



# Toolkit for supporting disabled staff

## Support available for staff and managers

A guide for staff and managers on the support available for disabled and neurodivergent staff inside and beyond the University

## Introduction

This guide forms part of the [University of Nottingham's toolkit for supporting disabled staff](#).

Introduction	Legal context	Case studies	Guidance	Support
<p>What is a disability?</p> <p>Legal overview</p> <p>The social model of disability</p> <p>How to share a disability</p>	<p>Staff equality legal pod-briefing</p> <p>Mandatory</p>	<p>Types of disabilities and neurodivergence</p> <p>The definition of a reasonable adjustment</p> <p>Examples of adjustments and case studies</p>	<p>The process to make adjustments</p> <p>Practical hints and tips</p> <p>Frequently asked questions</p>	<p>The role of the manager</p> <p>Developing your knowledge and skills</p> <p>Support from the university</p> <p>Getting medical advice</p> <p>External support</p>

**5. Support** – this component of our toolkit:

- Outlines the role of the manager in supporting staff
- Guides you on how to develop your knowledge & skills
- Explains the support available within the University
- Describes how to gain expert medical advice
- Describes the support available from HR
- Signposts you to support outside the University

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### The role of the line manager

Disabled and neurodivergent staff should be aware of their line management arrangements and have a line manager who has a key role in:

- Exploring potential reasonable adjustments with staff
- Providing support to disabled and neurodivergent staff
- Understanding and following our [HR policies and processes](#)
- Taking decisions/steps which value diversity and promote equality in line with our [values](#) and [competency framework](#)

This guide and others in our disability toolkit help managers to do this.

## Developing your skills and knowledge

It is important for managers to take personal responsibility for their own learning and development. Gaining a deeper understanding of different disabilities and the impact these can have on the way individuals can act, react and live their lives is an important aspect of any management responsibility.

Familiarity with this Disability Toolkit (including, for example, the Social Model of disability) and the behavioural expectations set out in the ['Building a Culture for Success'](#) guide will help provide some of the foundational elements needed.

New and existing members of staff should have agreed objectives and a learning and development plan. For new starters who identify as disabled or neurodivergent, this may include specific skills, training and induction activity. Planning induction is an opportunity for managers to identify and act on these learning and development needs.

Asking people about their individuals needs and any adjustments they'd like to discuss is essential to learn more about what is right for them. One to one conversations (including [Appraisal and Development Conversations](#)) are a great way to develop a knowledge of an individual's strengths as well as areas where support may be needed.

Managers should take care to avoid making assumptions about the support individuals might need, and understand the potential for unconscious bias. For example, if a manager tries to 'protect' a staff member with a disability by not giving them

tasks that are too challenging this may adversely impact their career progression.

While it may be appropriate to provide additional support to disabled and neurodivergent staff, a management style that appreciates and responds to the individual needs and strengths of all team members may, in many cases, enable managers to meet disability-related needs without a perception of 'special treatment'.

Disabled and neurodivergent staff must be given at least the same access to learning and development opportunities as all other staff. All learning and development offered by the University is open to all, and staff should be encouraged to engage in development programmes, request the support of a coach or mentor, or speak to colleagues in Professional Development or the Leadership and Management Team to find out what might be right for them.

The University offers tailored learning and development to help disabled or neurodivergent staff and their managers and those with an interest in disability. Our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training and development support helps encourage shared understanding, the development of new insights and more open conversations. This currently includes:

[Equality and diversity training](#) for all staff including equality and diversity awareness sessions, online equality and diversity training, and a welcome event for new staff.

[University staff equality pod briefing](#) explaining the legal requirements on staff and managers outlined in the 2010 Equality Act. This mandatory briefing must be completed by all staff at the University.

[Equality, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\) learning resources](#) available from the [Leadership and Management Academy](#) providing a helpful introduction to EDI, as well as a range of helpful tools and factsheets.

Managers may consider arranging training or shared conversations for the whole team to help them understand more about how they can support their disabled colleague, and how the disabled colleague can feel more connected with the team. It is very important that managers discuss this with any disabled or neurodivergent staff in the team before wider team discussions so that they understand and agree with the approach being taken. The aim of this is to ensure that they feel supported and that a level of shared understanding is achieved, not that their privacy has been invaded or they have been prevented from forming working relationships on their own terms.

Please contact [pd@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:pd@nottingham.ac.uk) or [lma@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:lma@nottingham.ac.uk) for guidance on the range of learning and development support available for individuals or to request team development.

### Support from the University

#### 1. Disabled staff network

The University's [disabled staff network](#) was created in early 2007 with a view to unite disabled staff from the University and provide a safe meeting place and a mechanism through which the University could consult directly with disabled staff members.

If you are interested in being a member, contact the disability staff network via [dsn@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:dsn@nottingham.ac.uk).

#### 2. Mental health first aider network

[Mental health first aiders](#) are a point of contact for members of staff or students who may be struggling, and offer support ranging from having an initial conversation through to helping someone to identify where they can access more help.

