

Disabled people in 2020

02.12.2021

 **3.1%**

Decrease in the number of employed disabled persons in medium and large enterprises compared to 2019

At the end of 2020, the majority of disabled persons working in medium and large enterprises were employed in the private sector (76.0%). More than half of employed disabled persons worked in the section administrative and support service activities (104.0 thousand) and in the section manufacturing (79.6 thousand).

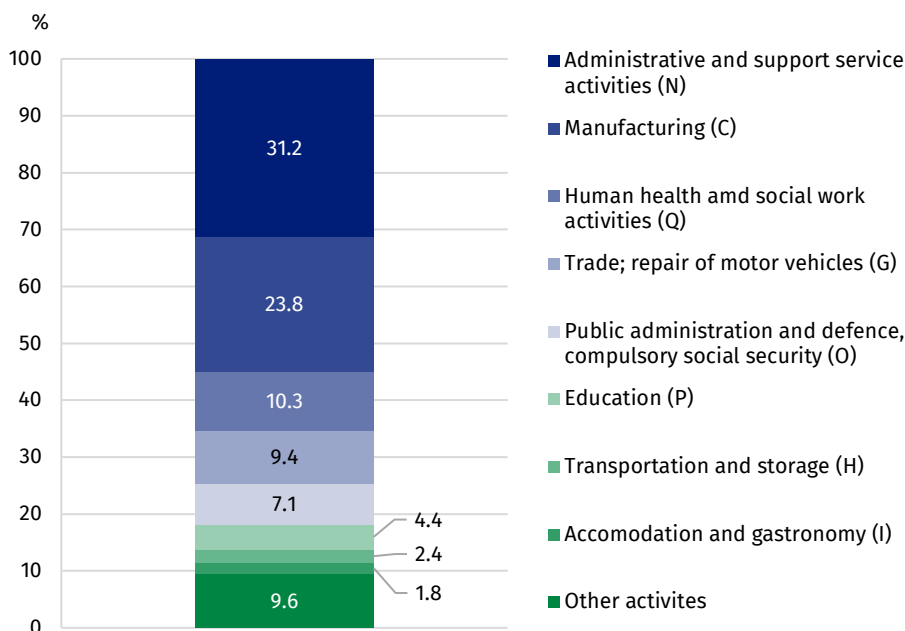
Disabled persons on the labour market

As of 31 December 2020, there were 333.7 thousand disabled persons working for entities employing more than 10 persons¹, they were employed mainly in administrative and support service activities (31.2%), including investigation and security activities (19.0%) and service activities related to maintenance of order in buildings and development of green areas (9.0%). Every fourth disabled person worked in manufacturing (23.8%). 10.3% of disabled persons worked in health care.

At the end of 2020, employed disabled persons accounted for 3.5% of the total number of people working in medium and large enterprises

Chart 1. Structure of employed disabled persons according to NACE sections in 2020

As of 31 December



As of 31 December 2020, 55.7 thousand disabled persons were registered in powiat labour offices, of which 16.8% persons entitled to benefits. The number of unemployed disabled persons decreased by 3.1% compared to 2019 and the number of persons entitled to benefits decreased by 5.3%. In the analysed group of unemployed people, men predominated (55.1%).

¹ Persons with a disability certificate based on Act of 27 August 1997 on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (Journal of Laws 2021, items 573).

People with a certificate of the degree of disability or the degree of inability to work

