Understanding disability

Disability in the UK

Approx. **93%** of disabled people **don't** use a wheelchair

53.6% of working age disabled people are in employment, compared to **81.7%** of working age non-disabled people

83% of disabled people acquire their health condition **during working age**

Disabled people from BAME backgrounds report **greater social inequalities** compared to disabled people from white backgrounds
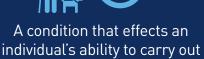
What is a disability?

A condition that effects an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

A mental health or physical condition.

Disabilities can be visible or hidden.

Can last 12 months or longer and be recurring.

Long-term conditions which are classed as a disability

- Heart disease
- Musculoskeletal conditions (including spinal-cord, arms, legs and joints)
- Lung or respiratory conditions
- Stroke
- Mental health conditions (depression, anxiety and bipolar)
- Diabetes

- Learning difficulties and neuro-diverse conditions (eg autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia)
- Visual, auditory and speech impairments
- Cancer (including those with and who have survived cancer)
- HIV
- Multiple sclerosis

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Taking action on barriers that disabled staff may experience

Organisations

Decision-making
Establish a disabled staff network and engage with disabled staff and trade unions. Involve them in decision-making and the development of your WDES action plan.

Employment and recruitment
Explore with disabled staff what actions your organisation can take to tackle any inequalities in employment and recruitment.

Career development
Introduce a developmental/talent management programme for disabled staff.

Policies and practice
Review policies such as absence management and reasonable adjustments to identify any gaps and make improvements. Consider introducing a health passport.

Attitudes
Develop actions the organisation can take to address disablism and promote an inclusive culture that has zero tolerance of discrimination.

Transport
Use and promote the Access to Work scheme, which provides funding for disabled staff, including transport costs for getting to and from work.

Buildings and facilities
Agree steps your organisation can take to improve access into and within its built environment. Consider inclusion from the outset of any new building developments.

Information
Run an internal campaign to raise awareness of what a disability is and encourage staff to record their disability on ESR. Review the NHS Accessible Information Standard.

Line managers

Decision-making
Engage with staff. Encourage open conversations to understand their challenges. Involve them in decisions that will have an impact on their working lives.

Employment and recruitment
Understand the benefits of employing disabled staff, your responsibilities as a manager and how to recruit and support staff.

Career development
Explore what opportunities are available for staff to progress in their career and support them on their journey.

Policies and practice
Improve understanding of organisational policies around absence management, reasonable adjustments and health passports so you can support staff.

Attitudes
Proactively address any behaviour that might adversely impact or affect someone who identifies as disabled, or differently abled.

Transport
Discuss any needs with staff and explore opportunities with HR to resolve issues - ask about the Access to Work scheme.

Buildings and facilities
Initiate a regular item at team meetings to discuss any reasonable adjustments or adaptations that people might need to help them in their roles.

Information
Educate yourself on what it is like to have a disability and what you can do to support your staff, both existing and prospective. Encourage staff to record their disability on ESR.

Further Information

NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard   NHS Employers Disability Resource Library