

Disability Confident – EMPLOYER



LEVEL 2

Hiring **good people**
is good business

Be Disability Confident



Disability Confident – EMPLOYER

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This guidance explains how to become a **Disability Confident employer** at level 2 of the Disability Confident scheme.

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Ministerial foreword

Congratulations and thank you for taking this step on your Disability Confident journey. I know that your business can be more productive, more prosperous and more competitive for the commitment that you are making.

The economic power of disabled people and their families is immense. Not only do they have a combined spending power of over £200 billion, but they have skills and talents that are underutilised and remain out of reach for many businesses.

The cost of this to your business, to government and to potential employees is huge. Growth is stifled and the potential for innovation and invention is lost.

But this can be avoided. The Disability Confident scheme will help you on your journey to employing, supporting and promoting disabled people in your workplace. You will gain insight into an often overlooked customer base and you will learn to think differently about what disability means – both for you and for your business.

There is no greater catalyst for change than business. In terms of your reach and your interconnectedness you are unrivalled. But the Disability Confident movement, that I am delighted you are now a part of, is absolutely in your interest too.



Penny Mordaunt MP

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work

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Introduction

The Disability Confident scheme aims to help you successfully employ and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. Being Disability Confident is a unique opportunity to lead the way in your community, and you might just discover someone your business can't do without.

It was developed by employers and disabled people's representatives to make it rigorous but easily accessible – particularly for smaller businesses.

The scheme is voluntary and access to the guidance, self-assessments and resources is completely free.

The 3 levels are designed to support you on your Disability Confident journey. You must complete each level before moving on to the next.

Your journey starts with:

- reading the guidance
- providing your contact details
- signing up to the Disability Confident statements
- identifying at least one activity that you can offer to do



[See how your business can be Disability Confident](#)

Once you have read this guidance you will need to confirm you have completed your self-assessment and inform us of the activities you are undertaking. Further details on how to do this are in the ['What happens next'](#) section on page 23.

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Getting started

As you progress on your Disability Confident journey you may have questions. To help you, we have provided links to further information, advice and guidance. We have also added case studies and videos to bring the Disability Confident journey to life. These materials are indicated through the icons shown below.



Information



Case study



Guidance



Video

We will continually add to and update the resources behind them. We are always interested in material employers have found helpful in their own Disability Confident journey. If you have any useful links please email them to the [Disability Confident team](#).

More information



[A practical guide for practitioners working with disabled people and those with long term health conditions.](#)

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Level 2 explained

This self-assessment is designed to enable you to focus on what you are doing and what additional steps you may need to take. It is about actions, not words.

In addition to the guidance and information, a list of organisations, groups and providers offering help and support is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

To take the second step, from being Disability Confident committed to being a Disability Confident employer, you will need to self-assess your business against a set of statements grouped into two themes.

Theme 1 – Getting the right people for your business

- core actions
- activity

Theme 2 – Keeping and developing your people

- core actions
- activity

For each of the two themes you'll need to agree to take all of the actions set out in the core actions list and at least one from the activity list.

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Theme 1 – Getting the right people for your business – core actions

As a Disability Confident employer my business is:

1. Actively looking to attract and recruit disabled people

Your business should:

- make a commitment to employ and retain disabled people and ensure this is reflected in job adverts, at all levels
- connect with local (and, if appropriate, national) [disability organisations](#) to access networks of disabled people who want to work – as an example, see the [Leonard Cheshire Disability – Change100 for businesses case study](#)
- run, support or participate in local disability jobs fairs or targeted recruitment campaigns – contact your local Jobcentre Plus to see if there are any being organised near you
- develop links with Jobcentre Plus and access government resources (for example, [Work Choice providers](#)) to advertise your jobs and attract disabled people to apply for opportunities
- work with and place job adverts in the disability press or on disability websites, such as:
 - [Diversity Jobs](#)
 - [Evenbreak](#)
 - [Disability Now](#)

More information



[Recruitment and disabled people](#)



[Leonard Cheshire – Change100 for businesses case study](#)



[Work Choice providers](#)

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2. Providing a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process

Your business should:

