fears that individuals who are unable to sustain work over the long term will be deprived of benefits.

5.9. Conclusion

Whilst there is a growing body of literature on inclusive education at school level, across Europe and other developed countries, the literature on disabled students in post-school education and training, including higher education, is far sparser (OECD, 2003). This is partly because many universities across Europe operate as independent bodies, and are not required to report information on the social profile of their students to governments, so there is no central data repository. As in Norway, there are often concerns that holding data on students' disability status may infringe their right to privacy. However, the lack of reliable and comparable data makes it difficult to track progress over time and make cross-national comparisons impossible. There appears to be a strong association between qualification level and chances of obtaining employment and disabled people's disadvantage in the labour market appears to be offset, at least to some extent, by obtaining higher level academic qualifications. Given the positive impact of educational qualifications, there appears to be a strong policy case for encouraging disabled students to maximise their educational qualifications and to ensure that financial support is available to provide reasonable adjustments. Because of low skills and employment rates, disabled people are much more likely to live in poverty than others. Social transfers are particularly important in alleviating these problems. Better collation and analysis of statistical data on young disabled people's post-school experiences and outcomes is required. In relation to adults, there is a need for inter-sectional analysis on employment outcomes with regard to disability, gender, ethnicity and immigration status.

CHAPTER 6. Measures to Support Disabled People in Obtaining Employment

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we summarised evidence on disabled people's low level of education, leading to a low employment rate and a high risk of poverty. To combat these disadvantages, employment support measures exist in all EU countries, and in this chapter we provide a brief overview of their development, characteristics and underpinning theories. Disability employment programmes across Europe can often be traced back to the post-war period, when measures were needed to help injured servicemen move back into employment. For example, in many countries industrial rehabilitation units were established to assess work capabilities and offer short retraining programmes. In addition, sheltered workshops for the most seriously injured and disabled were instituted, where disabled people did not have to compete in the open labour market for employment. As in chapter 4, following Pawson (2006), the emphasis in this chapter is on understanding programmes' underlying theories of disability and analysis of what needs to change in order to assist disabled people to find and keep jobs. Boldersen and Hvinden (1995) identified the following ideal types of policy on disability and employment:

- Pure market-led policy, based on the assumption that disabled people must compete on equal terms with non-disabled people for employment. If they are not employed, it is because they are unproductive or only marginally productive;
- Incentive-led policy, based upon the assumption that work has a social value and all members of society should participate in it;
- Integration-led policy, based on the principle that work is part of the process of normal living in which people with disabilities should participate;
- Choice-led policy, based upon the assumption that individuals should be free to choose whether or not they want to work; and
- Rights-led policy, based upon the assumption that disabled people have rights to services and employment.

Drawing on this analysis, in this chapter employment support measures are characterised as compensatory, protective, rights-based, inclusive and "carrot and stick".

6.1. Types of employment support measures in different European countries

Across Europe, broadly similar employment support measures are in evidence (Wynne et al., 2006). Legard, 2009 summarises these in relation to Norway (see table 6.1, next page). It appears that a large group of disabled people are in a planning and assessment phase, and it is not clear how long people have to wait for a placement. The next largest group consists of people in a sponsored placement or in education/training.

Table 6.1. Vocationally disabled job seekers by status in Norway, yearly averages for 2002-2007

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Vocationally disabled in action plan and waiting phases	21,799	20,593	29,403	32,118	29,603	25,898
Wage subsidies	1,526	1,689	1,569	1,899	1,828	2,052
Sponsored traineeship and training/education	34,893	39,856	37,605	41,311	39,016	35,789
Temporary employment programmes	1,059	744	402	233	165	109
Supported employment	1,797	2,510	2,992	3,680	4,704	5,405
Experimental schemes and other programmes	372	366	2,488	1,906	1,568	1,158
Assessment and vocational rehabilitation (partly in VRE*)	3,775	3,981	3,636	3,463	3,609	3,630
Sheltered employment in VRE	1,552	1,592	1,547	1,502	1,452	1,431
Sheltered employment	5,670	6,315	6,761	7,220	7,522	7,821
Sum of persons in programmes	50,644	57,053	57,000	61,187	59,864	57,395
Total	72,443	77,646	86,403	93,304	89,467	83,295

Source: Legard, 2009

6.2. Compensatory measures

In the post-war period, employment quotas were established in many European countries, whereby firms above a certain size were obliged to employ a certain proportion of disabled people, ranging from 3-6%. These schemes reflected the view that countries were indebted to injured servicemen, who were seen as the major beneficiaries of such schemes. Disabled people, it was believed, should not be expected to compete in the open labour market with non-disabled people, particularly in the post-war economic climate of austerity and job scarcity. A formal registration system of disabled people, often involving medical assessment, was used to determine eligibility for disability status, and employers who failed to employ the requisite proportion of disabled people were fined. Funds raised from non-compliance were used to subsidise the wages of people who were assessed as capable of only partially fulfilling job requirements. Quota systems and compensatory payments to employers of disabled people continue to exist in many European countries (Greve, 2009; National Disability Authority, 2011). Greve (2009) notes that the following countries have some type of quota system: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. There is no effective quota system in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden or the United Kingdom.

