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# Report

# Support for disabled staff at the University of Nottingham

Final review report

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## Introduction and rationale for review

As a result of a significant number of issues being raised about the support for disabled staff<sup>1</sup> at the University of Nottingham, a review of current provision and areas of development was conducted on 11 and 12 June 2019.

The aim and scope of the review was developed after discussion with the Disabled Staff Network in early 2019, and confirmed after approval at equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) Committee in March 2019. It was agreed that it would:

- consider what support is currently available and how this is accessed and experienced by disabled staff
- learn from areas of good practice within the University, across the sector and other organisations
- identify areas for development to ensure staff are supported fully and appropriately

The scope of the review related to the experience of disabled staff at the University of Nottingham in the following areas:

- on-boarding support following appointment
- induction support and reasonable adjustments when joining the University
- response to disclosure of a disability whilst working at the University and the support available following this
- support for progression and promotion
- inclusive management
- inclusion on campus

The review was sponsored by Robert Mokaya, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Global Engagement. The Review Panel was chaired by Sarah Sharples, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. All members of the review panel wish to thank colleagues, particularly the members of the Disabled Staff Network, for their openness in identifying good practice across the University and discussing the challenges currently experienced by disabled staff.

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<sup>1</sup> There is some variation in practice as referring to individuals as either 'people with disabilities' or 'disabled people'. In recognition of the social model of disability, throughout this paper we refer to 'disabled staff'.

## Methodology and composition of panel

The Terms of Reference for the review are attached at Appendix A. To identify the strengths and areas for improvement, the Review Panel's objectives were to:

- Review the current support provided to disabled staff
- Identify key challenges in the support provided and share best practice
- Produce recommendations to inform future implementation plans

The Review Panel used a range of methodologies to achieve its objectives, including:

- An information pack, providing context information, University of Nottingham policies, role profile for the disability liaison officers, census data for comparison and Human Resources datasets
- Data from surveys previously completed by the University of Nottingham relating to disability support
- Feedback from the Disabled Staff Network – a collation of members' experience as disabled UoN employees
- Feedback forwarded directly to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for EDI by staff members
- Feedback provided by staff members in direct response to a request made as part of the review

Two panel programme days, as follows:

- On Day 1 panel members split into three groups to discuss aspects of disability support with HR colleagues, Onboarding and Recruitment Team, Disability Liaison Officers, Estates and Health and Safety, Occupational Health, Mental Health Service and Counselling.
- On Day 2 panel members were split into three groups. Each group was assigned a tour of either University Park, Jubilee Campus or Sutton Bonington. A panel discussion was held later that day to provide feedback on the tour.

Panel Members	Job Role
<b>Sarah Sharples</b>	Review Chair Pro-Vice-Chancellor EDI, University of Nottingham
<b>Diane Gyi</b>	External Advisor Loughborough University
<b>Claire Murphy</b>	Information and Service Analysts Information Services

	University of Nottingham
<b>Sophie Bevan</b>	Student Services Administrator University of Nottingham
<b>Simon Langley-Evans</b>	Group Chair, Head of School of Biosciences University of Nottingham
<b>Fiona Hinchley</b>	Finance Team Manager University of Nottingham
<b>Jodie Chatfield</b>	Technical Central Support Manager University of Nottingham
<b>Lenford Vassell</b>	Security Officer University of Nottingham
<b>Hilary Martin</b>	Staffing Administrator, Disability Staff Network Interim Chair University of Nottingham
<b>Zoe MacKenzie</b>	SU Equal Opportunities and Welfare Officer University of Nottingham
<b>Nicola Selby</b>	Group Chair HR Specialist Services Project Officer University of Nottingham
<b>Amanda Griffiths</b>	Professor of Occupational Health Psychology University of Nottingham
<b>Lynette Outram</b>	Senior Manager Accessibility University of Nottingham
<b>Kim Lawson</b>	Senior Accessibility Tutor University of Nottingham
<b>Keith Benedict</b>	Associate Professor, Physics and Astronomy University of Nottingham
<b>Gavin Scott</b>	Environmental Manager, Estates University of Nottingham
<b>Liza Aspell</b>	Welfare Manager, Jubilee Campus/UNISON Disability REP University of Nottingham
<b>Dan Tilley</b>	Director of Sport, University of Nottingham

