

# Disability Awareness

A disability is “a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.”  
(Equality Act 2010)

## Types of Disability

A visible disability is one that you can see e.g. the use of a wheelchair or an amputation

A hidden disability is not immediately obvious e.g. chronic illnesses or mental health conditions

Disabilities may affect people in different ways, but everyone deserves equal opportunities and support.

## Recognising and diagnosing a disability

- ❖ Of those in the UK adult population with a disability, 80% have a hidden disability. (BMA 2024)
- ❖ Recognising most disabilities is challenging without visual cues.
- ❖ Common signs of a hidden disability to look out for:
  - Persistent fatigue or ongoing pain
  - Difficulty concentrating or remembering things
  - Excessive stress or consistent low mood
  - Sensitivity to noise, light, or busy environments
- ❖ If you think you might have a disability, talk to your GP, they will help you see a specialist, if necessary, who can give a diagnosis.

## Disability Rights

- ❖ It's important to have legislation that gives everyone equal access to opportunities.

Examples include:

### Care Act (2014)

It makes sure that adults with disabilities receive care and support to maintain their wellbeing, independence, and choice.

### Equality Act (2010)

Employers must make ‘reasonable adjustments’ which are changes to help someone with a disability do their job effectively.

An important government support scheme for disabled people:

### Access to Work (1994)

It helps cover the cost of support or equipment needed to help someone with a disability do their job. E.g. assistive software, support workers, travelling costs



## Disclosing a disability (Scope UK 2025)

- ❖ You can mention disability to your employer at any point.
- ❖ It is entirely your choice whether to mention your disability.
- ❖ You might consider disclosing when:
  - You receive a diagnosis
  - You need adjustments to do your job
  - Your condition/role at work changes
- ❖ Sharing this information may help you access support such as:
  - Reasonable adjustments
  - Access to Work grants

## Support and adjustments at work

- ❖ There are many different strategies that can be used to offer effective support.
- ❖ Some general examples of adjustments that can be made are:
  - Flexible working: adjust hours, work from home
  - Assistive technology: screen readers, voice recognition software
  - Physical adjustments: ergonomic chairs, accessible restrooms
  - Role modifications: adjusted workload, restructured tasks (AbilityNet 2025)

## References

[Equality Act \(2010\)](#)

[BMA \(2024\)](#)

[Access to Work \(1994\)](#)

[Care Act \(2014\)](#)

[Scope UK](#)

[AbilityNet](#)