Quota systems clearly have upsides as well as downsides. On the positive side, they recognise that employment is a social good and including disabled people in the labour market is a social responsibility. On the negative side, quota systems are often not enforced and the use of wage subsidies encourages employers to pay very low wages and adopt "cream-skimming" strategies, so that those with the least significant impairments are favoured over those requiring higher levels of support. Many disabled people object to a system based on medical examination and registration, and the idea that employers should be compensated for employing a disabled person in seen as demeaning. Because disability is conceptualised so differently across Europe, it is very difficult to compare the employment rates of disabled people in countries with strong, weak or no quota system.

6.3. Protective measures

Sheltered workshops are still used quite extensively across Europe, with recent increases in Austria, Germany, Finland, Italy, Luxemburg, Belgium, Italy and Spain, and decreases in Poland, Sweden and the UK (Greve, 2009). Their aim is to include disabled people in employment by providing enclaves removed from the open labour market. They are based on the assumption that disabled people are unlikely to find jobs in open competition with others because employers are likely to favour non-disabled people when recruiting new staff. However, the underlying ethos of sheltered workshops has been criticised for reflecting a view of disabled people as essentially deficient and in need of protection. Often run by charities and catering for disabled people with particular types of impairment (for example, blind people), they have traditionally tended to produce a limited range of products. Critics also note that sheltered workshops often provide low wages, rather uninteresting work and do not allow disabled people to progress into the open labour market. Responding to these criticisms, companies like Remploy, established in the UK after the Second World War, now have government-imposed targets for moving disabled people into open employment, although they still provide sheltered opportunities for those who are judged unable to hold down a mainstream job. There is little research comparing the long-term effectiveness of sheltered workshops with, for example, supported employment, although companies like Remploy have strongly defended their record. They note that they are by far the biggest employer of disabled people in the UK, and argue that placement in a mainstream environment does not necessarily lead to social inclusion if the disabled person is isolated and vulnerable.

More recently, social enterprises have begun to spring up which attempt to blur the boundaries between the open labour market and a sheltered environment. For example, in Edinburgh, Scotland, a bed and breakfast business managed by the Scottish Association for Mental Health employs people with mental health difficulties alongside non-disabled workers. Again, there is no long-term comparative data on the success of social enterprises in providing sustained employment for disabled people.

6.4. Inclusive measures

Supported employment, starting from a low base in 2002, caters for a growing number of disabled people, although evaluations of its impact have been small scale and project specific (Greve, 2009). Originally developed in the US for people with learning disabilities, supported employment has been seen as preferable to the use of sheltered workshops, which isolate disabled people from the open labour market. Essentially, supported employment involves the placement of a disabled person in a "real job", assisted initially by a job coach who undertakes a work assessment and provides assistance when required. After a period of time, the support of the job coach is meant to fade, and is replaced by "natural support" provided by fellow employees. Grand claims have been made for supported employment with regard to its cost effectiveness and the opportunities provided for career progression (Shearn et al., 2000). However, evaluations suggest that the majority of disabled people on supported employment schemes work for only a few hours a week and few have been able to progress to the open labour market (Ridley, 2001).

Person-centred planning is strongly associated with supported employment, since understanding the interests and abilities of the individual disabled person is regarded as an essential pre-cursor to a successful supported employment placement. For example, the Equinex Development Partnership, led by the Centre for Community and Lifelong Learning at the University of Wales, Newport has developed a number of individualised assessment and work placement programmes aimed at particular client groups, such as people with autistic spectrum disorder and hearing impairment. Within these programmes, personalised support was delivered by drawing on the expertise of multi-disciplinary teams, with input from psychologists, social workers, medical officers and employment specialists. Clients generally move on to government-funded programmes delivered by a range of private and voluntary sector providers (Preece, 2007).

