

Guidance on Undertaking Risk Assessments for Employees with Health Concerns, Medical Conditions, Disabilities or Impairments affecting their job role or work

The purpose of this guidance is to assist those responsible for conducting risk assessments to identify any hazards that may pose any **additional risks** to employees with health concerns, medical conditions, disabilities or impairments, so that measures can be implemented to protect them, and others, from harm whilst at work. This guidance supplements the general risk assessment guidance for employee work-based activities. It is not designed to be a standalone document. You may also find the HSE guidance [principles to support disabled workers and workers with long-term health conditions in work](#) useful to refer to.

This guidance can also be used by employees to consider how or if their health concern, medical condition, disability or impairment may affect their work, and any adjustments or control measures that could be put in place to support them.

Approach to risk assessment

Where it has been identified there is a significant risk to a person's health, safety or wellbeing arising from a work activity then a risk assessment detailing what the risks are and how they are controlled should be readily available (this is a legal requirement), therefore, risk assessments for normal work activities should already be in place. The pro-forma '**Risk Assessment for Employees with Health/Medical Conditions or Disabilities**' can be used where the nature of the employee's condition means there are 'additional risks' arising from their work activities that may require further control measures or reasonable adjustments, which can be documented on the form.

When undertaking this type of assessment it is essential to fully involve the employee in the process. The employee is usually best placed to provide information on their condition and how it may affect their own and others health and safety at work. Input from the employee will provide valuable information regarding their ability to perform tasks within their job role, in addition to identifying any reasonable adjustments that may need to be considered.

Information relating to an employee's health concern, medical condition, disability or impairment must only be used to assist the risk assessment process, it must not be shared with anyone else without the permission of the employee. Not all information will be relevant to the activity being risk assessed, therefore managers should focus solely on relevant issues.

The content of the risk assessment **must** remain confidential unless the employee provides consent for it to be shared with others. For example, if the employee moves jobs or changes manager, they may agree for the content of the assessment to be shared with their new manager to ensure their reasonable adjustments are

maintained. Please consider data protection requirements and keep the risk assessment form and its contents secure.

Objective of the risk assessment

The objective of the risk assessment is to identify measures which, when implemented, reduce risks to an acceptable level. It may not be possible to eliminate all risks.

To help avoid conflicts between health and safety and equality legislation the following steps must be followed:

- Fully involve the employee
- Assess the employee's abilities and avoid blanket restrictions based on generalisations/stereotypes
- Discuss and assess the effects of all aspects of the employee's health concern, medical condition, disability or impairment ie sensory, cognitive, behavioural and physical effects
- Assess the risks to the employee and others, such as colleagues and/or people to whom the county council provides a service
- Focus on any 'additional' risks that may arise as a result of the employee's health concern, medical condition, disability or impairment
- Where possible identify the actual duration and frequency of hazardous situations
- Consider all relevant workplace health and safety legislation and safety factors and what impact they may have on other legislation, for example, DVLA rules, Equality Act etc
- Consider any obvious restrictions, such as driving, working at height, lifting and handling
- Work together and focus on making any necessary adjustments and identifying solutions
- Get advice where necessary from:
 - HR
 - Occupational Health Service Tel: 0330 008 5999
 - Health, Safety and Quality Team Tel: 01772 538877
 - [Access to Work](#)
 - Disabled Workers Forum (DWF)
 - Forum of Asian, Black and Ethnic Employees (FABE)
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus Employee Network
 - Other voluntary organisations/agencies
- Evaluate the situation taking account of all the information gathered, any additional control measures implemented and/or reasonable adjustments agreed with the employee

- Plan to review the assessment regularly, or if the situation changes

Types of impairment

There are many types of impairment. It's important to remember that the employee is the best guide to their condition and how it may affect their health and safety:

- Cognitive, for example, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Asperger's. Those with a learning disability may have difficulty learning new things. They may make generalisations from one situation to another, and may have difficulty expressing themselves through spoken or written language
- Visual
- Hearing
- Mobility issues
- Dexterity issues
- Mental Health
- Non visible disabilities, for example, Epilepsy, Diabetes, etc

The risk assessment can also be used for issues that aren't included in the disability definition in the Equality Act, such as menopause, short term medical conditions, post-operative recuperation, etc.

Disclosure

There is no requirement for an employee to disclose their health concern, medical condition, disability or impairment. However failure to disclose any relevant information may place them at a disadvantage and impact upon their own and their team's health and safety, as their manager/headteacher will not be able to consider any potential hazards relating to their health concern, medical condition, disability or impairment during the standard risk assessment process.

Avoiding conflicts

Responsibilities under both equality and health and safety law must be fully explored by both the employee and their manager/headteacher in order to avoid unfair treatment and to eliminate or reduce risks to those with health concerns, medical conditions, disabilities or impairments and others.

The person undertaking the risk assessment must be competent and supportive in ensuring that the employee is fully involved in the process.

Legal requirements

Legislation requires employees to co-operate with their employer in order for the employer to comply with its legal duties and ensure employees take reasonable care

of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions. Legislation also requires the information/assessment to be factual, objective and free from stereotypes, generalisations or prejudice.