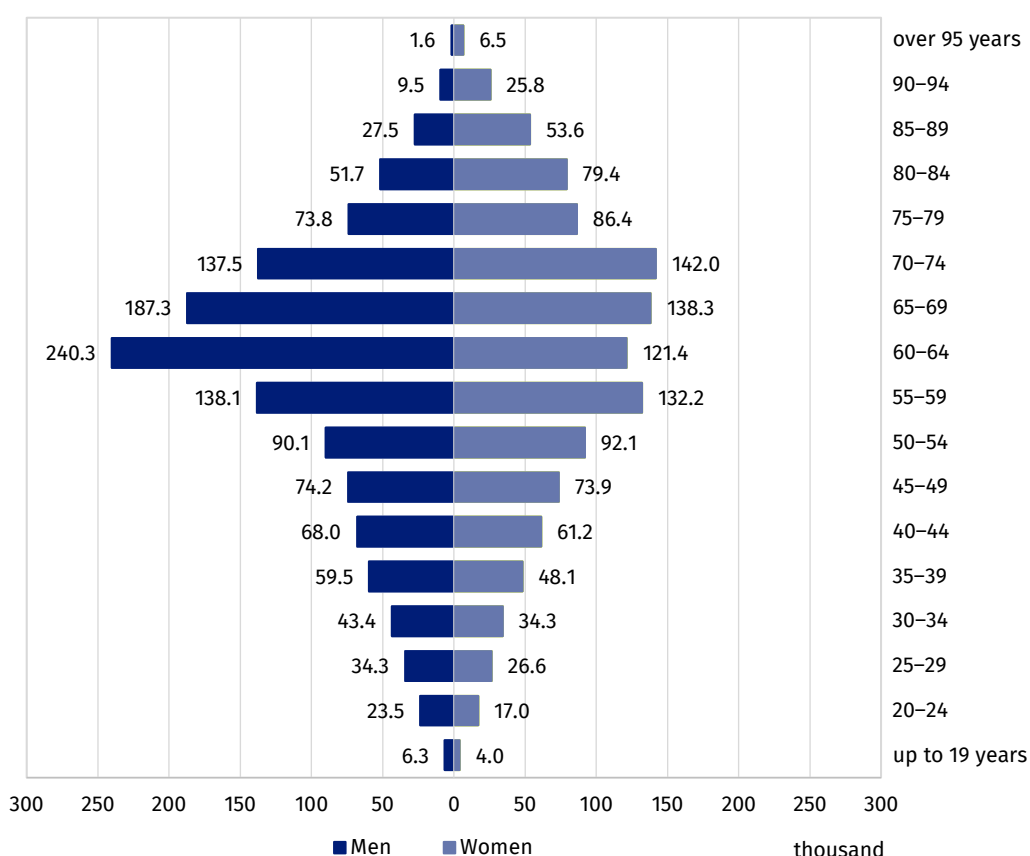
In December 2020, there were 2.4 million people in Poland² receiving retirement and other pension benefits and/or insured by contribution payers in the Social Security Institution, who had a certificate of the degree of disability (issued by disability assessment teams) or a certificate of the degree of inability to work (issued by the Social Security Institution)³.

In the surveyed population with a certificate, men prevailed, constituting 52.6%. Considering the age, males aged 64 (54.4 thousand) were the most frequent in the analysed group. About 52.7 thousand men were 63 years old. The largest number of women with a certificate were at the age of 71 (31.7 thousand). Over 30 thousand women were 59 years old (30.7 thousand) or 70 years old (30.5 thousand). The median age of men with a certificate was 62 years and the median age of women was 63 years.

Men accounted for 52.6 of people with the degree of disability or the degree of inability to work certificate

Chart 2. Persons with a certificate of the degree of disability or the degree of inability to work by sex and age in 2020

As of 31 December



Source: Comprehensive IT System of the Social Insurance Institution.

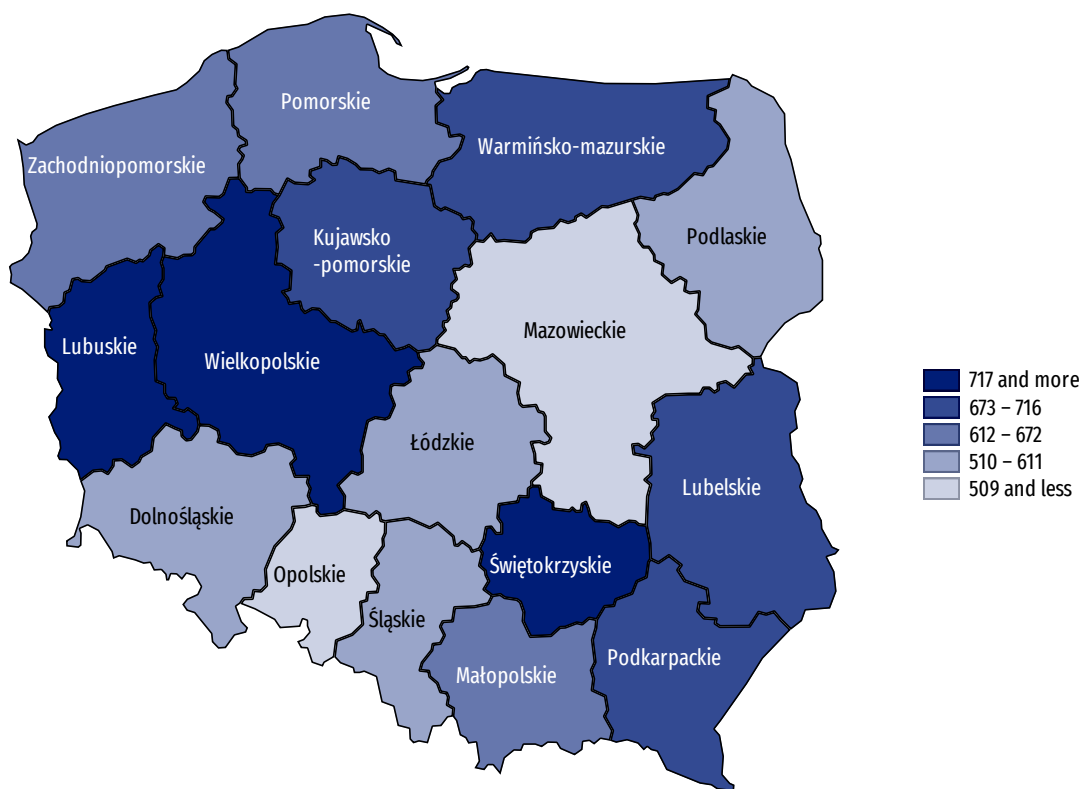
² Compiled on the basis of combined data sets from information systems of the Social Insurance Institution and after removing repeated and empty observations. The data could be incomparable to those presented in previous years due to the change in the method of calculating the territorial distribution of the phenomenon. Additional validation of the data set consisted in deleting people who died by 31 December 2020.