6.5. Rights-based measures

According to the disability movement, disabled people are prevented from working not because of their inherent deficits, but because of discriminatory attitudes and a failure to make reasonable adjustments. Most European countries now have anti-discrimination legislation in place, including obligations on employers to make reasonable adjustments to workplaces. Less favourable treatment given to a disabled person compared with a non-disabled person for a reason relating to the person's disability is prohibited. In some countries such as the UK, equality legislation requires positive action on the part of public (not private) sector bodies to monitor the social characteristics of employees with regard to disability, gender and ethnicity, to identify any disproportionalities in the workforce and to take action to remedy identified inequalities. Questions remain about the efficacy of anti-discrimination legislation in terms of making a difference to the lives of disabled people. Evaluations conducted on the Americans with Disabilities Act (Acemoglu and Angrist (2001) and the British Disability Discrimination Act (Meager and Hurstfield, 2005; Gooding, 2005) suggest that such legislation has had a modest positive impact in increasing employment rates of disabled people and making employers more aware of their duties towards disabled employees. However, the number of cases brought to court or tribunal has been low, particularly in relation to recruitment issues. It would appear that legislation is not sufficient in itself to bring about major improvements in the employment rates and living standards of disabled people.

6.6. "Carrot and stick" measures

An increasingly popular idea across Europe, particularly with right-leaning governments, is that the social welfare system encourages disabled people to claim benefits rather than find employment, and that the most effective way of increasing the employment rate of disabled people is to employ a "carrot and stick" approach, so that claiming benefits is disincentivised and work is incentivised. As a result, there is a new emphasis on active labour market policies and conditionality in relation to welfare benefit receipt. Disabled people, often with low levels of educational qualification, are obliged to demonstrate on-going engagement in job search, further education and training activities. Those who do not comply are threatened with the withdrawal of benefits. There is also an expectation that disabled people will submit to on-going medical testing to demonstrate that they meet the conditions for welfare payments, and as part of austerity measures, governments have targets for reducing the number of disability benefits claimants. In government consultations, disabled people generally affirm that they wish to be included in employment, and support the idea of flexicurity, but in the present economic climate many disabled people may be unlikely to accept low level and insecure jobs because they fear that it will be difficult to move back onto benefits if the job does not work out well (Greve, 2009; Riddell et al., 2010a).

Incentivising work often involves the provision of employment support, aimed at helping the disabled person find a job as quickly as possible. Increasingly, private and voluntary sector, rather than public sector, providers are awarded employment support or job brokerage contracts on the grounds that they are believed to be more efficient and entrepreneurial, although there is little evidence to support these assertions. Welfare to Work programmes in the US have influenced similar developments in Europe, such as the British Government's New Deal for Disabled People, established in the late 1990s with the aim of moving a million economically inactive disabled people back into employment. The main innovation of the New Deal for Disabled People was the use of personal advisers or job brokers to work very closely with individuals, assessing needs and identifying the type of support and training which were required. Compared with other New Deal programmes which were launched at the same time, for example, those aimed at single parents or 18-24 years old, the New Deal for Disabled People was not judged to be a success, partly because disabled people who had managed to obtain a relatively secure benefits package, often after years of struggle, were reluctant to jeopardise it by demonstrating an ability to work (Stafford, 2005).

A parallel innovation in the Netherlands was the development of an experimental re-integration voucher scheme. The voucher was awarded to the disabled job seeker and could be used to pay for any type of employment support, ranging from counselling to physical therapy to driving instruction. Private providers, as well as state services, could be used. An evaluation (Prins and Bosselaar, 2001) found that private sector providers were no more successful than public sector providers in helping disabled people re-enter the labour market.

Outcome related payments are frequently used to incentivise private and voluntary sector training providers to maximise work placements. Payment by result schemes have been criticised on a number of grounds, partly because they may encourage "cherry picking" or "cream skimming", so that service providers only accept people who are close to the labour market. Working with those who need a great deal of long term support to access employment, private providers may argue, is non-cost-effective, because the amount of additional support required is unlikely to be covered in the unit cost paid by government. In addition, accepting clients who are at a distance from the labour market may mean that the company fails to meet its outcome targets. Measuring success in this field has proved quite problematic. Riddell and Banks (2005) note that in the UK, employment support programme outcomes are generally monitored six weeks after completion. Placing a client in education, training or employment is generally counted as a successful outcome, but this takes no account of whether the person is likely to sustain the placement over time. Record keeping is often poor, and, because individual level data are not gathered, the same client may pass through many training programmes and be counted as a success by each provider.