Examples of control measures or reasonable adjustments

The following provides examples of some of the control measures or reasonable adjustments that can be considered as part of the risk assessment process to support employees with health/medical conditions or disabilities.

These are provided as examples only to support the process. The list is not exhaustive, there may be other specific control measures or reasonable adjustments that need to be considered and not all of the examples will be relevant in every situation.

- Allow sufficient time to become familiar and comfortable with a new job or work environment.
- New work tasks will be discussed with the employee to identify any concerns and agree how they will be dealt with.
- Additional on-the-job training is provided to the employee, or his/her work colleagues, where there is an identified need.
- Adequate supervision and assistance readily available to the employee if required.
- Regular work patterns are in place wherever practicable. The effects of any rotating or split shifts have been considered to ensure that they do not cause excessive stress and/or fatigue. Agreed changes to work patterns will be monitored.
- Changes to shift or working patterns, for example to accommodate travelling during less busy times on public transport.
- The employee has reasonable control over the pace of their work so they are able to take frequent breaks if necessary.
- The employee has access to appropriate sanitary/washroom facilities.
- The employee is able to request short term changes to their working hours including changes to start and finish times or to take longer breaks during the working day if necessary to accommodate their needs.
- The employee is able to request annual leave at short notice to accommodate their needs.
- The employee is able to work from home if necessary to accommodate their needs.
- Suitable personal protective equipment has been identified and issued where required.
- Where wearing a uniform is a requirement, consideration has been given to the impact on an employee who may be suffering from hot flushes to allow some

flexibility, such as lighter non-synthetic work clothing, the use of thermally comfortable fabrics, optional layers and also the provision of changing facilities.

- Access to a desktop fan, good ventilation, including windows that open and blinds to block direct sunlight, are available to assist an employee who may be suffering from hot flushes to keep cool.
- Where a disability or condition can be triggered by certain elements or work conditions, these have been identified and eliminated where possible, for example, flicker from DSE which may bring about seizures or specific work activities that may cause anxiety, etc.
- If the employee has any concerns they can report them to their line manager as soon as possible.
- Medication (or spare medication) will be carried by the employee or kept in a secure location in the workplace (document the location if applicable).
- Work colleagues and local first aiders have been made aware of how to help if required, for example, to assist with manual handling tasks or if the employee falls ill at work.
- A personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) has been fully documented for the employee.
- There are nominated helpers to assist the employee during an emergency evacuation.
- The best means of communicating with the employee in the event of an emergency has been identified, such as for hearing impairment - flashing lights or vibrating alarms, etc.
- Any substances/products being used at work, or that the employee may come into contact with as a result of their work, have been assessed to identify any specific impact on their health, such as solvent vapours, dusts, aerosols, etc. A COSHH assessment has been completed for any hazardous substances and controls implemented.
- Arrangements for travelling have been considered, for example, flexibility can be demonstrated if the employee is required to use public transport and is restricted to times of buses or trains.
- Lone working arrangements for the employee are documented and monitored.
- Restrictions on driving have been considered, if applicable (See [DVLA rules](#)).
- Manual handling activities are reduced as far as practicable and appropriate aids and support are provided for any tasks where manual handling is unavoidable.
- For higher risk work activities such as working at height, working with sharp tools, machinery or live electrics, safe systems of work are implemented and their effectiveness reviewed regularly.
- Welfare provisions have been considered to identify any additional requirements for the employee, for example, where a higher level of hygiene is required for the administration of medication or to change dressings, etc, or the availability of accessible toilet facilities is required.

- Consideration has been given to any other specific requirements such as wheelchair access or facilities for a guide dog or assistance dog.

COVID-19 considerations

The success of the COVID-19 vaccination programme has meant that the requirement for shielding and identifying people as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) is no longer necessary.

However, there remain a number of people whose weakened immune system means they may be at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, despite vaccination.

Enhanced protection measures may benefit these individuals. This guidance is for those individuals who remain at higher risk.

- Consideration has been given to remote working to help avoid/minimise face to face contact, for example interactions/contacts are arranged through telephone/video/skype/teams/email where possible.
- Social contact with colleagues, services users, members of the public, etc is minimised where possible.
- The employee will be relocated to areas with increased ventilation, such as a room/classroom that has increased natural ventilation/fresh air input that is easy to control, for example a room with sufficient opening windows.
- Adjustments are made to working hours to avoid peak times for public transport.
- The employee can use a face covering when meeting other staff members, service users, members of the public.
- The number of service users in attendance for home visits/outreach is minimised where possible.
- Contacts with service users will take place outdoors where possible.
- Workloads are reviewed, or work is reallocated, for example case allocation, to reduce face-to-face contact in localities or premises known to present a higher risk.
- The employee is offered alternative duties/tasks that are considered to be lower risk.
- Consideration is given to whether the employee can work from home.
- Another adult is provided to support within a classroom, for example a Teaching Assistant.
- The employee can undertake their PPA time away from the school site.