³ According to Art. 5 of the Act of 27 August 1997 on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (Journal of Laws 2021, item 573), the rulings of the Social Insurance Institution certifying physician on inability to work, incapacity for independent existence and the advisability of retraining are subject to translating into certificates of the degree of disability.

Most of men and women with a certificate of the degree of disability or the degree of inability to work registered residence⁴ in Śląskie Voivodship (148.4 thousand men and 123.8 thousand women, respectively). Half of the surveyed population reported living in the following voivodships: Dolnośląskie, Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Śląskie and Wielkopolskie. Least of persons with the degree of disability or the degree of inability to work certificate declared living in Opolskie Voivodship (21.0 thousand women and 25.2 thousand men).

Indicator of the number of persons with a certificate of the degree of disability per 10 thousand population reached the highest level in Lubuskie Voivodship (890). The indicator has exceeded 700 persons in the voivodships: Wielkopolskie (723), Świętokrzyskie (721), Podkarpackie (712), Kujawsko-pomorskie (708) and Warmińsko-mazurskie (706). On the other hand, the lowest number of surveyed people with a certificate per 10 thousand population registered residence in Mazowieckie voivodship (468). Moreover, the value of the indicator was lower than 500 persons in Opolskie Voivodship (473).

Map 1. Number of persons with a certificate of the degree of disability or the degree of inability to work per 10 thousand population by voivodships in 2020
As of 31 December



The highest value of the indicator of the number of persons with a certificate of the degree of disability or the degree of inability to work per 10 thousand population was recorded in Lubuskie Voivodship (890)

Source: Comprehensive IT System of the Social Insurance Institution.

⁴ The declared voivodship of the registered address was approximately 99% consistent with the declared voivodship of the stayed address. In occasional cases, where the registered address was not known, it was determined on the basis of the address of stay, and in the lack of both addresses on the basis of the correspondence address.

Education of students with disabilities and students with special educational needs

In the 2020/21 school year, there were 318 special nursery schools with 6 thousand children. The greatest number, namely 28.2% of children in special nursery schools, aged 7 years. Most of the children in special nursery schools were males (71.0%). There were 35.1 thousand children with disabilities in other nursery schools and other pre-primary education establishments, accounting for 2.5% of the total number of children. Most children with disabilities attended mainstream nursery schools (78.4%), including nursery schools with integrated sections (14.0%) and integrated nursery schools (12.9%).

In the 2020/21 school year, 6.0 thousand children attended special nursery schools and 35.1 thousand children with disabilities attended other pre-primary education establishments

Table 1. Pre-primary education establishments in the 2020/21 school year

As of 30 September

SPECIFICATION	Establishments	Sections	Children	
			total	of whom with disabilities ^a
TOTAL	22 315	73 650	1 423 891	35 115
Nursery schools	13 196	57 490	1 153 997	27 514
Special	318	1 302	6 037	.
Integrated	383	1 474	.	4 526
With integrated sections	514	3 464	.	4 899
With special sections	54	370	.	721
With integrated and special sections	109	821	.	2 720
Other nursery schools	11 818	50 059	.	14 648
Pre-primary education units	63	79	1 031	9
Pre-primary centres	1 472	2 192	28 019	3 767
Pre-primary sections in primary schools	7 584	13 889	240 844	3 825

a Excluding special establishments.

There were 46.8 thousand children and youth in special primary schools. In addition, 93.9 thousand pupils with special educational needs attended the sections of mainstream primary schools. A total of 140.7 thousand pupils in special education, accounted for 4.6% of the total number of pupils of primary schools. Most of the pupils were males (68.4%). There were 43.4% children with disabilities among 4.8 thousands children individually learning.

Special education and care centres and special educational centres are organised for pupils with the certificate of special educational needs on the basis of disabilities but, for that reason, could not attend the nursery school or school in their place of residence. In the 2020/21 school year, there were 360 such centres. 60.7% of the 17.7 thousand available places were used. Nearly 60% of pupils had intellectual disability. Subsequently, the centres provided care for children and youth with multiple disabilities (23.3%), deaf and hearing impaired (6.6%) and blind and vision impaired (3.5%).