Some studies have suggested that employment support measures, whether delivered by the public or the private sector, have little impact on the employment rates of disabled people. Bloch and Prins (2001), for example, reported a study carried out by the International Social Security Association which attempted to draw some global conclusions about good practice in vocational rehabilitation. The countries examined were Denmark, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States and focused on workers incapacitated by lower back pain, which is one of the major difficulties reported by people who leave a job and subsequently claim disability benefits. The study looked at the impact of medical interventions, benefits regimes and non-medical interventions on the likelihood of a person returning to work. Neither medical nor non-medical interventions were found to have a significant positive impact on a person’s chances of returning to work after a 12 month period. However, systems with strong job protection measures, penalising employers who failed to retain disabled employees, performed much better on employment retention. Frohlich et al. (2000) also conveyed a pessimistic message about the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation. Using a matched pairs methodology to study the impact of rehabilitation on recipients of sickness and disability benefits in Western Sweden, the study compared various forms of rehabilitation (educational, medical, social and workplace) with no rehabilitation. The study found that the group who did not receive any rehabilitation were actually more likely to return to work than the group who received various types of rehabilitation. This suggests that, rather than relying on employment support services to help disabled people back into employment once they have left the workplace, governments would be much better off investing in job retention programmes, so that people are not forced to leave jobs in the first place. Unfortunately, the economic crisis has led to many job losses across Europe, and although detailed analysis is not yet available, it is likely that disabled people will be disproportionately affected. Prideaux et al. (2011) have suggested that there is a need to conceptualise the nature of work in relation to disabled people. There should be an expansion in the use of direct payments, that is, funds paid directly to the disabled person to purchase the support they have been assessed as requiring. Direct budget holders should be reconceptualised as workers managing personal assistants and running small businesses.

6.7. Conclusion

There appears to be a degree of convergence in policy on disability and employment across Europe. Some measures can be traced back to the post-war settlement across Western Europe. Reflecting the view that disabled people may not be able to compete in the labour market on equal terms with non-disabled people, most countries have retained employment quota and sheltered workshop systems. Such systems have been criticised for promoting a deficit view of disabled people, depressing pay levels and, in the case of sheltered workshops, failing to promote social inclusion. Supported employment and social enterprises, by way of contrast, are based on the idea that social inclusion is most likely to be achieved through employment integration. Rights-based systems are reflected in European and domestic anti-discrimination employment legislation. However, evaluation of the impact of legislation in this area suggests that it produces at best a marginal improvement in the position of disabled people.

In times of austerity governments question whether expenditure on employment rehabilitation is worthwhile, suggesting that the apparent growth of expenditure on disability-related benefits in affluent countries is because the social welfare system in failing to incentivise work sufficiently. Increasingly, disability benefits claimants are being required to undergo repeated medical assessments and to participate in employment support programmes as a condition of benefits receipt. Particularly for people who become disabled whilst in employment, often as a result of workplace stress, job protection measures appear to be more effective than rehabilitation measures. In effect, this approach penalises employers who fail to retain disabled employees. However, a downside of such an approach may be that it deters employers from recruiting disabled people in the first place. The economic crisis is likely to have a disproportionately negative impact on disabled people, particularly in countries with deregulated labour markets and little job protection.

This chapter has highlighted a range of problems with regard to data collection and programme evaluation. Most countries do not gather longitudinal data on disabled people’s employment status over the life course, and indeed there are many ethical objections to doing this. Experimental designs are rarely used in measuring the success of different approaches to employment support. Furthermore, it is often the case that an individual disabled person passes through many different types of employment support programmes, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of each.

CHAPTER 7. Key Themes, Messages for Policy and Recommendations

In this concluding chapter, we draw together some overarching themes from the review, before identifying the key messages and recommendations.

7.1. The development of European policy and practice on special educational needs and disability

Whilst the EU has focused on employment since its inception, interest in education and lifelong learning developed more slowly but has grown steadily since the 1980s, in line with an increased focus on the development of a common social, as well as economic, agenda. Since the 1990s, there has been growing interest within the European Union in disability as a human rights and equality issue and on special educational needs as a key area of education policy. European member states have signed up to a number of pan-national agreements on special educational needs, most recently the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which includes a commitment to the principles and practice of inclusive education. In addition, all member states are expected to have implemented domestic legislation prohibiting discrimination against disabled people. However, as these agreements become embedded in different national systems they are interpreted in different ways. As a result, despite efforts to harmonise policy and practice in relation to special educational needs and disability, there are still major differences with regard to how disability and special educational needs are understood and how policies on inclusion are implemented. The principle of allowing member states to determine their own national priorities tends to limit the capacity of pan-national agencies, such as the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, to change national policy and practice relating to disability and special educational needs. Nonetheless, areas of policy convergence can be readily identified, including a commitment to inclusive policy and practice for disabled people in school, post-school education and the labour market. Given this shared commitment to inclusion, it is unsurprising that many of the problems and dilemmas identified below are common to many European countries.