Mental health first aiders are provided with a good awareness of mental health to enable them to have a conversation to support someone in getting the help they need. They do not provide intervention or advice, they help identify who to speak to when support is needed.

#### 3. Employee assistance programme

Our employee assistance programme is accessed through the [employee hub](#) offering free confidential support for any workplace or personal issue over the telephone (0808 168

2143) or online 24/7. You will need a University IT login to access this service.

#### 4. University counselling service

The University also offers a free and confidential counselling service to University staff and students including one-to-one counselling support and workshops. The service is open Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 4.30pm via [counselling.service@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:counselling.service@nottingham.ac.uk).

#### 5. University sports

[University of Nottingham sport](#) offers accessible facilities and support to disabled and neurodivergent staff and students who wish to get involved in sporting activities. This includes:

- [Supported fitness sessions](#) providing 1-2-1 supported sessions in our fitness suites (gyms), with a qualified instructor (max of one session per week).
- Sports buddies to give support when accessing the sports facilities. They can also set up a friend, family member or personal assistant as a sports buddy who will be able to access the facilities for no charge, when supporting disabled member of staff.
- [Access videos](#) showing the routes through the facility. The Disability Sport Officer or a member of the University of Nottingham Sport team, can also meet with disabled

members of staff and provide a tour of the sports facilities, if preferred.

Please visit [www.nottingham.ac.uk/sport](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sport) for more information.

## 6. Dignity adviser network

The University has a network of [dignity advisers](#) who are available to provide impartial and confidential advice to support staff and students who have issues or concerns regarding harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Dignity advisers are trained members of staff who volunteer from a wide range of backgrounds, disciplines and roles to help facilitate and support resolution within the framework of the Dignity at Nottingham policy, to help protect staff and students against harassment, bullying or victimisation.

## 7. Seeking expert medical advice

Sometimes medical advice helps to support an employee undergoing diagnosis, assessment or with the management of their condition.

Our occupational health provider advises and guides us to understand a condition and to identify ways of removing barriers and supporting the disabled or neurodivergent employee.

They do this by reviewing occupational health questionnaires completed by successful applicants and responding to referrals from managers where advice is required.

This service is free and available to managers who can request support online via our [occupational health support](#) web page.

## 8. Support from human resources (HR)

HR offer [guides and support](#) to support disabled staff and their managers to support disabled staff and their managers.

HR also enable them to:

- Share a disability or neurodiverse condition using [MyView](#)
- Understand and follow our HR policies and processes

The Employment Relations team can give managers and staff specific support on a case by case basis.

If you need HR support, then please contact HR between 9 am and 5.15 pm, Monday to Friday:

[Hr@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Hr@nottingham.ac.uk)

0115 748 4800

### Support from outside the University

Disabled and neurodivergent staff are often well researched and knowledgeable about their condition and can provide information and resources for their manager.

Sometimes staff and managers also wish to identify other support available outside the University. We have provided some helpful web links below.

Support and resources for all disabled staff	<a href="#">Business Disability Forum</a> <a href="#">Direct.gov</a> <a href="#">Disability Confident</a> <a href="#">Disability Support Nottingham</a> <a href="#">Disability Nottinghamshire</a> <a href="#">Leonard Cheshire</a> <a href="#">Middle Street Resource Centre (Beeston)</a> <a href="#">Remploy</a> <a href="#">Scope</a> <a href="#">The Equality Challenge Unit (Advance HE)</a>
Autism	<a href="#">National Autistic Society</a>
Cancer	<a href="#">Cancer Research</a> <a href="#">The Macmillan Trust</a>

Deaf/ Hearing Impairment	<a href="#">Nottinghamshire Deaf Society</a>  <a href="#">RNID: The Royal National Institute for Deaf People</a>
Diabetes	<a href="#">Diabetes UK</a>
Dyslexia	<a href="#">British Dyslexia Association</a>
Epilepsy	<a href="#">Epilepsy Action</a>
HIV/AIDS	<a href="#">LIVlife</a>  <a href="#">National Aids Trust</a>  <a href="#">Terrence Higgins Trust</a>
ME/MS	<a href="#">The ME Association</a>  <a href="#">The Multiple Sclerosis Society</a>
Mental Health	<p><a href="#">Mind wellness action plans</a> support managers and staff to review mental health and identify practical steps to support people experiencing mental health challenges)</p> <p><a href="#">Mental Health Foundation</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Nottingham Recovery College</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Samaritans</a> – call 116 123 for free</p>
Mobility Disabilities	<a href="#">Disabled Living Foundation</a>

Visual Impairment	<a href="#">My Sight Nottinghamshire</a> formerly Nottinghamshire Royal Society of the Blind  <a href="#">RNIB: The Royal National Institute of Blind People</a>
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## Getting more support from our toolkit

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Click [here](#) to access the full toolkit.

Please contact [hr@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:hr@nottingham.ac.uk) for further guidance and support.

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