## Review findings

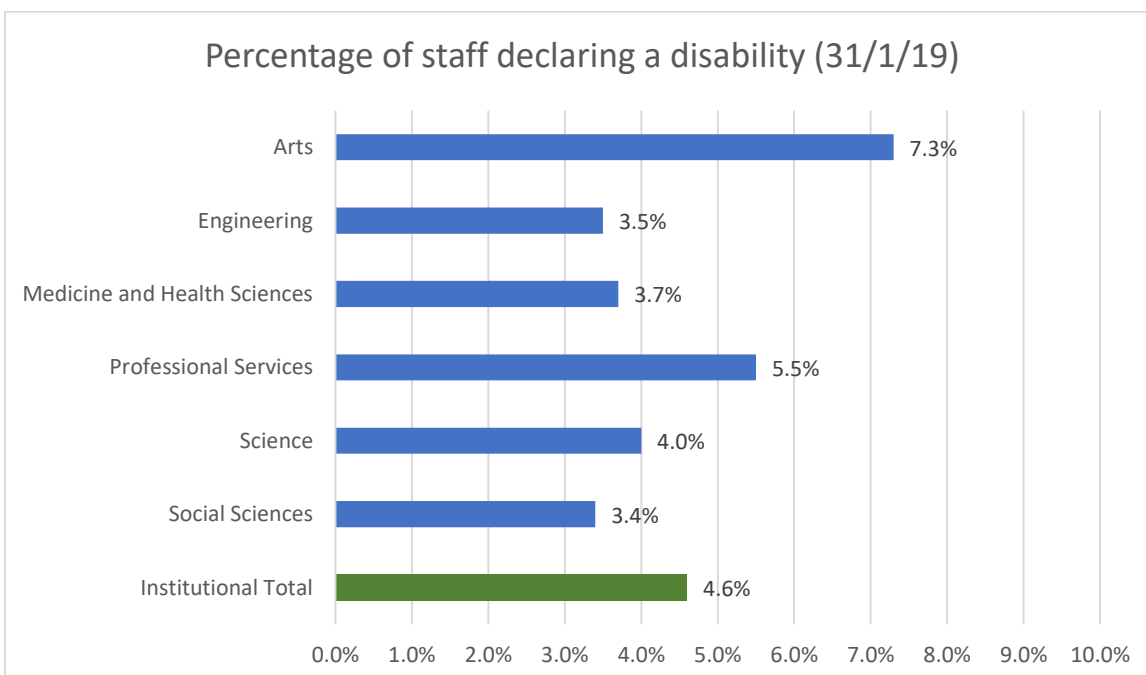
***'If you remove barriers, you are helping everyone, not just disabled staff'***

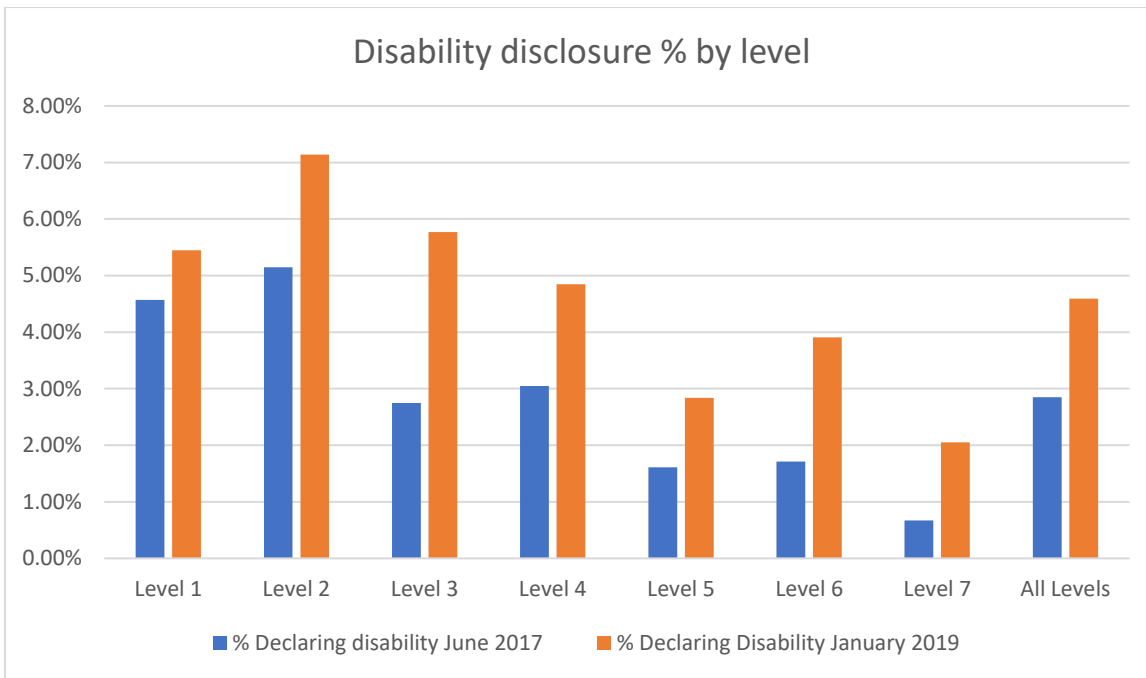
**(University of Nottingham staff feedback)**

The review findings are grouped under specific themes that flow in accordance with the discussions during the two-day panel review.

- Experience of being disabled
- Physical and digital infrastructure
- Culture and behaviour
- Support for line managers
- Specialist Support provision

As context, the following figures illustrate the current proportion of staff who have declared a disability at the University as of 31 January 2019. Overall, 4.7% of University of Nottingham were known to have declared a disability in April 2019. This is close to the 2017/18 Russell Group average (4.4%) and East Midlands University average (4.9%) but lower than the national average as recorded by the Department for Work and Pensions as of April 2018 (19%). It can be seen that declaration varies considerably between faculties and teams, and overall decreases with level.