7.2. Categorisation systems and the gathering of statistics

All countries use categorisation systems in relation to children with special educational needs, disabled students in higher education and disabled people in the labour market. First, there is the binary divide between those who are categorised as having special educational needs/disabilities and those who are not. Within these over-arching categories are sub-categories relating to particular impairments or to social disadvantages. Amongst many European countries, there is on-going discussion about which groups should be regarded as in need of inclusion. Countries wrestle with the issue of whether inclusive policies should be targeted at those with disabilities and learning difficulties only, or whether additional support should also be targeted at those who have difficulty within the education system and the labour market as a result of behavioural difficulties, poverty, immigration status and so on. Very often there are overlaps between these groups, so that people in socially deprived neighbourhoods are at much greater risk of having a child with behavioural or learning difficulties. The earlier analysis shows that countries have resolved these dilemmas in different ways, casting the net very widely or narrowly. This cross-country variation is inevitable, but makes international comparisons quite difficult.

Categorisation systems and statistics are used for a range of benign and less benign purposes. On the one hand, knowing which children or adults have particular types of difficulties may be useful for planning services, allocating additional resources, arranging reasonable adjustments and providing welfare benefits. On the other hand, identifying someone as having a particular type of disability may lead to discrimination, social marginalisation and exclusion. Countries have to decide what proportion of children and adults should be identified as having special educational needs or disabilities, and which system of categorisation should be used. At the moment, it is evident that there is large cross-country variation and uncertainty about whether to count all children and adults who are receiving additional help, or only children and adults who have some sort of medical or psychological diagnosis. In relation to statistics on adults, the picture is further complicated depending on whether administrative data are drawn upon, generally used for the allocation of welfare benefits, or self-report survey data.

7.3. Disproportionalities in the identification of special educational needs and disabilities

In all countries, boys and children from areas of social deprivation are more likely to be identified as having special educational needs. The size of the disproportionality is much greater in non-normative categories such as mild/moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties, where professional judgement rather than measurement against an agreed norm plays a larger part in diagnosis. In many European countries, socially marginalised minorities such as Roma children are more likely to be identified as having special educational needs and placed in special schools than children from the majority population. Critics have suggested that the special educational needs systems, under the guise of benign paternalism, often serves to control and marginalise less powerful social groups, rather than facilitating their social inclusion. Since this is such a widespread problem, it is clearly important that all countries examine the perverse, as well as the intended, consequences of their special needs provision. At the same time, it is important to preserve the principle that children with identified disabilities require reasonable adjustments in the form of additional aids and services to enable them to benefit from education.

Despite the universal endorsement of inclusive education, European countries vary in their use of special schools and special classes. Countries with education systems which are divided along ability lines, such as Germany and the French and Flemish communities in Belgium, have relatively high proportions of pupils in special schools(about 5%). By way of contrast, countries such as Italy and Greece educate almost all children in mainstream schools, although commentators such as Vlachou et al. (2006) suggest that in many Greek schools very little specialist support is available, with the result that disabled children may be unable to access the curriculum.

It should also be noted that hidden forms of segregation are on the rise, for example, the majority of children in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in England have some sort of special educational needs, but these children are not counted as being in the special sector. Behaviour support units, nurture groups and alternative schools are becoming increasing common in countries such as Norway and the UK. These alternative forms of provision attempt to develop pupils' social and life skills, and may provide temporary respite for pupils who are experiencing instability within their families. Nonetheless, children placed in such units are deprived of a mainstream education and generally leave school with few qualifications.

Amongst disabled adults, wider social divisions are also evident. Disabled people are much more likely than non-disabled people to leave school with low or no qualifications, and across Europe, because of the changing nature of the labour market, this group is particularly vulnerable to worklessness, low income and poverty. Amongst disabled people, those who progress into higher education are much more likely to find work than those who do not. Within the UK, analysis shows that disabled university students, particularly those in elite universities, are particularly socially advantaged (80% are from professional or managerial backgrounds) and they are less likely to come from a minority ethnic background than non-disabled students (Riddell et al, 2005). It would be interesting to know whether this pattern holds across other European countries, but studies which would address these questions have not yet been conducted, due in part to lack of reliable national data.

7.4. Tensions between special and mainstream services in education, training and employment

There is on-going uncertainty about how the principles of inclusion should be implemented in diverse social policy fields. In the field of education, for example, all European countries have committed themselves to implementing inclusive policies, but there is wide variation in the percentage of children placed in special schools. Some countries, such as Germany and Belgium, continue to have large special sectors, with little visible change to date. Similarly, a number of countries which were formerly members of the Soviet Union have adopted the discourse of inclusion, but many professionals still adhere to defectological thinking which formed part of their earlier professional training. As a result, countries like the Czech Republic have large special sectors.

