

# What disabled consumer choose to buy and why – Barriers to buying



## Introduction

The research highlighted that 41 per cent of disabled people in the UK had experienced barriers in the last five years when trying to undertake a range of activities because of their disability or access needs.

## Who is this for?

'What disabled consumers choose to buy and why' is for everyone involved in improving the experience of disabled consumers whether online, by phone or in-person. The findings will be useful for customer experience managers, customer service personnel, facilities and property managers and also for D&I and HR professionals responsible for attracting and hiring customer-service staff.

## What activities do disabled consumers find hardest?

Questions were included in an omnibus survey of individuals. Everyone was asked to think about specific products or services they had bought in the last five years and to say if they had had difficulties engaging due to any access needs or disability that you needed to consider. For those who identified as having access needs, the activities that caused difficulties (for more than 10 per cent of respondents) were:

- Going to restaurants, cafés and pubs – **14 per cent**
- Buying clothes or shoes – **13 per cent**
- Personal banking in-person or online – **13 per cent**

- Pursuing a personal interest or hobby (such as a cooking or art class) – **13 per cent**
- Switching utility supplier (for example, broadband, electricity, or gas) – **12 per cent**
- Buying insurance such as health, travel, or property insurance – **12 per cent.**

The next most challenging activities (just under 10 per cent of respondents) were:

- Booking a holiday or holiday accommodation – **8 per cent**
- Booking tickets (for example, for the theatre, cinema, concert, a museum, gallery, or theme park) – **8 per cent**
- Buying large electrical appliances for the home (such as fridges, freezers, and TVs) – **8 per cent**
- Buying new devices (hardware such as computers or consoles, phones) – **8 per cent.**

## Why do disabled consumers find these activities harder?

To further explore the challenges, Business Disability Forum commissioned Open Inclusion to facilitate an online survey and focus groups amongst its panel of around 650 people with disabilities and conditions.

In the online survey, almost all respondents (**90 per cent**) reported being impacted, at the decision-making stage, by any of the following:

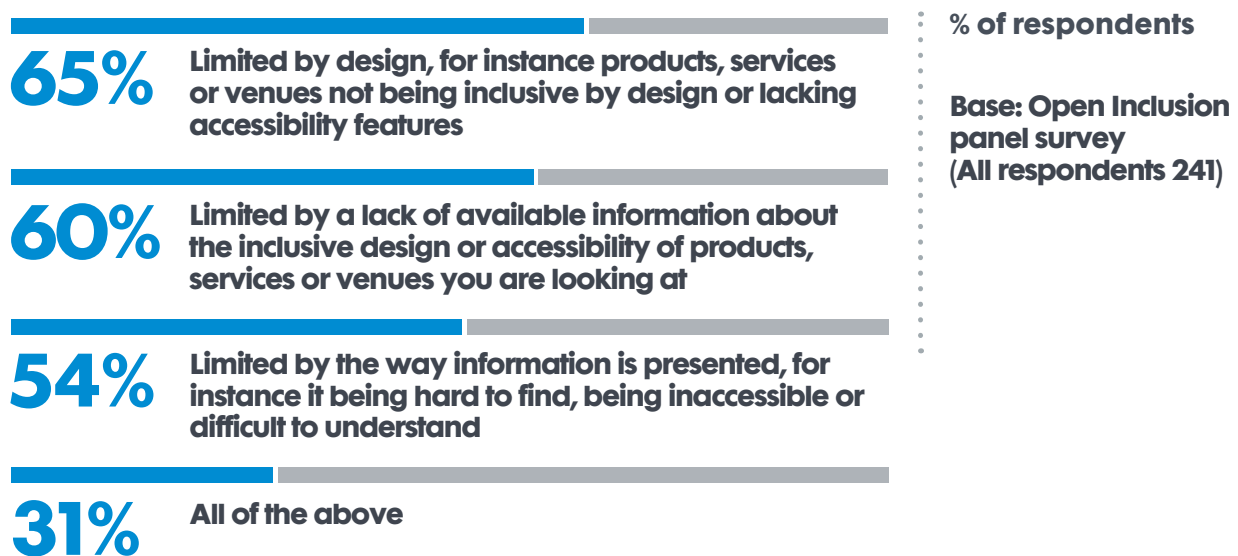
- Limitations of design (products, services or venues not being inclusive or lacking accessibility features)
- Limitations in available information
- How information was presented.

Over three in ten respondents (**31 per cent**) were impacted by all three aspects.

Chart 1 highlights the breakdown.

- **65 per cent agreed** that their choice of new products or services was often limited by design
- **60 per cent** were limited by available information
- **54 per cent** were limited by the way information is presented.