- identify and address any barriers that may prevent or deter disabled people from applying for jobs, including where you advertise, the words you use and how people can apply
- make sure online or offline processes are fully accessible – for example, provide a named contact, telephone number and email for applicants to request support or ask questions
- get your recruitment process tested by disabled people, and if there is a barrier either remove it or provide an alternative way to apply
- provide a short but accurate job description that clearly sets out what the jobholder will be required to achieve, accepting there are different ways to achieve the same objective
- make sure all documentation is available in different formats, if required (written and online)
- accept job applications in a variety of formats
- make sure people involved in the recruitment process are Disability Confident and know how to support disabled applicants

More information



[Recruitment and disabled people](#)



[Business Disability Forum](#)



[Finding inclusive employers](#)



[Accessible communication formats](#)



[Recruiting disabled talent](#)



[Guidance on finding talent – top tips](#)

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3. Offering an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job

Some employers will be able to offer a guaranteed interview. If employers do not advertise a formal guaranteed interview they should make it clear in their recruitment material that **if a disabled applicant meets the minimum criteria for the job** (this is the description of the job as set by the employer) they will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities at an interview.

To make interviews work well for disabled applicants, your business should have:

- made sure your recruiters (internal or external) know how to support disabled applicants
- identified the core elements of the job and made these known in your advert, job specification and online content
- provided an opportunity for disabled people to indicate that they are disabled or have a long-term health condition and are requesting an interview
- made sure you invite disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job when sifting job applicants

More information



[Guaranteed Interview Scheme](#)



[Evenbreak](#)



[Disability Rights UK](#)

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4. Flexibility when assessing people so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job

Your business should:

- plan for, and make reasonable adjustments to, the assessment and interview process – for example, small things such as allowing candidates to complete a written test using a computer can make a big difference
- offer extended or working interviews to enable disabled people to demonstrate their potential
- make sure people involved in the interviewing process understand the Disability Confident commitment and know how to offer and make reasonable adjustments – for example, a later interview time that takes account of the longer journey time a disabled person may need

More information



[Considering other selection methods](#)



[Individuals with hidden impairments](#)

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5. Proactively offering and making reasonable adjustments as required

Making reasonable adjustments (such as changes to working patterns, adaptations to premises or equipment and provision of support packages) will ensure disabled workers are not disadvantaged when applying for and doing their jobs. This includes contract workers, trainees, apprentices and business partners.

Often these adjustments will cost nothing or very little. The Access to Work scheme may be able to provide advice and assistance if there are extra costs involved.

It's important that your employees at all levels, and any agencies you use, know what to do and know where to turn to for advice.

More information



[Reasonable adjustments for disabled workers](#)



[Reasonable adjustments are often straightforward \(Acas guide\)](#)



[Access to Work guide for employers](#)

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6. Encouraging our suppliers and partner firms to be Disability Confident

As a Disability Confident employer, you can encourage your partners, suppliers and providers to demonstrate their commitment to being Disability Confident. You may wish to consider setting clear performance indicators in contracts or frameworks for your supply chain and partners.

More information



[The Clear Company](#)



[Business Disability Forum](#)

7. Ensuring employees have appropriate disability equality awareness

A Disability Confident employer will ensure all employees have sufficient disability equality awareness, taking into account their role. Disability equality training explores the concept of people being disabled by society's barriers and attitudes, highlighting the role society in the removal of those barriers and in the changing of attitudes. The training may include customer care, etiquette and appropriate language for instance.

For example, staff carrying out recruitment will need to be fully aware of the steps to make a recruitment process fully accessible. Managers and supervisors will need to understand how to support their disabled staff. Other employees will need a general understanding of how attitudes, behaviours and environment can affect disabled people.



[A practical guide for practitioners working with disabled people and those with long term health conditions](#)

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Theme 1 – Getting the right people for your business – activity

You must also commit to at least one action from the list below to be a Disability Confident employer.

As a Disability Confident employer my business is:

1. Providing work experience

Work experience is usually for a fixed period of time that a person spends with the business, when they can learn about working life and the working environment.

Some work experience positions offer people the chance to try particular tasks. Others can provide an opportunity to watch and learn.

Work experience also provides an opportunity for disabled people to demonstrate their abilities and helps build the resilience and behaviours they will need to succeed. Watch the Mencap and Inclusive Employers video to see the experience of young people during Learning Disabilities Work Experience Week.

More information



[Not just making tea: a guide to work experience](#)



[Mencap and Inclusive Employers video](#)

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2. Providing work trials

This is a way of trying out a potential employee before offering them a job. It can be informal or by agreement with Jobcentre Plus.