Debates continue as to whether children with special educational needs require special pedagogies, curricula and forms of assessment, or whether their needs are best served by using generic teaching approaches with differentiated learning materials and additional adaptations for those with very particular learning difficulties. Different countries exemplify a range of practices, but in general those with a large special sector, as part of a hierarchically divided wider school system, tend to believe in the necessity of special pedagogies and curricula. The consensus across most European countries is that flexible adaptations to mainstream pedagogical and curricular approaches are necessary in order to ensure that all children can be included. At the same time, it is recognised that some children, such as those who are blind or deaf, may require communication adaptations in the form of Braille or Sign Language delivered by specialist and appropriately qualified staff. Debates on specialist methods are on-going, and parents may take the lead in arguing for specialist approaches to teaching children with particular difficulties such as dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorder or ADHD.

Teacher education is clearly of vital importance in moving towards more inclusive systems. Countries with a large special sector, such as Germany and Belgium, tend to have specialist training programmes for teachers of pupils with particular categories of difficulty. Whilst specialist knowledge may be helpful in the differentiation of learning materials for particular children, it may also be counter-productive if mainstream teachers believe that they need specialist training in relation to every type of difficulty which they may ever encounter. Teacher education programmes with a focus on inclusive education seek to develop generic skills to respond to pupil diversity, in particular how to adapt mainstream pedagogy, curriculum and assessment to meet individual needs and in what circumstances specialist input is necessary. In some countries, teacher education programmes pay insufficient attention to pupil diversity, and as a result pupils with special educational needs may be neglected.

In the field of employment, there are also tensions between mainstream and special approaches, with a growing emphasis on participation in the open labour market. Quota systems, which were established as part of the post-war settlement, place obligations on firms to employ a certain proportion of disabled people. Although such schemes still exist in most European countries, they are not monitored or enforced effectively, partly because of objections by disabled people to demeaning medical examinations and registration processes. Similarly, sheltered workshops still exist, but are criticised on the grounds that they offer limited and stereotyped employment opportunities, such as basket weaving for blind people, pay low wages and offer little chance for progression. Particularly during a period of job shortages, however, there are anxieties about whether it is realistic to expect all disabled people to compete for jobs in the open labour market alongside non-disabled people. Supported employment has been growing in popularity across Europe, since it appears to provide access to "real jobs" with appropriate support. However, evaluations suggest that there are problems with supported employment schemes in practice, since benefits restrictions mean that most disabled people can work for only a few hours a week, so participating in work makes little difference to their overall social and financial status.

Partly in response to concerns about expenditure of disability benefits, most European countries provide employment support or vocational rehabilitation measures. However, there are questions about the effectiveness of these programmes, and some analysts have suggested the need for much greater investment in job retention measures, since once a person has been out of employment for six months they are extremely unlikely to return to work. Private training agencies are increasingly being used to provide personalised services using payment by results contracts. However evaluations suggest that such measures promote "cherry picking" strategies, encouraging organisations only to work with clients who are closest to the labour market.

7.5. Disabled people and the economic crisis

As we have documented in this report, children with special educational needs and disabled adults in the labour market face enormous problems, even during times of economic expansion. They have traditionally experienced institutional segregation, or have been deprived of educational and employment opportunities altogether. Currently, despite the commitment of European countries to inclusion, they are still often placed in segregated institutions or in mainstream settings with inadequate support. Children with special educational needs frequently leave school with few or no qualifications, subsequently moving into specialist post-school training which takes them further away from the labour market. They are much more likely to be unemployed or economically inactive than non-disabled people, and those who are relatively successful in the labour market struggle to find a job paying a living wage. Disabled people who obtain higher education qualifications still experience labour market penalties, but they are much more likely to be employed than less qualified disabled people. Whilst access to higher education is clearly of vital importance for disabled people, it would be an over-simplification to suggest that tertiary education is a panacea for all ills. By definition, universities are academically selective institutions and many disabled people with cognitive impairments are unlikely to qualify for admission, unless the institutions change radically.

The real test for European countries over the next decade will be whether ways can be found of including disabled people with few or no qualifications, who often live in socially deprived areas and may experience language and cultural differences. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) and OECD (2008) have documented the growth of inequality across Europe over the past two decades. The challenge for the EU and member states is to halt and reverse this trend, and the situation of disabled people may be seen as a litmus test of the success of these measures. The retrenchment of the welfare state in most European countries makes this challenge particularly acute.

7.6. Key messages and policy implications

1. Equality policies for disabled people in relation to education, training, employment and other social policy fields have been developed relatively recently by the EU.

Policy implication 1: The European Commission should continue to develop high level policies on inclusion in the fields of education, training and employment, monitor developments through data gathering exercises and encourage policy convergence in this area.

2. Countries vary in the proportion of children they identify as having special educational needs and the proportion of the groups placed in special settings.