## Chart 1: Limitations for disabled customers when considering purchase of products and services



## How common are these barriers?

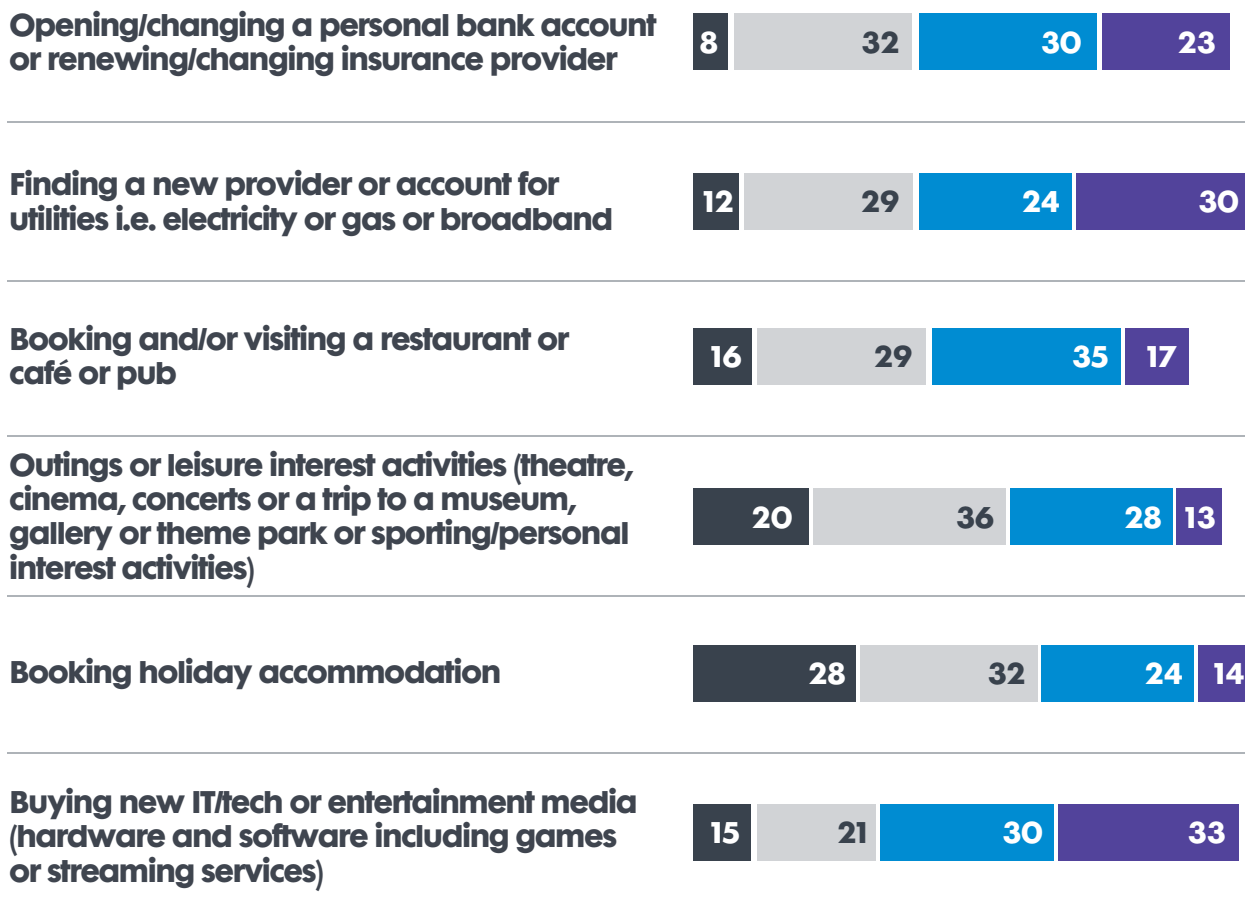
To further compound the issue, data from the online survey suggests that limitation in choice is a frequent occurrence for many.

**65 per cent agreed that** “I feel like my choices of what to buy are limited on a daily basis due to barriers (a lack of accessibility or inclusion)”. 26 per cent agreed strongly and 39 per cent to some extent.

Limitation of choice for consumers with disabilities runs across all seven business sectors explored in the survey:

- Over half of our respondents were likely to feel limited by choice, specifically because of their access needs, in relation to outings or leisure activities (**56 per cent**) or when booking holiday accommodation (**59 per cent**).
- Over four in ten respondents were limited to some extent when booking a new place to eat (**45 per cent**), finding a new provider or account for utilities – electricity, gas or broadband (**41 per cent**) – and opening or changing a personal bank account or renewing or changing insurance provider (**40 per cent**).

**Chart 2: To what extent, if at all, do you feel that your choice of was limited given your disability or access needs? For example, you had fewer options to choose from than you would have liked.**



**Key**



% of respondents

Base: Open Inclusion panel survey (All respondents 241, base sizes for each sector vary) don't know and not applicable not included in the chart.

## Abandoning a purchase

Finally, in terms of retail, including everyday or regular items such as food, clothes, or other retail items, 43 per cent of respondents experienced barriers very or quite often that caused them to leave an online shopping task early or abandon without buying.

The figure was the same for going into shops in person.

## About Business Disability Forum

**Business Disability Forum** is the leading business membership organisation in disability inclusion. We are trusted partners, working with business, Government and disabled people to improve the life experiences of disabled employees and consumers, by removing barriers to inclusion.

Find out more about the benefits of joining us at [businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/membership](https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/membership).

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