Under each heading, the panel has highlighted a number of strengths and suggested areas for improvements. We have also converted a number of suggestions and advice into firm recommendations for the University.

### Experience of being disabled

***‘Every time my line manager changes I have to start the process all over again’ (UoN Staff Feedback)***

***‘I had to find things out for myself at a time when I was already very stressed’ (UoN Staff Feedback)***

The experience of disabled staff reiterated the disparities in support across the University. There was a sense that the University of Nottingham’s expectation was that disabled staff carry the burden of arranging things themselves and push for solutions. The panel considered the experience of being disabled under the headings of strengths, areas for improvement, short term actions and longer terms considerations for long lasting impact and sustainability.

### Strengths

- Some staff had experienced invaluable support from and worked in partnership with line management teams.
- Our recruitment and on-boarding teams are equipped with the expertise, tools and experience to support disabled staff and management teams.

- Our policies to support disabled staff are in general fit for purpose (with concerns raised only about sickness policy for disabled staff).

## Areas for Improvement

- Individual cases were identified where management teams had not supported staff adequately against unfair treatment, including discrimination and bullying.
- Our impression was that the process for and data trail from disclosing disability is not clear to staff. Some disabled staff knew that they could declare disabilities on MyView while others thought that a discussion with line managers was all that was required to ensure that all relevant people were aware and informed. There were also misunderstandings about who was informed when a disability was declared, both at job application stage, and if a disability changed or developed during the period of employment. People felt that they often had to repeatedly declare their disability to multiple people, which not only caused inconvenience but also had an emotional impact on the disabled person.
- We found inconsistencies in the treatment of disabled staff when line managers changed, often resulting in previous judgements about reasonable adjustments being revised and changed.
- There is a lack of clarity about reasonable adjustments and what it means for disabled staff, who are unclear about the University's expectations for reasonable adjustments. At the review we identified that reasonable adjustment process was often left to line managers with only access to reference documents online to guide decision making. Managers did not always feel that they were able to access support and guidance from expert sources, although, particularly in the case where staff with significant and/or complex disabilities were being supported, there were excellent examples of good practice where the HR teams along with external organisations had provided high quality support and significant changes to work and workplace design.
- A need for additional training aimed at managers and management teams was identified. The panel found that managers did not necessarily have formalised training to enable them to support disabled staff. It was felt to be particularly important to ensure that all line managers were aware of their accountability and legal responsibility as well as the need to develop the required knowledge and approach required to supporting disabled staff.
- Staff felt that there was a significant difference between the provisions of support for disabled students, compared to staff. This applied to the methods of assessments of provision of specialist equipment, advice and guidance around reasonable adjustments, and the acceptability of being open about disability within the workplace.



## Advice from Panel

With regards to the experience of disabled staff at the University of Nottingham, the panel made the following suggestions:

### Short term actions (within 1 year)

- Establish a network of disability champions to support disabled staff across the University. These would be a range of colleagues who are subject experts, have knowledge and experience of being disabled and/or those working with disabled colleagues. Champions should be trained and the role would be voluntary (mirroring the model of the revised dignity adviser training and role description).
- Ensure clarity on expectations, roles and responsibilities in relation to reasonable adjustments by:
  - Developing and publishing a guide to provide clarification on how to agree and make reasonable adjustments for disabled staff.
  - Introduce reasonable adjustment disability passports<sup>2</sup> to ensure consistency and support transitions between roles.
  - Produce examples and case studies of reasonable adjustments to build knowledge and ideas of what is possible, whilst clarifying that reasonable adjustments are examples rather than mandates, and that all settings should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Training on the legal responsibilities associated with supporting disabled staff<sup>3</sup> should be made mandatory for all line managers. All current line managers should complete this training within a year of publication of the report. This training should be accompanied by clear support for line managers from HR specialists and accessible tools and documents.
- Linking to the recent review of Staff Networks, increased clarity of the role of the disabled staff network, its aims and governance<sup>4</sup> will be provided. This should be accompanied by increased visibility and accessibility of network activities.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/reasonable-adjustments-disability-passports>

<sup>3</sup> This will be addressed within the wider EDI engagement programme being planned for 2020/2021

<sup>4</sup> This will be addressed as an outcome from the review of staff networks which was completed in July 2019.

## Longer term considerations

- The panel would welcome a review of the disability and sickness policy, with particular focus on ensuring that triggers that arise because of disability-related sickness absence are proportionate. This review should consider all job families including Operations and Facilities, and should consider not only adherence to policy but how the current policy enables people to be supported as individuals.
- There should be a focus on attracting and recruiting more staff with disabilities at the University of Nottingham.
- The panel also suggests that the University moves beyond reactive solutions, recognising the predictable implications of an ageing workforce for accessibility and design needs, moving towards making more anticipatory adjustments and giving more consideration to accessibility in all its provisions.

## Physical and digital infrastructure

### ***‘My disability changes – The height of a toilet can make a difference’ (UoN Staff Feedback)***

The review found that the physical and digital infrastructure of the University significantly impacts the experience of disabled staff. There were a number of specific, frustrating examples provided, including challenges around travel within and between campuses for wheelchair users, difficulties with design of accessible toilets, need for consideration of different types of disability in design of technologies that are used to complete work, and provision of specialist workstation equipment. The panel identified the following:

### Strengths

- Estates and Occupational Health teams are committed to providing ongoing support to disabled staff.
- Our new buildings have accessible provisions for disabled staff.

