

Supporting disabled staff in the workplace

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**There are 13.3 million
disabled people in the
UK**

That's 1 in 5 people.



**18% of working age
adults are disabled**



**96% of disabilities
are non visible**

- Some people may not want to talk or disclose a disability.
- This could be because they fear discrimination, stigma or are anxious about their colleagues' reaction.
- They may well not consider themselves to be disabled and find the term unhelpful.

- If the individual is doing their job and doesn't need any changes to their working environment or working practices, then there is probably no reason for the department or the University to know, or for them to disclose their disability.
- However, as with any personal matter, disability and/or health issue, when this affects the person's ability to do the job, intervention is likely to be required.

Equality Act - disability

Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if:

- They have a physical or mental impairment
- The impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

Substantial – more than minor or trivial

Long-term – the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (considerations for recurring or fluctuating condition)

Normal day-to-day activities – everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

Equality Act - Reasonable Adjustments

Whether or not an adjustment has to be made depends on how 'reasonable' it is - and that's something that will depend on the individual circumstances of each case, and the resources of the employer.

Many adjustments are straightforward and easy to carry out, however it is for the manager to decide what is deemed to be reasonable and put the adjustment in place - seek advice from HR / OH

Open discussion with the staff member will support a good outcome

What is 'reasonable'?

Is an adjustment required?

- Is the person disadvantaged or experiencing a barrier at work?
- Are they experiencing this disadvantage/barrier because of their disability?

If answer to both is yes, then need to consider:

Is the adjustment reasonable?

- Effectiveness
- Practicality
- Cost
- Disruption
- Risk

Reasonable adjustments might include.....

Workplace changes - widening doorways for wheelchair access; altering the lighting for people with restricted vision; allocating a parking space for the car of a person with a disability; provision of ergonomic equipment and ensuring that there are adequate toilet facilities.

Employment changes / adjustments - altering working hours; allowing absences during working hours for rehabilitation assessment or treatment; and supplying additional training.

Disability support starts at recruitment stage

- Interview – can request adjustments to the interview process
- Following offer of post – completion of work health declaration
 - Do you have any health problem or disability (physical or psychological), which may affect your work?
 - Do you have a health problem or disability which may require any adjustments to your work activities or your place of work?
- On-offer referral to OH for advice to individual and manager regarding adjustments
- Ongoing support and review at local level

During employment

Occupational Health

- Management / self referral - Opportunity to review and provide advice regarding impact on health and any adjustments in short and long term
- A management referral is required if seeking written recommendations regarding adjustments or modifications.

Human Resources

- Individual case advice from HR team

<https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/disabled-applicants-and-members-staff/support-services-available-within>

Support / tools

Assistive Technology / Equipment Loan Pool for ergonomic computer equipment (referral via OH)

University Staff Counselling Service

Return to work discussions – HR Sickness Absence Policy

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) – EM Fire Safety Unit

Tailored Adjustment Plan - British Disability Forum

Wellness Action Plan – MIND <https://www.mind.org.uk/media/1593680/guide-to-waps.pdf>

Access to Work <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>

Remploy Mental Health Service <https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/workplace-mental-health-support-service-employers>

Access to Work

- Government funded scheme <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>
- Support for staff who have a disability or health condition that makes it hard to do parts of the job
- Support is based on an individual needs assessment
- Individual receives an Access to Work grant to help pay for items or services which may include:
 - Adaptations to the equipment used
 - Special equipment or software
 - British Sign Language interpreters, lip speakers or note takers
 - Taxi fares to work if unable to use public transport
 - A support service for a mental health condition / Specific Learning Difficulty

Access to Work - funding

Can apply for grants of up to 100% of the costs incurred for people who apply who have been working for less than six weeks when they first apply for Access to Work support.

A proportion of the costs of support if the following applies:

- the person has been in the job for six weeks or more
- The person needs special equipment or adaptations to premises

Large employers with 250 or more employees will pay the first £1,000 and 20 per cent of costs up to £10,000

Access to Work review the circumstances and support received between one and three years.

Access to Work - grant

The Access to Work grant can help pay for items or services which may include:

- Adaptations to the equipment used
- Special equipment or software
- British Sign Language interpreters, lip speakers or note takers
- Taxi fares to work if unable to use public transport
- A support service for a mental health condition
- Strategy sessions for specific learning difficulties

Access to Work will not provide a grant for

- Any changes that an employer has to make (reasonable adjustment)
- Items that would normally be needed to do the job whether the person is disabled or not

Summary

- Encourage discussion with individual
- Agree about confidentiality – who will know and what they will know
- If needed, seek advice from HR and OH
- Refer to OH if advice required
- Review the effectiveness of the adjustments agreed periodically

Questions

