

Disability in the Workplace^{*}

People with disabilities represent a large minority in the UK. Such disabilities may have little impact upon a person's ability to work, or they may have a major impact requiring considerable support and assistance. Employers that deal effectively with disability-related issues will be better placed to utilise the skills and potential of people with disabilities, allowing them to make a valuable contribution in the workplace.

It is believed that 1 in 6 people experience problems relating to their mental health. This naturally has an impact on the wellbeing of individual, as well as others around them. Given the high prevalence of mental health problems, employers can play a pivotal role in supporting employees during difficult times. With stress, depression and anxiety affecting an employee's morale and sometimes their attendance at work too, employers need to take mental health issues seriously. Whilst mental health issues can result from both an employee's home life and their working environment, an employer who effectively handles the situation can benefit the employee, team, and organisation.

Legislation

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* was significantly revised and the current *Disability Discrimination Act 2005* has a much wider scope. The newly revised *Act* includes focus on employment, education, access to goods, facilities, services, and property.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 2005* makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate against disabled people for reasons related to their disability. This includes: application forms, interview arrangements, promotion, transfer or training opportunities, terms of employment, work-related benefits such as access to recreation or refreshment facilities, and dismissal or redundancy.

Business improvement

TUC - Disability and Work

This trade union guide to the law and good practice provides a large amount of useful information, including up-to-date case studies to show how the courts have interpreted the *Disability Discrimination Act* and recommendations of good practice in some of the major areas of working life where experience has shown that disabled people face the worst problems.

Available at the following link: (<http://www.tuc.org.uk/extras/disabilityandwork.pdf>)

MINDFUL EMPLOYER[®]

Led and supported by employers, the MINDFUL EMPLOYER[®] initiative is aimed at increasing awareness of mental health issues at work and providing support for businesses in recruiting and retaining staff.

^{*} As with other areas of equality, there is a huge amount of information about this important issue and this page cannot reflect all issues related to the subject matter. However, we hope our focus on the key legislation, leading campaigners, business improvement and good practice tips regarding disabilities and mental health equality in the workplace are helpful.

One element of the MINDFUL EMPLOYER® initiative is the Charter for Employers who are Positive about Mental Health, which is open to any employer - small, medium or large; public, private or voluntary sector, anywhere in the UK.

More information available at the following link: (<http://www.mindfulemployer.net>)

SHIFT - Action on Stigma

Launched in 2004, replacing and building on the work of the Mind Out for Mental Health campaign, the SHIFT initiative is committed to challenging stigma related to mental health and ending discrimination in the workplace. Supported by the Department of Health, the group has produced the Action on Stigma publication, providing employers with recent examples of discrimination and the pressures some employees feel as a result of the stigma.

The Action on Stigma publication highlights the business benefits that can be achieved by following six principles that improve awareness, support and understanding in the workplace. The successes of such approaches are demonstrated in a series of Case Studies.

Available at the following link: (<http://www.shift.org.uk/work/employment/index.html>)

Disability Symbol

The Disability Symbol is a recognition given by Jobcentre Plus to employers based in Great Britain who have agreed to take action to meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees. The Disability Symbol is a circular symbol, usually green, with two ticks, and is used by employers all over Britain.

More information available at the following link:

(http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Employers/advisoryservices/diversity/Dev_015793.xml.html)

Investors in People - *Equality and Diversity Handbook*

Designed to benefit all organisations, regardless of size or sector, this *Handbook* introduces the ideas behind equality, diversity and inclusion. It examines how implementing those ideas can deliver tangible benefits to an organisation.

Equally relevant to organisations working towards the Standard and beyond, this book is also a valuable guide for organisations simply wishing to develop Equality and Diversity techniques. This booklet published in 2007 is available for purchase via the [Online Shop](#).

Useful links and further reading

Legislation

- ***Disability Discrimination Act 2005***
(<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/20050013.htm>)

Useful links

- **Equality and Human Rights Commission** (<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>)
- **SHIFT** (<http://www.shift.org.uk/>)
- **CIPD** (<http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/dvsequl/disability>)
- **LDA - Diversity Works for London** (<http://www.diversityworksforlondon.com>)