### Areas for Improvement

The size, complexity and variety of the University’s estate presents a number of challenges for disabled staff. These challenges were acknowledged by the panel when suggesting areas for improvements around the University. These include:

- Improving the physical accessibility in our listed buildings. The panel felt that our older buildings required more investment to meet the accessibility needs of disabled staff. There were examples where members of staff have not been able to access the Trent Building.
- Accessible toilet facilities should be made fully accessible to all where possible and availability fully communicated so disabled staff and others are aware of where their needs can be met. (e.g. all accessible toilets to have 2 handrails instead of just one)
- Changes to some of our existing estates systems and processes are required. The panel found that some disabled staff did not really know how to raise accessibility issues with Estates, and there was not always clarity around responsibility and prioritisation for addressing issues which were raised.
- Better messaging with regards to signage around the University was identified as a key need. This is especially the case when issues arise with our physical infrastructure that require out of order signs, which often do not display any information about alternative routes, timings until infrastructure (e.g. automatic doors, lifts) are fixed, or information about points of contact for further support.
- Better uses of Equality Impact Assessments and consideration of EDI when commissioning building projects and changes to the physical and digital space.
- Recognition of the value that health and safety adds to the working environment is required. The Safety Office currently take responsibility for providing specialist advice regarding display screen equipment needs. However, the room which supports provision of specialist equipment is not visible and many are not aware that it exists. It is not clear who is able to provide advice regarding adjustments required in support of Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs), e.g. dyslexia. It is also not clear who is responsible for notifying the safety team that an individual requires specialist support. There is a need for clarification and increased visibility of systems and processes for referring staff to the Health and Safety team.
- Staff who have mobility impairments or experience fatigue benefit from the provision of seating when performing roles that might traditionally require standing for prolonged periods (e.g. lecturing).
- Clarity in the processes for making reasonable adjustment to our physical infrastructure is also required, noting that what is 'reasonable' is addressed within the Equality Act, and may be different for different roles and for different parts of the University. Disabled staff and their managers need to be able to work in partnership with experts to understand what a reasonable request is from the University's perspective.
- The physical location of the Occupational Health Office is not accessible for people who are mobility impaired and is remote from other parts of the University. Changing its location is a matter of priority for the review sponsor and chair.

## Advice from the Panel

There is a commitment across the University to ensure appropriate support is available and accessible. Given this commitment, the panel recommends the following:

### Short term actions

- Change the location of Occupational Health to ensure it is more visible and accessible.
- Ensure all lecture & teaching rooms have appropriate stools and chairs available for the speaker/teacher.
- Develop a digital resource that provides a one-stop shop for advice/information about policies; examples of best practice and ideas for equipment provision and accessibility solutions. This should include information about accessibility of buildings and directions for alternative routes which should be managed to provide up to date information at all times.
- Establish a working group comprising key professional service team members, including but not limited to Estates, Employee Relations, Occupational Health and the Safety Office, to ensure shared ownership of issues raised that relate to the physical infrastructure of the University and collaborative problem solving.
- All projects must include consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion through the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment at the beginning of the project, reviewed throughout. To support this, all Project Management teams/groups should have a nominated EDI lead to ensure consideration of the impact throughout the project lifecycle.
- Organisation and delivery of all lectures/conferences and large group teaching/training events should ensure the use of lapel or hand-held microphones. Signs should be displayed in all teaching rooms where hearing loops are present to remind staff to use the provided audio equipment.

### Longer term considerations

- A review of, and upgrade to, the car parking system across campuses should be undertaken. This should include consideration of bookable disabled parking spaces; late arrival spaces; amount of disabled parking spaces required close to key buildings and provision of additional detail on campus maps to identify location of disabled parking spaces in each car park.
- Conduct a feasibility study into the provision of a service to provide accessible transport to staff, in the same way as we provide an accessible transport service for students.
- Introduce braille on all signposts and signage across all campuses for people who are visually impaired.

- Ensure the MyNottingham app and other widely used tools should be fully accessible to visually-impaired users.
- Review the Hopper Bus schedule and stops to consider the impact on travel for disabled staff.
- Consider the introduction of a certification mechanism similar to BREEAM<sup>5</sup> that takes us above the current minimum of building requirements in terms of accessibility.
- Consider combining provision for staff and students with regards to support for identification of suitable equipment requirements as part of Display Screen Equipment assessments.

## Culture and behaviour

***'If simple things are not right, it makes everything else more difficult' (UoN Staff Feedback)***

The review found evidence of a commitment to providing appropriate and accessible support for all disabled people across the University and at all levels. However, there is also evidence of a culture that stops or discourages people from declaring disability. Reasons for this may include a lack of confidence in having conversations about disability, disabled staff not having enough role models and ambassadors, or lack of clarity around responsibility for decision making, arranging and resourcing any adjustments that might be required to accommodate the needs of disabled staff.

