



Disability Confident scheme – Myth busting

There are lots of myths about employing people with disabilities. Some employers worry about ‘getting it wrong’. Some are fearful of the perceived cost. Others may believe that people with disabilities cannot perform the job.

The truth is that many people with disabilities have lots to offer employers. Making relatively small changes in the workplace can make a real difference to the employment prospects of people with disabilities, and a massive difference to the positive contributions that they can make.

This product is designed to help you prepare for your collaborative conversations with employers. It sets out some of the most common myths that are often expressed about employing people with disabilities and provides key facts that you can share during your interactions including links to supporting information.

Myth	Fact
It will be expensive to employ a person with disabilities.	There may be changes that employers need to make when they employ a worker with disabilities (these are called reasonable adjustments). However, a lot of people with disabilities do not need them, and the average cost of a reasonable adjustment is less than £80.
There is no support for employers to employ people with disabilities.	The Government’s Access to Work programme can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition. Support can be provided where someone needs help or adaptations beyond reasonable adjustments.
Employees have to be registered as disabled to ensure they get the adjustments they need to do their job	There is no process requiring registration for people with disabilities to register as disabled. If an employee has a disability, their employer has a duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable them to do their job. The best way to make sure this happens is for the employee to inform their employer of their disability and work with them to identify and consider adjustments that could be put in place to assist. Find out more about making reasonable adjustments on Gov.uk.
A job applicant has to tell an employer if they are disabled.	A person with disabilities can keep a disability confidential. Generally, in law, an employee does not have to tell their employer about their condition, but it may be more practical for them to do so, so the employer can support them and take their condition into consideration.

Myth	Fact
People with disabilities have a higher absentee rate than their colleagues.	There is no evidence to suggest that people with disabilities are more likely to have time off work. In reality, some studies have shown that people with disabilities are actually less likely to miss work.
People with disabilities as a whole are less productive than nondisabled people	This has been shown not to be true and misleading. Most employers (85%) disagree with the statement that ‘People with disabilities tend to be less productive than other employees’ (only 8% agree).
People with disabilities regularly require assistance.	With dedicated training and support, especially during induction, many workers with disabilities (as with all workers) adjust to their job roles, and their disability does not affect their ability to work unaided.
Health and safety procedures provides a legitimate reason for not taking on a worker with disabilities.	There is no health and safety legislation that would prevent a person with a disability finding or staying in employment. Health and safety should not be used as an excuse for doing nothing, or for refusing to make reasonable adjustments.
Once an employer has hired a person with a disability, they can't sack or discipline them.	While there are laws in place, such as the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act that serve to protect the rights of all workers, there are no special procedures for firing or disciplining workers with disabilities. Employers must ensure they have effective people management processes in place to manage all of their workforce.
If a problem arises about an employee's disability, it is likely to turn into a long term dispute.	Not necessarily. Often, the best option is for the employer to have a quiet word with those involved to reach a resolution early and to which they can all agree.
To be disabled, the person has to be in a wheelchair, or blind, or lost a limb, something like that.	The definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010 is very broad and can cover a very wide range of conditions – what the law calls ‘impairments’. Some disabilities are not obvious and/or visible - such as some mental health conditions. Conditions that are not obvious are sometimes referred to as ‘invisible disabilities’. In simple terms, an invisible disability is a physical, mental or neurological condition that is not visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person's movements, senses, or activities.
In redundancy situations, an employer has to create a vacancy for an employee with disabilities.	No. An employer does not always have to redeploy employees with disabilities. They should be capable and qualified for any new job, with suitable ‘reasonable adjustments’ in place.