Policy implication 2: Countries should monitor over time the proportion of children they identify as having special educational needs and the proportion they place in mainstream schools. Countries with high use of special placements should develop more inclusive systems, with progress reviewed against targets.

3. Categorisation systems may be used to plan additional support and reasonable adjustments, but may also be used to stigmatise and segregate. The meaning and use of particular labels may change over time.

Policy implication 3: Countries should examine carefully the cultural meanings attached to the labels they use and their practical implications in terms of education and employment outcomes. Disproportionalities in identification and placement, particularly relating to socially marginalised groups such as children from socially deprived backgrounds, Roma children and children of immigrants, should be identified. Measures should be taken to reverse unwarranted over-representation of particular groups amongst the SEN population, with progress monitored against targets.

4. SEN systems are shaped by a web of geographical, cultural, social and economic factors.

Policy implication 4: NGOs, EU agencies and national policy makers should take account of the diverse traditions shaping current SEN systems. Whilst promoting moves towards inclusion, they should be aware of the danger that discourses may change whilst practices remain the same.

5. Funding regimes may incentivise or disincentivise the development of inclusive provision.

Policy implication 5: National and local policy makers should monitor the effects of funding mechanisms, ensuring they support inclusive practice and provision.

6. Countries vary in relation to the proportion of children included in international attainment tests such as PISA.

Policy implication 6: Organisations co-ordinating international tests such as PISA should provide clear guidelines on which children should be included in international tests. Countries should monitor and report on which children have been tested so that appropriate adjustments to raw scores may be made.

7. Learning support teachers and classroom assistants play a vital role in making inclusion work well in practice.

Policy implication 7: National and local governments should ensure that funding is available to employ sufficient support staff, and teachers should be trained in the management of such staff, ensuring in particular that learning support assistants help pupils without having a negative effect on their social integration.

8. Teacher education and continuing professional development have not always been organised along inclusive lines.

Policy implication 8: Providers of teacher education across Europe should ensure that the theoretical and practical aspects of programmes prepare new recruits to reflect the principles of inclusion in all aspects of their work.

9. Disabled people are particularly likely to leave school with few or no qualifications.

Policy implication 9: National and local policy makers and schools should make every effort to ensure that children with special educational needs leave school with the highest educational qualifications they are capable of achieving. Trends in attainment should be monitored over time, with targets set for improvements.

A role for the European Commission

10. Inclusion is understood differently in different European countries, with various interpretations of which groups are in need of additional support measures.

Policy implication 10: There is a need for the European Commission to encourage countries to define clearly what is meant by inclusion in their particular context and which groups of children and adults are in need of additional support measures. The European Commission should encourage shared understanding of what counts as inclusion and which groups are in need of additional support in education and employment.

11. The mis-identification of SEN amongst Roma children and other minority ethnic groups appears to be related to policy on language of instruction in many European countries.

Policy implication 11: The European Commission should encourage countries to ensure that language difficulties are not mis-interpreted as evidence of SEN. Additional language support in mainstream schools for children who have recently arrived in the country should be standard practice across Europe.

12. Devolved governance and marketisation of education systems are growing trends across Europe, which may have negative consequences for children with special educational needs.

Policy implication 12: The European Commission should encourage countries to monitor the impact of devolved governance and marketisation on children with special educational needs, ensuring that these global trends are not detrimental to inclusive practices.

13. There is a dearth of research on the effectiveness of inclusive practices for particular groups of children.

Policy implication 13: There is a need for the European Commission and national governments to commission research which is designed to assess the benefits of different types of inclusive practices for specific groups of children. Research findings should be widely disseminated so that they influence practice.

14. The poor social integration of children with SEN in mainstream classes has been highlighted by research.

Policy implication 14: The European Commission and national governments should encourage investigation of the best ways of promoting social integration in mainstream classes. This might involve research by teachers on their own practice. Knowledge exchange initiatives should be used to communicate findings to teachers.

15. Studies in a number of countries have demonstrated that children with complex and profound impairments may be difficult to include in mainstream classes.

Policy implication 15: The European Commission should encourage countries to identify the best ways of including children with the most significant impairments. This is likely to involve intensive support in mainstream or a mix of mainstream and special provision. It should be recognised that placement in mainstream schools may not be appropriate for some children with very significant impairments (e.g. those with multiple physical, sensory and cognitive impairments who have little or no speech).

16. Whilst inclusive practices have been gaining ground, some parents' groups and medical lobbies have campaigned for the recognition of medicalised categories such as ADHD.

Policy implication 16: The European Commission should encourage national governments to monitor the use of medicalised categories and psycho-pharmaceutical interventions. Parents, teachers and doctors should be educated about the various causes of behavioural difficulties which may lie in the classroom, the wider social environment and in parenting strategies. Schools should ensure that the focus of assessment is on identifying educational needs, so that medical labels by themselves are not used as passports to additional support.