## Strengths

- There are good examples of line management support, which in turn fosters a good working environment and culture for disabled staff.
- The Calibre programme is well regarded, but can be at risk of perpetuating the 'deficit model' which places the burden on disabled staff themselves, rather than the people, culture and systems around them.
- Good EDI structures within departments, strong advocacy for EDI from senior leaders (e.g. Heads of School) and proactive line managers have led to good working conditions as well as reasonable adjustments for disabled staff.

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<sup>5</sup> BREEAM or Building Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method is used to masterplan projects, infrastructure and building. It evaluates the procurement, design, construction and operation of a development against a range of target based on performance benchmarks and focusses on sustainable values including: Energy, Land use and ecology, water, Health and wellbeing, pollution, Transport, Materials, Estate and Management (NBS).

## Areas for Improvement

- There is a lack of understanding and insufficient training for staff about disabilities (visible and invisible), reasonable adjustments and mental health awareness.
- Concerns were expressed about how to use the workload planning tool to support conversations about reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities. It was felt that more support is required to ensure that disabled staff and line managers are supported adequately.
- It was felt that there were very few role models and champions for disabled staff. Developing a truly inclusive culture would benefit from disability champions, empowering disabled staff to share their stories, equality of access and experience.
- Disclosure of disability amongst staff remains low compared to the general population and reduces for staff at more senior levels. This is likely to be due both to a reluctance to disclose disability as well as low levels of employment of disabled staff. Work to encourage disclosure should recognise the barriers to disclosure in our culture, which include the difficulty in accessing the systems required to declare, low confidence that declaring a disability will have a real impact on experience in the workplace or introduction of reasonable adjustments, and a reluctance to declare due to perceived stigma or threat.
- The remit of Disability Liaison Officer (DLOS) roles with respect to staff is unclear. Their work is currently focused on students, but they do also provide informal support for staff. However, there is not a formal equivalent role for identifying, support and advocating staff with disability. This means that managers are unable to easily access informal advice locally. Capacity issues within Employee Relations mean that their advice and work in partnership tends to focus on the most significant disabilities, and there is therefore a gap in support for line managers.
- The impact of supporting costs for making reasonable adjustments can be significant for small teams or activities where the budget spends are restricted (e.g. research projects).
- We understand that when an individual who is offered a role within the University has declared a disability through the HR system, their line manager is not automatically informed. Instead, the individual is asked to declare the disability separately within the HR system, and to their line manager.

## Advice from the Panel

### Short term actions

- Develop a communication plan to publish the outcomes of the Support for Disabled Staff Review, including the acknowledgement that our current levels of support for disabled staff are not consistently as high as they should be and detailing the plan for implementing the recommendations and improving support. This communication should include clear reference to our obligations to disabled staff under the Equality Act 2010.
- Within our communications, ensure we reflect the social model of disability and beyond<sup>6</sup> in partnership with disabled staff. Consider additional action that further embed the model and support changing attitudes, behaviours and culture in the long term.
- Review information within our HR systems, websites and communications to ensure it clearly explains how a disability should be declared and what happens when one is declared. This should include information to support both the disabled staff and their line manager.
- Aim to introduce a change in process, which, with permission of the staff member, allows HR colleagues to directly inform line managers when a member of staff has declared a disability, maintaining GDPR obligations. This aims to encourage closer collaboration between HR and line managers, and make the process easier for disabled staff, whilst maintaining privacy and confidentiality.
- Conduct a feasibility analysis to explore whether a central source of funding could be provided to support costs incurred when making reasonable adjustments.
- Clarify the role of DLOs to ensure equivalent support for staff and students. This could involve either a) expanding the role to include staff and students (recognising that this will require an increase in the number of staff who take on the DLO roles, or b) establishing the proposed 'disability champions' as equivalent to student-facing DLOs.

### Longer term considerations

- Introduce a programme of information and education to support all staff in holding conversations about disability, and being clear about expectations in terms of approach to supporting staff with disabilities.

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<sup>6</sup> It is recognised that there are some more current considerations around the social model of disability that warrant further considerations – the views of disabled staff will be sought in how best to accommodate this model within our University context (Shakespeare, T (2013) *Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. London: Routledge

## Support for line managers

### ***'It is difficult to have the conversations about disability' (UoN Staff Feedback)***

The support line managers receive also varies across the University. Some line managers find it difficult to start the conversation about disability and feel that the responsibility for providing the necessary support for disabled staff was left to them. The review found that:

#### Strengths

- There are cases where excellent support has been available to line managers. Links have been made with external specialist support teams and expertise in cases where local management required expert advice to implement the best adjustments for disabled staff.
- Staff within Specialist Services<sup>7</sup> and HR are equipped with the knowledge to provide advice around support and flexibility for line managers who need to make the right judgements about cases involving disabled staff.

