

Support for Disabled Employees at De Montfort University

1. The University's Commitment

De Montfort University is committed to providing disabled people with equality of opportunity to take part in all aspects of University life. In line with the Equality Act (2010) the university recognises that practical adjustments, support and guidance may be required by disabled employees throughout the recruitment process and within the workplace. Employees are encouraged to disclose their disability so the most appropriate adjustments and support to suit their individual needs can be implemented for them. The University has also been awarded the Job Centre Plus [Disability Two Ticks Symbol](#), as a result of its commitment to being positive about disabled people.

The University promotes disability equality and proactively engages with disabled employees and students at De Montfort University, through consultative group meetings, to contribute to policies, practices, plans and procedures. The University's action plan to promote disability equality is outlined in the [Disability Equality Scheme 2009-2012](#).

De Montfort University is committed to providing a working and learning environment that promotes the dignity and respect of every individual and is free from bullying and harassment.

We recognise that you may not wish to disclose your disability for a number of reasons, and we respect this. Nevertheless the University will continue to maintain and develop support mechanisms for disabled employees that are intended to provide confidential and discrete support wherever possible.

2. What is a Disability?

You may be considered disabled (for the purposes of the Equal Act) if you have a mental or physical impairment, that has a substantial and long term adverse affect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities. The university recognises that the definition of disability also includes 'unseen' conditions, these may include mental health conditions, cancer, heart conditions, epilepsy, diabetes, ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Additionally, conditions such as cancer and multiple sclerosis are considered a disability from the point of diagnosis, which may be before these have an overt adverse effect.

If you are unsure about whether or not you are covered by this definition you are advised to speak to your Line Manager in the first instance or the HR adviser for your area. The Occupational Health team can also be contacted directly for an informal conversation (please see section 7 'Key Contacts').

You can also seek support from your GP or contact organisations with specialist knowledge, such as the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), the Royal National Institute of Deaf People

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(RNID), or other local disability groups (please see section 8 '[Additional Sources of Help & Information](#)').

3. Recruitment Support

If you are considering applying for a new role within the university you will be invited to state on your application form how the University can make reasonable adjustments to support you, either in the recruitment process or at interview stage. For instance, you may need a disabled person's car parking space, a British Sign Language Interpreter or for information to be presented to you in a different format.

If you indicate on the application form and/or equal opportunities form that you are disabled and would like reasonable adjustments made, the Human Resources Department will contact you to discuss your requirements and how the University may be able to support you.

4. Reasonable Adjustments within the Work Place

The University can support its disabled employees by making reasonable adjustments within the workplace. An adjustment could be a service provided, or a change/adaptation made to equipment or facilities within the work place, which would enable a disabled person to carry out their employment duties. Employees are encouraged to inform their line manager about their disability as this enables the university to provide support and make reasonable adjustments in order that they can perform their role.

When deciding whether an adjustment is 'reasonable' the University will take into consideration a number of factors including how effective the adjustment will be, the extent to which it is practical, and the costs to the University (although these may be supported by Access to Work, see section 5). The University will always endeavour to provide the required adjustments, but where it is not possible the employee will be provided with a clear explanation of why the adjustment was not considered to be reasonable.

You are encouraged to speak to your Line Manager in the first instance to discuss any adjustments you need to enable you to carry out your role. Your Line Manager can then help to identify what your needs are and what can be put in place. They may discuss with you the option of referring you to Occupational Health for professional advice and guidance about your disability and the most appropriate ways the University can support you at work.

There may be reasons why you may not wish to discuss your disability with your Line Manager and in these instances you may choose to speak to your HR adviser or the Occupational Health Adviser. However, if any adjustments are required then it is likely that your Line Manager will need to be involved in the changes.

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Where an employee becomes unable to do their job as a result of their disability, the university will consider whether reasonable adjustments would enable the employee to continue in their existing role.

Redeployment to an alternative role may be considered in circumstances where it is not possible to make other reasonable adjustments to enable the employee to perform their existing job. In the majority of cases, it should be possible to enable the employee to continue in their current job after taking into account reasonable adjustments.

If the adjustments that would be required are not reasonable and the employee is unable to continue in their current job, redeployment may be considered.