If this is agreed with Jobcentre Plus, an employer can offer a work trial if the potential job is for 16 hours or more a week and lasts for at least 13 weeks. The work trial can last for up to 30 days.

More information



[Work trials](#)

3. Providing paid employment (permanent or fixed term)

As well as providing employment opportunities, a Disability Confident employer will encourage disabled people to apply for their vacancies and support them when they do. Jobcentre Plus has a range of recruitment services that can help an employer seeking to recruit staff. An employer can get:

- [recruitment advice](#), including specialist support for businesses
- help setting up [work trials](#) to give an opportunity to see potential recruits in action in the work environment
- help through [Work Choice](#) (for employing a disabled person who needs specialist support), [other employment schemes](#) including Work Clubs, and help with work experience

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More information



[Work trials](#)



[Recruitment and disabled people](#)



[Sector-based work academies: employer guide](#)

4. Providing apprenticeships

These are for new or current employees. They combine working with studying for a work-based qualification. As well as providing apprenticeship opportunities, a Disability Confident employer will encourage disabled people to apply for their vacancies and support them when they do.

Employers based in England may be able to get a grant or funding to employ an apprentice. Apprentices must be paid at least the minimum apprenticeship wage.

The apprentice must:

- work with experienced staff
- learn job-specific skills
- study for a work-based qualification during their working week, such as at a college or training organisation

More information



[Take on an apprentice](#)

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5. Providing a traineeship

Traineeships are designed to help young people who want to get an apprenticeship or job but don't yet have appropriate skills or experience.

More information



[Traineeships fact sheet for employers](#)

6. Providing paid internships or supported internships (or both)

A paid internship is a period of paid work experience between 1 and 4 months, aimed at college or university students and usually taking place during the summer. Typically, the intern will work full time for a certain employer, where they will gain experience and basic knowledge about a particular business discipline. This valuable experience can be built upon during a placement year as well as in graduate employment. A supported internship is aimed at disabled people still in education who are seeking work experience and knowledge about a business discipline but whose disability is such that they need special support, often including a support worker or work coach to help them in the workplace. Supported internships do require time and commitment to set up, so might be most appropriate for a larger employer who could offer several of them at once or in succession, sharing support costs and setting up time.

More information



[Advertise an internship](#)



[Leonard Cheshire – Change100](#)



[Supported internships: guidance](#)

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7. Advertising vacancies and other opportunities through organisations and media aimed particularly at disabled people

This can help ensure the opportunities are seen by disabled people. Appropriate organisations include:

- [Diversity Jobs](#)
- [Evenbreak](#)
- [Disability Now](#)
- [RNIB](#)
- your local council for voluntary service
- your local disability rights organisation
- provider websites

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8. Engaging with Jobcentre Plus, Work Choice providers or local disabled people's user led organisations (DPULOs) to access support when required (or both)

This includes:

- identifying and connecting with national local disabled people's networks and organisations (or both)
- identifying and connecting with Work Choice providers
- identifying and connecting with job clubs
- building links to specialist schools and colleges
- identifying pre trained and supported talent, for example through supported apprenticeships and internships
- working with advocates

Disabled people's user led organisations (DPULOs) are run by and for disabled people. DPULOs have an important role in:

- providing peer support in areas such as social care, financial services, employment and volunteering
- changing perceptions
- enabling disabled people to have a stronger voice in the local community

They provide advice on a wide range of topics to all disabled people, whatever their impairment. The government recognises the importance of DPULOs and encourages disabled people to use their local organisations.

More information



[What is a DPULO?](#)



[List of DPULOs](#)



[Help for recruiters: Work Choice](#)

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9. Providing an environment that is inclusive and accessible for staff, clients and customers

Access is not only about meeting the needs of people with physical impairments. It is also about meeting the access needs of people with, for example, sensory impairments or learning disabilities. An inclusive environment works better for everybody.

Accommodating the needs of those customers, clients and service users who might be disabled can help you make sure that your business is accessible to everyone. It will also send a message to the world that disabled people are welcome in your business. In turn, this helps to attract applications from disabled people for vacancies or other opportunities you are offering.