#### Areas for improvement

- There can be inconsistencies in the advice and support provided to line managers. The inconsistency in advice results in inconsistencies in the experience of disabled staff who require support outside of local line management.
- There is no specific training for line managers who take on responsibilities for managing staff with disabilities.
- Time management and workload management for managers with responsibility for disabled staff lies with the managers themselves and can be significant (up to several hours per week per disabled member of staff in some cases). This increases the burden on managers, and is not normally recognised within workload models or allocations.
- The access to work scheme is not visible to the general staff population and more specifically to disabled staff.
- The University does not currently have a network for line managers or a central portal where line managers can share issues, raise queries and share best practice.

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<sup>7</sup> The review noted that whilst the Specialist Services team is designed to provide support for student accessibility needs, it had also informally provided support to staff on occasion.



- Specific training for line managers who are working with staff with learning differences is not currently available through the university.

## Advice from the panel

### Short term actions

- Identify a mechanism to recognise when significant time commitment is required from line managers to support disabled staff in performance objectives, goals and workload allocations. This mechanism needs to allow a proactive and rapid response to ensure that staff are supported as soon as their disability is declared.
- Provide support to all staff by providing training as already identified within this report, and with specific recognition for SpLDs<sup>8</sup>.
- Introducing a programme of education for line managers
- Produce a clear and accessible guide for line managers who have responsibility for supporting staff with disabilities, including coverage of specific learning differences.

### Longer term considerations

- Introduce a forum where discussions can take place between HR, specialist service providers, estates and line managers to address the communication challenges between these groups and build a strong ethos of working together to address issues.
- Provide support and advice for disabled staff and line managers when the health of a disabled staff members changes and/or deteriorates.
- Ensure sufficient capacity within the Employee Relations team to provide specialist support and guidance to line managers where required.

## Specialist Support provision

***‘Because someone has a disability does not mean they cannot do the job well’ (UoN Staff Feedback)***

The panel noted a breakdown in communication between line management team and specialist support when issues were raised by disabled staff. The panel also highlighted significant issues engaging staff and educating managers in how to support staff with disabilities.

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that there may be many staff who have not been diagnosed with an SpLD whom do require extra support.

## Strengths

- Our Occupational Health team have an appropriate team structure in place to support our staff.
- The Employee Relations team members have skills to ensure provision of the appropriate support across the University to support disabled staff. These skills and expertise covered disabled staff from recruitment, salary negotiations, management of probation and Cifas<sup>9</sup> IFAS checks, DBS checks and liaising with line managers.

## Areas for Improvement

- The University's Occupational Health provider did not have a clear understanding of the University's organisational structure, culture and diversity of activities/roles. Further work is required to clarify these with provider. There was a general sense a closer working relationship between Occupational Health and the University is required to clarify its roles and our expectations. The isolated location of Occupational Health (on the top floor of Lenton Hurst) potentially exacerbates the disconnect between this team and the wider University.
- Support from our specialist teams (HR, Safety Office, Estates, Occupational Health) is patchy across the University. Many line managers and disabled staff remain unaware or ill-informed about the processes when issues arise. This results in an inconsistency of experience for staff with disabilities.
- There are significant inconsistencies in access to specialist support for our staff and students. Disabled staff believe that student support is viewed as being more important than support and access for disabled staff. Equality of access needs to be the standard.

## Advice from the Panel

### Short term actions

- Introduce the use of local staff as Disability Champions and ambassadors for our specialist support teams to raise awareness with disabled staff.

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<sup>9</sup> Fraud prevention service: [www.cifas.org.uk](http://www.cifas.org.uk)

- Work in partnership with the Employee Relations team in HR to ensure closer partnership between staff from Occupational Health and the wider University.
- Review capacity within Employee Relations team and make recommendations for further investment where need is identified.
- Review and change the location of the Occupational Health team to increase visibility and enable easy access to staff with impaired mobility.

### **Longer term considerations**

- A review of current ways of working for our different specialist teams is required and a more joined up and integrated approach for providing specialist support is required for disabled staff and line managers.
- Introduction of visible and accessible support structures to enable response when staff are diagnosed with new conditions.

## Recommendations

We concluded the review with a consideration of what the 'gold standard' for support for disabled staff would look like. We recommend that the University adopt the recommendations presented within this report as an initial step, working towards the gold standard of recruitment and support of disabled staff.

### **Experience of being disabled**

- Support provision for disabled staff is transparent and accessible
- Disabled staff feel that it is safe to disclose their disability, and that this will not lead to any adverse treatment or discrimination in any way
- All staff feel comfortable to seek advice, guidance and support in working towards providing an inclusive environment for disabled staff
- If a disabled staff member moves roles, or has a change in line management, any changes to their support and adjustments are seamless and fair
- Disabled staff do not personally incur significant additional financial cost to enable them to work at the University
- We learn from and work with those within the University who have expertise relating to disability, including disabled staff

### **Physical and digital Infrastructure**

- Equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded as a priority in our Estates Masterplan
- All new buildings and projects aim for the highest possible standard of accessibility and inclusion
- All digital technologies that we use as part of our work be either appropriate for use by those with disabilities, adjustable, or appropriate alternatives are provided

### **Culture and behaviour**

- No perceived difference between the quality of support provided for disabled students and disabled staff
- A fully inclusive environment, that embodies the social model of disability
- An agile institution that is able to respond to the need for nuanced and changing adjustments to support disability
- All staff to feel empowered and to have the space to work as effectively as they can
- Easily accessible information for all about the support available for disabled staff