17. Most pupils with SEN benefit from the application of common pedagogical principles which are relevant to all pupils, whilst a minority require intensive and focused teaching and additional adaptations.

Policy implication 17: The European Commission and national and local policy makers should encourage schools to use generic pedagogical strategies which support the learning of the majority of pupils. Teachers should be aware of how to differentiate learning materials, when to apply intensive teaching methods and additional adaptations, and when to draw on the expertise of specialist teachers and other professionals.

18. In some European countries curricula are standardised and inflexible, which makes the inclusion of disabled children difficult. Grade retention practices are also inimical with the principles of inclusion.

Policy implication 18: The European Commission and national and local policy makers should encourage the use of flexible and personalised curricula, with additional support delivered in age-appropriate settings.

19. Programmes (IEPs) are one of the devices which may be used to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have access to the mainstream curriculum, but also have individualised targets.

Policy implication 19: The European Commission and national and local policy makers should encourage the use of IEPs to specify the individualised learning targets for pupils with special educational needs. The attainment of individual children should be regularly monitored against targets, and new short-term and long-term targets set as required.

20. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have a vital role to play in identifying the academic and social needs of their children, and in supporting their learning.

Policy implication 20: The European Commission should encourage the active involvement of parents. National and local policy makers and schools should ensure that parents are fully involved in all aspects of their children's education, including identifying difficulties, establishing learning goals and monitoring progress. It should be recognised that some parents will need considerable support themselves to be able to assist their child's learning.

21. Compared with their non-disabled peers, young disabled people in the 16-24 age group are less likely to participate in post-16 education and training, and transitions from school to post-school education may be impeded by a range of barriers.

Policy implication 21: The European Commission should encourage post-16 education providers to ensure that transitions are as smooth as possible, with the use of individual transition plans where appropriate. Reasonable adjustments should be made in order to include disabled people in education and training opportunities, preferably in mainstream rather than special settings.

22. Disabled people are less likely to progress into higher education than non-disabled people.

Policy implication 22: The European Commission should encourage national governments to monitor participation of disabled people in higher education over time and strive for equal participation rates of disabled people who do not have significant cognitive impairments.

23. There are no cross-European comparative data on the participation of disabled students in higher education, or on the impairments and outcomes of those who participate.

Policy implication 23: The European Commission should work with EU Member States to develop harmonised definitions and survey questions, so that cross-national comparisons may be made on higher education participation rates. Targets should be set to monitor progress over time.

24. There is a lack of up-to-date and reliable data on participation of disabled people in employment in different European countries

Policy implication 24: The European Commission should work with member states to conduct regular and reliable data-gathering on the employment of disabled people, allowing inter-sectional analyses to be conducted.

25. Disabled people with low or no qualifications are less likely to be in employment than disabled people with higher level qualifications. In terms of employment outcomes, disabled people with low or no qualifications are also disadvantaged compared with non-disabled people with low or no qualifications.

Policy implication 25: The European Commission should encourage countries to ensure that, as far as possible, disabled people receive the necessary support to gain educational qualifications, since this is likely to improve their labour market position. The educational qualification levels of working-age disabled people should be tracked over time, with targets set for improvements.

26. The position of unskilled workers in labour markets across Europe has deteriorated since the 1970s, and that of disabled unskilled workers has declined even more markedly.

Policy implication 26: The European Commission should encourage national governments to ensure that those without qualifications are able to participate in the labour market, in order to mitigate their risk of poverty and social exclusion. The position of unskilled workers in the labour market should be tracked over time.

27. Disability benefits ameliorate the risk of poverty and social exclusion, but are likely to be reduced in the context of the current public spending squeeze across Europe.

Policy implication 27: The European Commission should encourage national governments to undertake equality impact assessments to ensure that reductions in social transfers do not have a disproportionately negative impact on disabled people.

28. Flexicurity arrangements are helpful in allowing disabled people to work part-time without the entire loss of benefits

Policy implication 28: The European Commission should encourage member states to further develop flexicurity arrangements.

29. There is considerable convergence on disability and employment policy across Europe, with most countries adopting a similar repertoire of employment support measures. However, employment support and vocational rehabilitation programmes vary with regard to their effectiveness in moving disabled people into the labour market, or helping them to retain employment if they become disabled whilst working.

Policy implication 29: The European Commission should encourage national governments to monitor the outcomes of employment support programmes and prioritise those which appear to have better outcomes, particularly if they provide greater autonomy for disabled people. Employment retention programmes which aim to keep disabled people in employment should be developed further.

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