

# Understanding disability

## Disability in the UK

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



**52.3%** 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 equalities 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](#)