- A kind and compassionate culture, which is open and supportive of all

**Support for line managers**

- Line managers feel able and trusted to provide the support that staff need, and be accountable for decisions made
- Staff consistently supported on the basis of their individual needs for disability and long-term health

**Specialist support**

- All support services to have the capacity and skills to provide advice, guidance and resource as required
- Clarity on responsibility for provision of funding for any interventions that require financial commitment

## Some fundamental changes to the way we work

In addition to the specific recommendations made within this report, the review identified a need for a fundamental change in our approach to supporting disabled staff. Some of these recommendations require changes in terms of where we base resource or expertise to support disabled staff, and may require additional investment. It is therefore recommended that the following proposals are explored in more detail, and a feasibility report produced to consider their merits.

### Closer collaboration between support for staff and students

Many of the issues that emerged during the review reflected a strong perception that the provision for disabled staff and students was different in substance and quality. It was also clear that there were different groups with expertise in supporting staff and students who were not actively collaborating and sharing learning and good practice. There were also potential inefficiencies in duplication of expertise and resource, and inconsistencies in solutions.

It is therefore recommended that as part of the feasibility review, the impact of having closer working collaboration and/or combining support for staff and students is explored. Areas that were highlighted as potential ones to combine during the review included the role of Welfare Officers and Disability Liaison Officers, specialist assessment of equipment needs, identification of issues where estates work is needed to improve accessibility, and provision of transport services.

There may also be other areas where support and expertise can be combined. It is recognised however that there may also be areas where it is not appropriate to combine support, due to the different nature of working as an employee as opposed to studying as a student.

### Increased recognition of the way that we all support disability

The current status of disability support, outside those who hold specialist or dedicated roles, within day to day line management or collaboration roles is that it is absorbed as one of many tasks that an individual may have to take on.

However, it is clear that most of the difficult issues, which are experienced by disabled staff, are associated with a lack of time, expertise or resource available to provide them with local guidance. Issues that emerge may include the need to quickly address inappropriate behaviour towards a

disabled person, the need to make small adjustments to work in response to a changing or short term need of a disabled person, and the time that is taken to work with a disabled colleague to ensure that they are able to complete their work to the expected standard.

In some cases a large amount of time is needed to support a person with a disability, but this is not always recognised in the work load of the line manager. Also, it is not always clear where responsibility lies for making the financial investment required to support disability. Whilst many of our colleagues are able to access resource through Access to Work, others require adjustments, which would be expected to be covered by a local budget. If several disabled staff are members of a small team, this can place a significant financial burden on the budget.

Therefore, it is recommended that the feasibility report considers how to a) recognise the impact of supporting disability in work roles and b) manage more effectively the financial support available to make adjustments.

### Reducing the burden on the disabled person

Effective management of support for disability should be done in partnership with a disabled person. However, many examples emerged where the disabled person felt that they took the majority of the burden for the complex navigation of different services and teams that may be required to provide them with support.

There were also examples where there were disagreements about what constituted a reasonable adjustment, and the disabled person felt disempowered. It is recommended that the feasibility report identify new ways to reduce the burden on disabled people in organising and navigating the systems to enable them to receive the support that they need. This may be achieved through training, awareness or dedicated points of advice/guidance.

### Adoption of a culture beyond the social model of disability

In the social model of disability, disabled people are seen as being disabled not by their impairments (such as blindness or autism) but by society's failure to take their needs into account. It is recommended that the feasibility report considers specific ways that a social model of disability can be embedded within the ways of working of the University, leading to fuller inclusion for our disabled colleagues.

It is also recognised that to develop a 'gold standard' of support the University needs to move beyond the social model, working with experts to understand how to incorporate the latest research into our approach to disability support. It is also recognised that our approach must avoid complacency, must not remain static but should continually evolve to ensure that we respond to ever changing workforce, legislation and technology updates.



## Next Steps

The experiences of disabled staff can be extremely difficult and not equal to other staff. However, if the recommendations within this report are adopted, we are confident that we can move to a position where the University delivers a gold standard of support for disabled staff, and increases the number of disabled staff at the university who are recruited, as well as encouraging those already at the University to declare their disabilities.

This report will now be reviewed by the relevant University committees. On the basis of the committees' responses, we will then implement appropriate groups, resources and activities to ensure that the experiences of disabled staff are improved quickly and effectively.

**Sarah Sharples.** Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, August 2019, Panel Chair

**Toni Pickering.** Review Project Manager, August 2019, Review Coordinator

**Esther Akanya.** Senior Project Manager, August 2019, Review Coordinator

# Appendix A: Review of support for disabled staff at the University of Nottingham

## Terms of Reference

### Background

We are aware that there have been a number of issues raised about the experiences of some disabled staff at the University of Nottingham and have therefore instigated a formal review to understand what our current provision is and where there are areas for improvement.

### Aims

The aim of the review is to review the resources (including processes, tools, roles, responsibilities and activities) which are in place to support disabled staff at the University of Nottingham. The review will make clear recommendations about changes to the way that support to disabled staff is provided, from which an action plan will be developed and implemented.