More information



[Accessible premises infographic](#)



[Inclusive environments](#)

10. Offering other innovative and effective approaches to encourage disabled people to apply for opportunities and supporting them when they do

Your business may have developed other innovative and effective approaches beyond what we have set out here. If so we would like to hear what you are doing. If appropriate, we could include details and case studies in future versions of this scheme, to help other employers.

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Theme 2 – Keeping and developing your people – core actions

As a Disability Confident employer, my business is:

1. Promoting a culture of being Disability Confident

This is about building a culture in your business where your employees feel safe to disclose any disability or long-term health condition, feeling confident they will be supported as necessary. It's about creating positive messages in company literature, statements and plans, and challenging any negative images or prejudicial statements.

A Disability Confident employer will regularly consult with staff about their perceptions of issues, barriers or concerns, and will report back on action taken to address these.

More information



[The Clear Company](#)



[Business Disability Forum](#)

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2. Supporting employees to manage their disabilities or health conditions

This could include:

- encouraging employees to be open and to discuss access and support needs
- making sure that employees know that, should they acquire a disability or should an existing disability or health condition worsen, every effort will be made to enable them to continue in their current job or an alternative one
- providing support for existing employees who become disabled or experience health problems, for example, through occupational health sessions, offering flexible working patterns, offering home working
- providing reasonable adjustments as necessary to support staff. This includes supporting applications to Access to Work for advice and financial support

More information



[Recruiting disabled talent](#)

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3. Ensuring there are no barriers to the development and progression of disabled staff

This could include:

- encouraging disabled staff to be ambitious and seek progression in the workplace, including increasing hours, taking on additional responsibilities and seeking promotion
- ensuring disabled staff are fully included in team meetings and informal communications
- monitoring, whether formally or informally, progression rates for disabled staff and ensuring they are in line with general progression rates
- regularly discussing training and development needs with all staff, including disabled staff and offering appropriate training support as necessary such as courses in alternative formats, special coaching if necessary, accessible training venues
- ensuring there are no unforeseen barriers to progression, such as changes to location or travel arrangements that a disabled member of staff could not do

The linked guide explores three areas of equality good practice to help with this action:

- equality policies
- equality training
- monitoring

More information



[BBC training scheme](#)



[Case study: an inclusive approach to developing disabled talent](#)



[Equality policies](#)

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4. Ensuring managers are aware of how they can support staff who are sick or absent from work

This could include:

- having a clear process for managing absence and making sure all staff know about this process
- where appropriate, making a referral to the Fit for Work service
- ensuring that absent staff receive regular contact from their line manager to keep them in touch with work developments and so they know they are still valued
- when a staff member has recovered enough to return to work, making sure a support plan is in place. This might include temporary reductions in hours or changes to work patterns and any necessary reasonable adjustments. Where the employee is unable to continue in their current role, despite reasonable adjustments, you should explore suitable alternatives

5. Valuing and listening to feedback from disabled staff

This could include:

- ensuring there are opportunities for staff feedback, whether through formal staff surveys and forums or informally, and encouraging staff to participate in them
- encouraging the creation of disabled staff networks where appropriate and creating mechanisms for receiving feedback from them
- regularly reporting on issues raised and what action has been taken about them
- ensuring that line managers encourage staff to speak openly about their views, needs and ambitions in staff reviews, and act appropriately on the points raised

6. Reviewing this Disability Confident employer self-assessment regularly

A Disability Confident employer will be looking to continually improve and to take account of changing advice and guidance. Regularly running through the self-assessment pack can help with this process.

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Theme 2 – Keeping and developing your people – activity

You need to take at least one of the activities below to become a Disability Confident employer.

1. Providing mentoring, coaching, buddying and or other support networks for staff

As examples:

- providing access to support networks can be a good way of helping disabled staff or those with health conditions to develop their skills and build their confidence
- mentoring is a partnership between mentor and mentee, with both working together as equals, in a relationship based upon mutual respect. A mentor is an experienced individual who is willing to share their knowledge with someone less experienced. They involve themselves in helping to guide the career of the mentee through a process of regular meetings and discussions
- coaching is more focused on a specific area of work and is sometimes used as a short term approach. The coach seeks to use their own everyday experience to improve the performance of others by giving tuition or instruction
- a buddy is generally a nominated colleague who can provide support, guidance and training and promote confidence when a member of staff moves to a new working environment
- some companies also encourage staff to set up their own informal support networks, including virtual networks using email and messaging services

2. Including disability awareness equality training in our induction process

Ensuring that new staff and people moving posts receive the appropriate level of disability equality training, ensuring that they can identify and support colleagues and team members with disabilities and support needs. This will be particularly important for staff taking on line management responsibilities.

