

# **'Collecting Global Employee Disability Data – the challenges and enablers for global disability-smart organisations'**

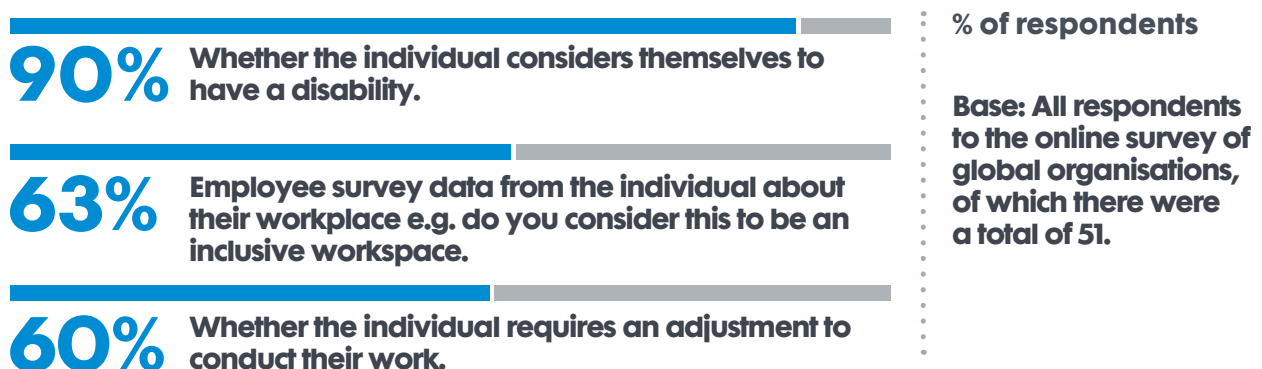
This document is part of series that summarise key considerations and successful approaches to collecting Global Employee Disability Data from our research sponsored by HSBC. You can access the full report at: [businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/knowledge-hub/resources/towards-a-disability-smart-world-global-disability-inclusion-strategy-report/](https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/knowledge-hub/resources/towards-a-disability-smart-world-global-disability-inclusion-strategy-report/)

## **2 Key consideration two: What Global Employee Disability Data do organisations collect?**

- For many organisations, the aim is to collect data where it is legally permissible and culturally acceptable to do so and to gain consistency, where possible, across those jurisdictions. 24% of survey respondents had succeeded in creating a standardised global data set, specifically related to employee disability, and running data collection exercises in all their locations where this was lawful.
- In order to standardise a global data collection exercise, many organisations identified the need to establish a globally acceptable and resonant definition of disability. This was one of the most frequently discussed barriers to being able to conduct a meaningful, global exercise, because of the significant variation in legal definitions and culturally appropriate language, globally.
- Respondents typically used either the United Nations definition of disability, the World Health Organisation definition of disability, or their own global definition, when providing employees with the option of sharing their disability status (where lawful).
- Legal definitions and terminology remain a strong determinant of the language used, and the type(s) of data collected, where the driver of data collection was predominantly about legal and quota compliance.
- Workplace adjustment data and employee opinion data was also collected by global organisations, which provides more insightful and actionable data, to improve the working lives of people with disabilities.

- While legal compliance is necessary for global organisations, where these legalities aren't in place, it is important to carefully consider what data you are requesting and why. It should not be assumed that more is better, if nothing purposeful is achieved with the collected data.
- Organisations could consider 'Globalising' their approach. One size will not fit all in a global data collection exercise; there will always be regional variations and requirements. So, a global aspiration and baseline data standard may be set, but that could be applied with local adaptations.
- Organisations could consider the development of a disability data scorecard, which could bring together multiple types and forms of employee disability data, which may already be collected across different departments. For example, this could include:
  - Disability 'count'
  - Disability quota compliance
  - Level of self-ID
  - Adjustment requests
  - Adjustment response times
  - Disability inclusion from employee surveys
  - Qualitative opinion data from ERGs / champions / listening groups.

The following responses from the research survey demonstrate the main types of data collected by global organisations: when asked 'What data are you collecting?'



// Freshfields had identified that, apart from continually working to build a culture of trust and openness, one of the key challenges to collecting employee disability data, is establishing globally appropriate terminology. Freshfields have developed a global definition, with the support of Business Disability Forum that draws on the United Nations definition. From there, Freshfields have run a number of training sessions to promote a better understanding of the breadth of disability across the firm and will continue to build on this.

They are also in the process of defining a set of disability-related questions, which are locally relevant but also consistent across all jurisdictions to enable better global data collection.”

Kristina Adey-Davies, Global Diversity and Inclusion Senior Manager, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP.

**UN Convention definition of disability:** Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

**WHO definition of disability:** Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives.