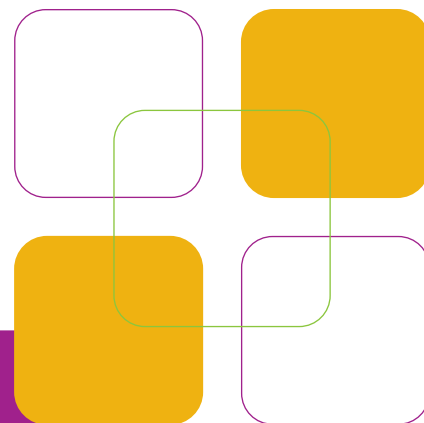


# Using the disability symbol - a guide for employers



Right people.  
Right job.

**jobcentreplus**

Part of the Department  
for Work and Pensions

## Using the disability symbol

In a market where it is increasingly difficult to find and keep skilled and motivated staff, employers are recognising that employing disabled people is a vital factor in making their business more efficient, productive and successful.

Employers who use the disability symbol make certain commitments to employing, keeping and training disabled people and developing their careers. The commitments are the same for all employers who use the symbol, but the way you use them can fit in with your existing procedures and practices.

## About Jobcentre Plus

We can offer you a professional, modern and free service through a network of offices and contact centres across Britain.

We can provide expert information, advice and guidance about:

- recruitment methods and procedures
- the local workforce (for example, employment levels, what candidates are available, and wage rates), and
- any difficulties you might face when filling your vacancies.

We can also offer:

- advice on local recruitment events
- interview facilities at some of our offices
- help with sending out application forms (yours or ours)
- advice on recruiting and keeping disabled people, and
- access to information and expert advice about employment and training.

In short, we provide easy access to the UK workforce, and we are the ideal recruitment partner for employers of all sizes.

## **Why use the disability symbol?**

If you are reviewing your organisation's approach to employing disabled people, or trying to create a more varied workforce, the disability symbol may help. By using the symbol you will help make it clear to disabled people that you welcome applications from them and are positive about their abilities. It will also show existing employees that you value their contribution and will treat them fairly if they become disabled.

## **What other benefits are there?**

Staff develop better and become more confident if they see the company they work for as being a good employer of disabled people. Disabled people are as hard-working and reliable as any other employees. In their daily lives, many disabled people develop good problem-solving skills, which may be useful in the workplace. Most do not need adjustments at work but if they do, we may be able to give you advice on the type of help available. By being an employer who is, and is seen to be, 'positive about disabled people', you will make your business more effective, reduce costs and improve how you deliver services.

## **Who can use the disability symbol?**

Any employer can sign up to the disability symbol. They include small, medium and large employers from private- and public-sector organisations all over Britain. The symbol is not available in Northern Ireland. A large organisation will need to sign up to use the symbol as a whole organisation – individual branches or sites cannot sign up separately.

## **How do I begin using the disability symbol?**

If you decide you want your organisation to start using the symbol, you should contact us and arrange for us to visit you. One of our advisers will work through the commitments and discuss how you might make them work within your company or organisation. They will work with you to improve your staff policies and practices to allow you to meet the 5 symbol commitments (**page 4**). You will need to make sure that the whole organisation is able to deliver the commitments when you are ready to begin.

# What are the 5 disability symbol commitments?

## **Commitment 1**

- Recruitment – interviewing all disabled applicants who meet the minimum conditions for a job vacancy and considering them based on their abilities.

## **Commitment 2**

- Consulting disabled employees – making sure there is a system in place to discuss, at any time (but at least once a year), what you and they can do to make sure they can develop and use their abilities.

## **Commitment 3**

- Keeping people who become disabled – making every effort, when employees become disabled, to make sure they stay in employment.

## **Commitment 4**

- Developing awareness – taking action to make sure that all employees develop the appropriate level of understanding about the effects of being disabled needed to make your commitments work.

## **Commitment 5**

- Reviewing progress and keeping people informed – each year, reviewing the 5 commitments and what has been achieved, and planning ways to improve on them and let employees and us know about your progress and future plans.



## **What definition of disability is used for the disability symbol?**

People falling within the definition of the Disability Discrimination Act, and people who fall outside the definition in the Act because they have a disability caused by specific work or the workplace environment, but nowhere else.

## **What is the relationship between the disability symbol and the Disability Discrimination Act?**

Using the disability symbol can help you develop a system for reviewing your disability policies and practices. It can also help you to broaden your employees' awareness of disabled people at work.

Using the disability symbol does not mean that your organisation will meet the conditions of the Disability Discrimination Act in a particular case. The Act conditions apply to your actions with particular individuals in specific cases, but the disability symbol is about your organisation's general approach to employing and keeping disabled people. You will need to make sure that you are meeting the conditions of the Act as well as any action you take by using the symbol.

If you are concerned about how the Disability Discrimination Act affects your organisation, you should consult your legal advisers.

## **Where can I use or display the symbol?**

You must display the symbol on **all** job advertisements (inside and outside the organisation), application forms, recruitment materials and staff communications. You can also use it on business stationery, reports, notices and other relevant items.

We will also put the symbol on your vacancy. Remember to mention, when you advertise your vacancies with us and recruitment agencies, that you use the disability symbol.

If you advertise vacancies on the internet, you should show the symbol. If you are not able to show the symbol, you should include a statement that lets people know you use it.

You cannot use the symbol to provide or promote goods or services to customers. For example, you must not use it on product brochures or other material supporting your product, message or business.

## **What will happen after I have signed up?**

You should plan ways to let all your employees know about the symbol, and what the commitments mean in your own organisation.

It's a good idea to try to get local publicity so that disabled people will know that you are serious about employing them, and to let other employers know about your commitment to employing disabled people.

You can ask us for advice or help at any time, whether it is about employing a particular disabled person or about any part of your commitments to using the symbol. It's a good idea to keep in touch with your adviser, especially if you have a vacancy to fill or you need help to keep an employee who becomes disabled or whose disability gets worse.

Many employers who use the symbol find it helpful to exchange ideas, problems and solutions with each other. We will be able to put you in touch with other employers who use the symbol, and you may be able to support other employers who are thinking about reviewing their recruitment policies and practices.



## **Who monitors the symbol?**

By using the symbol, you and disabled people will monitor how you put the commitments in place within your organisation. Your fifth commitment, to review your progress each year and plan ways to build on it, is designed to help you with this. We can offer support if you come across any difficulties while you are making your commitments work.

We will contact you each year to review your organisation's progress against the commitments and discuss your future plans. If everything has gone well, you may want to consider whether there is more you could do to develop and encourage employees with disabilities. Your adviser will be happy to help.

If a disabled person makes a complaint about how your organisation uses the symbol, it is important for you to follow it up quickly and carefully. You may have to check whether you need to make any changes to continue to meet the conditions of the symbol. In very exceptional circumstances, if problems cannot be dealt with quickly, we may ask an organisation to suspend using the symbol until the necessary changes have been made, or to stop using the symbol altogether

For more information, or to place a vacancy contact us online or by telephone:

[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/employers](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/employers)

**0845 601 2001**

Textphone **0845 601 2002**

Textphones are a service for hearing impaired customers, and don't accept text messages from mobile phones.

Open Monday-Friday 8am-8pm, Saturday 10am-4pm.  
Call charges vary by company or tariff.

Right people.  
Right job.

Jobcentre Plus is committed to applying the principles of equal opportunities in its programmes and services.



Part of the Department for Work and Pensions

Ref No. **EMPLDEV.DIVRSTY.03** | v1.1 (September 2007) ISBN: 978-1-84695-907-3