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3. Guiding staff to information and advice on mental health conditions

Guiding staff to information on mental health and well-being in the workplace can help them identify the symptoms and know how to support their team members and colleagues. Of the [national and local helplines and support groups](#), Access to Work provides a specific mental health support service.

More information



[Employing disabled people and people with health conditions](#)

4. Providing occupational health services if required

An occupational health service can provide support for existing employees who develop an impairment/condition or experience health problems. This can be done internally, for example through occupational health sessions, or might be done through an external provider. Access to Work may be able to offer advice and contribute to the costs of this.

See guidance for employers on using Fit for Work to help their employees stay in or return to work.

More information



[Access to Work](#)



[Fit for Work: guidance for employers](#)

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5. Identifying and sharing good practices

Benefits of this activity are that:

- it shows leadership to share your best practice with your wider business community, and helps support others on their Disability Confident journey
- being a known exemplar of good practice can help attract disabled talent that you might otherwise have missed
- providing specific role models and case studies can help encourage other disabled staff in the organisation or amongst suppliers, networks or the wider community to be more confident and ambitious

6. Providing human resource managers with specific Disability Confident training

Give managers and people involved in human resources (this can include any recruitment agencies acting on behalf of the organisation) specific and continuing training to make sure the organisation is following current best practice in supporting disabled people.

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What happens next?

When you have completed your self-assessment, you will need to [complete this form on GOV.UK](#) to confirm that you:

- have undertaken and successfully completed the Disability Confident self-assessment
- are taking all of the core actions to be a Disability Confident employer
- are offering at least one activity to get the right people for your business and at least one activity to keep and develop your people

In return we will send you a **Disability Confident employer badge** that you can use in your own business stationary and communications for 2 years. We'll also send you a certificate in recognition of your achievement and information about becoming a Disability Confident leader.

As part of awarding you your Disability Confident employer badge, we will include your business name and expiry date on [GOV.UK](#).

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Case studies and resources

Developed by employers and disabled people's representatives, this scheme is designed to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. See what others say about the benefits of being Disability Confident.

Use the links below to watch employers' testimonials on how disabled staff have made a positive difference to their businesses.



[IMG Productions](#) (IMG) is one of the world's leading television production companies. Their journey to becoming Disability Confident began when producer Simon Birri acquired a disability following a brain aneurysm.



[Chartwells Independent](#) have recruited, trained and supported Steven, who has autism. He has become a highly regarded member of the catering team at Old Swinford Hospital School in Stourbridge.



[EY](#) talk about their approach to recruiting talented disabled people and how they support staff who acquired a disability during their career.



The [Recruitment Industry \(RIDI\) awards](#) celebrate progress and recognise the success of organisations that are making headway in increasing the inclusion of disabled professionals.

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Definition of disability

Someone is disabled under the [Equality Act 2010](#) if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This means that, in general, the:

- person must have an impairment that is either physical or mental
- impairment must have adverse effects that are substantial
- substantial adverse effects must be long-term, for example, it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- [long-term substantial](#) adverse effects must be effects on normal day-to-day activities, such as a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection



[Guidance for employers about their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010](#)

Long-term health conditions

Examples of long-term conditions include:

- high blood pressure
- depression
- dementia
- arthritis

Long-term conditions can affect many parts of a person's life, from their ability to work and have relationships, to their housing needs and educational attainment.

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Mental health conditions

A mental health condition is considered a disability if it has a long-term effect on your normal day-to-day activity. This is defined under the Equality Act 2010.

A condition is 'long-term' if it lasts, or is likely to last, 12 months.

'Normal day-to-day activity' is defined as something you do regularly in a normal day, such as using a computer, working set times or interacting with people.

If a mental health condition means they are disabled, they can get [support at work](#) from their employer.

There are many different types of mental health condition, including:

- depression
- anxiety
- bipolar disorder
- obsessive compulsive disorder
- schizophrenia
- self-harm

What isn't counted as a disability?



See [guidance on conditions that aren't covered by the disability definition](#), for example addiction to non-prescribed drugs or alcohol.