Results of a Survey “Impact of COVID-19 on Persons with Disabilities”

Conducted by Mirairo, Inc.

* Summary

Purpose: To understand the difficulties persons with disabilities are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on the challenges caused by the shift in working practices.

Duration: 5th March 2020 ～ 9th March 2020

Target:

Monitors with disabilities registered on Mirairo Research

Persons with disabilities who have Mirairo ID

Number of Respondents: 411

Survey Method: Online questionnaire

* Respondents by disability types (multiple choice)

Physical impairment: 201

Visual impairment: 65

Hearing impairment: 42

Mental impairment: 29

Developmental impairment: 11

Intellectual impairment: 8

Other: 21

Multiple impairments: 34

* Q1. What difficulties have you experienced as a result of the spread of COVID-19? (open-ended)

【Mobility Impairment】

・I cannot avoid touching the hand rims of my wheelchair, so I feel that my hands get dirty even though I use disinfectants.

・I use a wheelchair and am in a lower position than persons without disabilities. I am concerned, more than usual, that the droplets from coughing and talking may splash on me.

・I have motor difficulty in my hands. When my mask falls off, I cannot put it back on by myself.

・Disinfectants are available in various places, but they are often placed at a height that wheelchair users cannot reach.

【Visual Impairment】

・I am very concerned because I touch things regularly in daily life.

・I cannot read the signs at shops announcing the availability of supplies including masks.

・There used to be more people who would offer to guide me, but I feel that they are more cautious these days.

・It is difficult for me to decide whether to put a mask on because I cannot see whether others are wearing masks or not.

・It is difficult to listen to someone wearing a mask.

【Hearing Impairment】

・I cannot converse with people wearing a mask. They seem annoyed when I ask them to remove it.

・I face a problem when there is no option but a phone call to make inquiries. I wish they could offer inquiry services through e-mail or FAX.

【Mental Impairment】

 ・I feel panicked because I cannot tell which information is correct.

【Intellectual Impairment】

・My child with intellectual impairment doesn‘t want to wear a mask.（Comment from a parent）

* Q2. Are you working now?（Including regular and irregular employment）

Total: Yes 257, No 154

Mobility impairment: Yes 123, No 78

Visual impairment: Yes 49, No 16

Hearing impairment: Yes 32, No 10

Mental impairment: Yes 16, No 13

Developmental impairment: Yes 7, No 4

Intellectual impairment: Yes 3, No 5

Other: Yes 13, No 8

Multiple impairments: Yes 14, No 20

* Q3. Do you work from home?

Total:

I’m working from home 59; My workplace offers a work from home option, but I’m not doing it 10; No work from home option at my workplace 154

Mobility impairment:

I’m working from home 40; My workplace offers a work from home option, but I’m not doing it 10; No work from home option at my workplace 71

Visual impairment:

I’m working from home 5; My workplace offers a work from home option, but I’m not doing it 13; No work from home option at my workplace 30

Hearing impairment:

I’m working from home 5; My workplace offers a work from home option, but I’m not doing it 8; No work from home option at my workplace 19

Mental impairment:

I’m working from home 2; My workplace offers a work from home option, but I’m not doing it 4; No work from home option at my workplace 10

Developmental impairment:

I’m working from home 1; My workplace offers a work from home option, but I’m not doing it 0; No work from home option at my workplace 5

Intellectual impairment:

I’m working from home 0; My workplace offers a work from home option, but I’m not doing it 0; No work from home option at my workplace 3

Other:

I’m working from home 3; My workplace offers a work from home option, but I’m not doing it 4; No work from home option at my workplace 6

Multiple impairments:

I’m working from home 3; My workplace offers a work from home option, but I’m not doing it 1; No work from home option at my workplace 10

* Q4. What are the difficulties you are facing in working from home? (open-ended)

【Mobility Impairment】

・At home, I use a basic wheelchair, and sitting in it for a long period of time causes pain. It doesn’t happen at the workplace because I use a different wheelchair for going outside.

・It is difficult to have my functional limitations understood through online communication. It is difficult to have get assessed on which tasks I can perform and cannot.

・I cannot use the support service by assistants while at work (because of the regulations). I am dependent on my parents while I work from home, including using bathrooms and taking lunch.

【Visual Impairment】

・I am concerned that I may not be able to get support I need in understanding visual information.

・I have not been able to install a screen reader in the computer I use at home because it doesn’t have a hard disc. Moreover, I cannot attach the braille display to the computer provided by the company. So, I cannot work as fast as I do in the office, and there are some tasks I cannot carry out at home. I cannot use assistive devices because of security requirements.

・I use a desktop computer at work and a laptop at home. When working from home, I feel fatigue in my neck and back. In addition, the screen and the keyboards are smaller and hard to use.

【Hearing Impairment】

・I cannot use a phone, so I would have difficulty in communication in case of emergency.

・Teleconferences are difficult for me to join.

【Developmental Impairment】

・I cannot concentrate on my work when I’m staying at home by myself. I am worried that I cannot complete my tasks as planned. I also find it more difficult to get up in the morning compared with the time I was commuting. I tend to sleep in.

* Q5. Do you use the staggered working hours scheme (to avoid rush hour commuting)?