The scope of the review relates to the experience of disabled staff at the University of Nottingham in the following areas:

- on-boarding support following appointment
- induction support and reasonable adjustments when joining the University
- response to disclosure of a disability whilst working at the University and the support available following this
- support for progression and promotion
- inclusive management
- inclusivity on campus

### Methodology

The review is intended to be inclusive, collaborative and solution focused to ensure positive engagement with all key stakeholders. Information will be gathered from a variety of sources to inform the review, including:

- Collation and analysis of relevant data, to include as a minimum:
  - Staff numbers

- Staff subject to disciplinary action and the outcome of this
- Sickness absence figures and outcomes
- Data split by intersectionality with race and gender where possible
- Review of current policy, practice and organisational processes / structures, both within the University of Nottingham and other organisations for comparison (e.g. NHS, local authority, third sector)
- Understanding the sickness absence process across all departments and any differences
- Identification of progress made in other reviews / initiatives, e.g.:
  - Diversity in Recruitment
  - Promotions Review
  - Disabled Student Support (in relation to any cross over issues such as the campuses)
- Feedback from staff, potentially through focus groups or staff surveys
- A formal panel, which includes some independent and external expertise as well as internal membership

## Roles and responsibilities

### Project sponsor

The project sponsor is the key stakeholder in the review and will have overall accountability for the review to ensure that it fulfils its remit. Their responsibilities are to:

- Provide business context, expertise and guidance to the review
- Champion the review throughout the University, ensure required resources are in place
- Act as an escalation point for decisions and issues
- Act as a link between the review, UEB and the wider University (staff and students)

### Review chair

The review chair is responsible for chairing review group meetings, providing leadership and management of the review process and ensuring the review aims, terms of reference, recommendations and final implementation plan are agreed.

### Panel members

Members of the review group will use their expert knowledge and understanding to contribute to the review process, particularly in relation to the analysis of information presented to them. They will examine data and information provided to them and will consider the review findings and contribute to recommendations for improvement. Panel members will support information gathering through a variety of methods, including liaison with:

- Meeting with disabled staff network leads and members, including, if possible, staff groups who have disabilities relating to: mental health; sensory impairment; mobility impairment; Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLDs); neurodiversity
- Occupational Health
- HR Employment Relations and on-boarding teams and business partners
- Disability Liaison Officers
- Managers with experience of supporting a disabled staff member in the university (to include APM and academic, including Estates, Catering and Finance)
- Experiential visits with disabled members of staff/students
- Considering the experience at all UK campuses
- Estates Team (including Head of Estates and Director of Sustainability)
- Health & Safety Director
- Unions (UCU, Unison, Unite)
- Sports facilities, including review of provision for disability sport
- After hours support for staff and tutors on site outside of normal working hours

### Strategic Change Unit (SCU)

The SCU will provide expert advice and guidance to the review to ensure it is undertaken in line with University of Nottingham expectations and the review terms of reference. In addition, the SCU will:

- Co-ordinate the review, maintaining an oversight of all review activity
- Provide secretariat support throughout, to include supporting the review group and managing all practical and logistical aspects of the review
- Author the draft review report and implementation plan

### Membership

Title / Name	Role
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Professor Robert Mokaya	Review Sponsor, PVC for Global Engagement
Professor Sarah Sharples	Review Chair, PVC for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Dr Diane Gyi	Reader in Health Ergonomics and Design, Loughborough Design School, Loughborough University
Lynette Outram / Kim Lawson	Senior Manager Accessibility/Senior Accessibility Tutor, Academic and Disability Support and the ACCESS Centre
Hilary Martin	Disabled Staff Network Interim Chair/Staffing Administrator, School of Life Sciences
Dr Keith Benedict	Associate Professor, School of Physics & Astronomy
Professor Amanda Griffiths	Professor of Occupational Health Psychology, Institute of Mental Health
Zoe MacKenzie	Equal Opportunities and Welfare Officer, SU
Lenford Vassell	ASC and Branch Equalities Officer/Unite Disability Representative
Liza Aspell	Student Welfare Manager/UNISON Disability Representative
Professor Simon Langley-Evans	Head of School of Biosciences
Daniel Tilley	Director of Sport
Claire Murphy	Information and Service Analyst, IS
Fiona Hinchley	Finance Team Manager, Financial Management
Gavin Scott	Environmental Manager, Estates
Sophie Bevan	Student Services Administrator
Nicola Selby	HR Specialist Services Project Officer
Jodie Chatfield	Technical Central Support Manager
Esther Akanya	Senior Project Manager for EDI, Strategic Change Unit
Toni Pickering	Review Project Manager, Strategic Change Unit

## Review timescales

To be completed by the end of the Academic Year 2018/19.

- Initial planning for the panel to be held by end-May 2019
- Panel to be held in June 2019
- Outcomes to be submitted to EDI Committee in August 2019
- Implementation from September 2019

## Review governance

The review will report to the EDI Committee who will provide support and oversight as required, including during the implementation phase.

## Communications

A communications plan will be developed to ensure that staff and students are engaged with and informed about the review as appropriate.