5. Access to Work

Access to Work is a government funded scheme, run by the Job Centre Plus that can be used whenever an employee may need workplace adjustments to support them in overcoming work related obstacles resulting from their disability. Examples of how Access to Work funding may be able to provide support for you include:

- Adapt or provide new equipment you need at work.
- Adapt your working environment to meet your needs.
- Support your journey to work (may include personal support worker for journey to and from work).
- Have the support of a communicator/interpreter.

An application for Access to Work support must be made by you. As a disabled employee the University cannot make the application on your behalf. After making the initial contact, Access to Work will then send you an application form to complete and sign.

You are encouraged to discuss your application with your Line Manager, HR Adviser or the Occupational Health Adviser as they will be able to provide support throughout the process, whether that be assistance with the first phone call, completing the application form, or deciding on adjustments that will best suit your needs.

For further information on how to apply for Access to Work funding you should refer to the Universities [Access to Work Guidelines](#) and see 'Key Contacts', section 7.

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6. Disabled Employees Group

All disabled employees are invited to attend disabled employees group meetings that take place at least once a term. Employees are invited to express thoughts, concerns, or examples of good practice relating to processes/procedures/facilities and working relationships within the university. For further details on dates for the next meeting please contact the University's Equality and Diversity Adviser (see Key Contacts, section 7).

7. Key Contacts

Your Line Manager

Your Line Manager should ideally be your first point of contact if you have just developed a disability or you are disclosing your disability for the first time. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to your Line Manager initially, you can contact the HR adviser for your area or the Occupational Health Department.

University Occupational Health and Safety Department

Occupational Health Adviser: 0116 207 8833

Or visit their website: [Occupational Health Care Services](#)

Human Resources

HR adviser for your work area

If you are unsure who the HR contact is for your work area you should contact the *HR Enquiry Line* 0116 250 6018

Equality & Diversity

Equality & Diversity Adviser: 0116 250 6436

Or equality@dmu.ac.uk

Access to Work

Access to Work Operational Support Unit

Alexandra House

377 Cowbridge Road East

Canton

Cardiff

CF5 1WU

Telephone: 02920 423291

Textphone: 02920 644886

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8. Additional Sources of Help and Information

The university provides a working and learning environment that promotes dignity and respect for all and is free from discrimination. However if employees have any concerns in this regard they should raise them immediately with either their Line Manager, HR adviser, or a named person in the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

- Employee Assistant Programme (EAP) – First Assist

A health and wellbeing benefit is available for all staff and their dependants as employees of the university. The EAP offers you immediate access to 24 hour telephone counselling and legal and financial information services provided by an independent health and wellbeing provider, FirstAssist.

The EAP service is completely confidential and only statistical information relating to the usage of the service is passed to the university. All FirstAssist consultants providing the service are bound by strict ethical codes of conduct and confidentiality. If you wish, you may remain anonymous when using the service.

To access these services at anytime, day or night, simple dial 0800 716 017, state that you work for De Montfort University and tell FirstAssist what you need help with. You'll then be transferred to the most appropriate professional.

- The DMU [Diversity Learning Zone](#)

This an effective resource that will provide support for all members of the University community in addressing issues of equality and diversity. It has been developed in-house by people who know the needs of the university, its employees and students first-hand. It is frequently updated with contributions from colleagues across the university and input from other individuals and organisations where appropriate.

- British Dyslexia Association
<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk>
- Diabetes UK
<http://www.diabetes.org.uk>
- Directgov
<http://www.direct.gov.uk>
- Employers Forum on Disability (EFD) - employer's organisation focused on disability in the workplace
<http://www.employers-forum.co.uk>

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- Jobcentre Plus - part of the Department of Work & Pensions (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk>); services for people with disabilities and their employers, including the Access to Work scheme for the provision of equipment, adaptations and transport
<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk>
- Mencap - charity working exclusively with and for people with learning disabilities
<http://www.mencap.org.uk>
- Mind - leading mental health charity
<http://www.mind.org.uk>
- Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) - helps visually impaired people to find, keep or progress in suitable jobs
<http://www.rnib.org.uk>
- Royal National Institute of Deaf People (RNID) - advice for hearing impaired people and their employers
<http://www.rnid.org.uk>
- Shift - provides information and support to help assess needs of those with mental health issues
<http://www.shift.org.uk>