Total:

I’m using the scheme 50; My workplace offers the scheme, but I’m not using it 69; No staggered working hours scheme in my workplace 129

Mobility impairment:

I’m using the scheme 25; My workplace offers the scheme, but I’m not using it 34; No staggered working hours scheme in my workplace 58

Visual impairment:

I’m using the scheme 9; My workplace offers the scheme, but I’m not using it 10; No staggered working hours scheme in my workplace 29

Hearing impairment:

I’m using the scheme 4; My workplace offers the scheme, but I’m not using it 12; No staggered working hours scheme in my workplace 15

Mental impairment:

I’m using the scheme 4; My workplace offers the scheme, but I’m not using it 5; No staggered working hours scheme in my workplace 7

Developmental impairment:

I’m using the scheme 2; My workplace offers the scheme, but I’m not using it 4; No staggered working hours scheme in my workplace 0

Intellectual impairment:

I’m using the scheme 0; My workplace offers the scheme, but I’m not using it 0; No staggered working hours scheme in my workplace 3

Other:

I’m using the scheme 4; My workplace offers the scheme, but I’m not using it 6; No staggered working hours scheme in my workplace 3

Multiple impairments:

I’m using the scheme 4; My workplace offers the scheme, but I’m not using it 3; No staggered working hours scheme in my workplace 7

* Q6. What are the difficulties you have experienced in using the staggered working hours scheme? (open-ended)

【Mobility Impairment】

・I cannot change my commuting schedule because the non-step bus schedule is fixed.

・Leaving home later than usual makes it easier to go to the office, but coming home later puts pressure on my body.

・I am not entitled to use the scheme because I drive to work.

・I have been diagnosed with developmental difficulties as a side effect of cerebral palsy. I find it hard to adapt myself to changes, so I am not using the staggered work hours scheme.

・I use welfare taxis to work and don’t need to use the scheme.

【Hearing Impairment】

・I drive to work, so I don’t use the scheme.

【Mental Impairment】

・I have medical conditions and I don’t go to the office by choice. I don’t get paid or receive compensation from my employer. I would like to have some support as I need to cover the medical costs.

【Others】

・I’m not using the scheme because that would disrupt the schedule for my hospital visits.

* Q7. Do you use remote meeting systems (video/phone conference)?

Total:

I’m using remote meeting systems 63; My workplace offers remote meting systems, but I’m not using them 30; No remote meeting systems are used in my workplace 153

Mobility impairment:

I’m using remote meeting systems 40; My workplace offers remote meting systems, but I’m not using them 12; No remote meeting systems are used in my workplace 64

Visual impairment:

I’m using remote meeting systems 7; My workplace offers remote meting systems, but I’m not using them 7; No remote meeting systems are used in my workplace 33

Hearing impairment:

I’m using remote meeting systems 6; My workplace offers remote meting systems, but I’m not using them 5; No remote meeting systems are used in my workplace 20

Mental impairment:

I’m using remote meeting systems 3; My workplace offers remote meting systems, but I’m not using them 2; No remote meeting systems are used in my workplace 11

Developmental impairment:

I’m using remote meeting systems 2; My workplace offers remote meting systems, but I’m not using them 1; No remote meeting systems are used in my workplace 3

Intellectual impairment:

I’m using remote meeting systems 0; My workplace offers remote meting systems, but I’m not using them 0; No remote meeting systems are used in my workplace 3

Other:

I’m using remote meeting systems 3; My workplace offers remote meting systems, but I’m not using them 3; No remote meeting systems are used in my workplace 7

Multiple impairments:

I’m using remote meeting systems 2; My workplace offers remote meting systems, but I’m not using them 0; No remote meeting systems are used in my workplace 12

Q8. What difficulties have you experienced in remote meetings? (open-ended)

【Mobility Impairment】

・I cannot type fast and find it difficult to take notes.

・I am paralyzed from the neck down. I find it difficult to take notes while talking on the phone or watching the screen.

Long meetings take a heavy toll on my body.

・I cannot speak loudly, so other meeting participants cannot hear me well.

【Visual Impairment】

・The software used for remote meetings does not support the screen reader, making it difficult to operate the computer before attending the meetings.

・I cannot see visual images just like in ordinary meetings.

・Sometimes I cannot hear other speakers voice clearly.

・I’m afraid I might not be able to use the software properly because I have never used my own computer for remote meetings.

【Hearing Impairment】

・I use a voice recognition app for regular meetings, which transcribes voice into words. I’m having problems because the remote meeting system and the voice recognition app do not work well together.

・I cannot tell what others are saying in remote meetings.

・The sound quality is low, making it difficult for me to hear. The quality of image is also poor, so I cannot lipread.

・I am fine so far, but I’m afraid some people may find it difficult to understand the conversation due to the time lag between the image and the sound.

・I cannot understand what’s being said. I don’t think I can join remote meetings.

【Developmental Impairment】

・I feel a little embarrassed because my room is untidy during videoconferences.

* Q9. Please share your thoughts on working from home, staggered working hours, and remote meetings (open-ended)

【Mobility Impairment】

・I hope these measures will be more widely used as part of reasonable accommodation, not just for COVID-19.

・I hope that working from home will be an available option for anyone, regardless of disability.

・I hope that working from home and staggered working hours options will become available for everyone, not just for big companies or regular employees.

・I am the only one in my company who is allowed to work from home. I’m practically cut off from my work and very unhappy. The nature of the job in my division is such that it is impossible to do it from home.

【Visual Impairment】

・I think these measure will promote the social participation of skilled persons with disabilities.

・It is necessary to ensure anyone regardless of disability can work from home, but I think it is difficult to overcome issues on security restrictions and assistive devices.

【Hearing Impairment】

・I am now self-employed. If I work for a company, I would be concerned how I would work from home. I cannot use the phone, so I am concerned whether I can communicate smoothly and how I can join teleconferences.

・I hope that these systems will be equally accessible to everyone.

【Developmental Impairment】

・I think they are good systems, but I don’t think they would work for me. It’s good to have options.

【Multiple Impairments】

・It would alleviate the stress I feel during my commute.

【Other】

・Persons with disabilities are often hired as contract workers. Even if we want to take advantage of these systems, many of us are not in the position to be entitled to use them.