Children and youth with a severe intellectual disability with the certificate of rehabilitation and education classes as well as children and youth with multiple disabilities, including intellectual disability with the statement of special educational needs could fulfill one-year introductory school section obligation, full-time compulsory education and part-time compulsory education by attending rehabilitation and education centres. As of 30 September 2020, 186 rehabilitation and education centres provided 7.1 thousand places, of which nearly 92% were used. Centres provided participation in classes for over 3 thousand pupils with multiple disabilities and for nearly 3 thousand pupils with severe intellectual disability.

Post-primary education for youth with special educational needs was provided mainly in special schools. The majority of special schools were special vocational training schools and first degree sectoral vocational special schools, developing skills in a specific profes-

In the 2020/21 school year there were 191.4 thousand children and youth with special educational needs in mainstream schools (excluding schools for adults), who accounted for 3.9% of the total number of students

sions. 29.2 thousand students attended all special schools. In addition, 21.3 thousand students with special educational needs attended the sections of secondary schools, including 38.1% students in the sections of general secondary schools, 30.9% students in the sections of technical secondary schools and 30.3% students in the sections of special first degree sectoral vocational schools. A total number of children and youth in special education at post-primary level amounted to 50.5 thousand and accounted for 3.1% of the total number.

239 students with special educational needs attended post-secondary schools, prevailing in special post-secondary schools (88.3%).

In the 2020/21 academic year, 19.6 thousands persons with disabilities attended higher education institutions (1.6% of the total number of students⁵) and 5.2 thousand persons with disabilities graduated⁶ (1.8% of the total number of graduates). There were 0.8 thousand doctoral students with disabilities, i.e. 3.3% of all doctoral students.

Methodological notes

1. This information report is the third nationwide study on the subject of disabled people, prepared by the employees of the Statistical Office in Kraków. The scope of the presented data does not exhaust the issue of disability due to its complex nature and diversity.
2. The information file uses:
 - a. Data collections of the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) and powiat labour offices on persons with a certificate of the degree of disability or the degree of inability to work issued by an authorized institution;
 - b. Data provided by the Ministry of National Education (MEN) on children and youth with the opinion of the public psychological and educational counselling centre (or other public specialist outpatient clinic) on the need for special education. Special education is organised for children and youth with disabilities, socially maladjusted and at risk of social maladjustment, requiring special organisation of learning and methods of work. It may be conducted within the school system or individually. Children and youth with the statement of special educational needs needn't be disabled within the meaning of the Act on Occupational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of People with Disabilities. Likewise, students with disabilities do not need a statement of special needs issued by an authorized institution;
 - c. Data provided by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MNiSW) on students and doctoral students with a certificate of the degree of disability;
 - d. Statistical information from the Statistics Poland's reports was also used to prepare this news release.
3. The disability certification system in Poland is not uniform. It is defined by two basic legal acts:
 - a. The Act of 27 August 1997 on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (uniform text, Journal of Laws 2021, item 573) – in Art. 2, disability is defined as permanent or temporary inability to fulfil social roles due to permanent or long-term impairment of the body's efficiency, in particular resulting in inability to work. Art. 3 defines the degree of disability: severe, moderate and slight, while Art. 4a mentions children up to 16 years of age who are issued without establishing its degree. Disability adjudication institutions are powiat (first instance) and voivodship (second instance) disability adjudication units. The district labour and social security courts are the last stage.
 - b. The Act of 17 December 1998 on pensions and pensions from the Social Insurance Fund (uniform text, Journal of Laws of 2021, items 291, 353, 794, 1621, 1981) – in Art. 12 defines a person incapable of work as one who has completely or partially lost the ability to work for gainful employment due to a violation of the physical fitness and does not expect to regain the ability to work after retraining. Decisions on: ina-

⁵ Listed only once according to the main type of disability confirmed by the decision of an authorized institution.

⁶ Graduates from the 2020/21 academic year.

bility to work, incapacity for independent existence and purposefulness of retraining, issued by the Social Insurance Institution, are translated into decisions about the degree of disability in accordance with Art. 5 of the aforementioned Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons.

A person must have one of the above-mentioned certificates to be recognized as disabled in the legal and formal meaning.

4. Decisions issued after 31 December 1997, which cannot be translated into disability certificates, are:
 - a. Statements of inability to work on a farm, issued by the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund,
 - b. Decisions on inability to work/service, issued by adjudicating units of the Ministry of National Defence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration and units of special services (Internal Security Agency and Intelligence Agency).

In the case of quoting data from the Statistics Poland, please provide information: "Statistics Poland data source", and in the case of publishing calculations made on data published by the Statistics Poland, please provide information: "Own study based on Statistics Poland data".

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Terms used in official statistics

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[Level of disability](#)