

Disabled Staff - Guidance for Staff, Prospective Staff, and Managers

Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust recognise that it has a duty to protect people who are disabled, who become disabled and who have been disabled, from discrimination in the field of employment.

It is therefore this Trust's policy to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that fair and equal job opportunities exist for disabled people in a working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.

The Trust is committed to providing equality of access to services for all patients, based on their needs and will support and value its staff regardless of physical impairment. The Trust supports equality of opportunity and celebrates diversity. It is committed to positively promoting disability equality and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

In response to the statutory general and specific duties enshrined in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the Equality Act (2006) the Trust has recently published a 'Single Equality Scheme' which can be accessed on the staff Intranet (via Staff Services', 'Human Resources')

Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has a range of schemes to facilitate work for all staff. These include:

JOB SHARE

Job sharing is an arrangement whereby 2 people voluntarily choose to share and take the responsibility of 1 full time post. The purpose of job sharing is to provide flexibility, support the Trust's Equality Policy and improve our ability to recruit and retain staff. In the event that a job share partner leaves, the remaining partner may be offered a full time appointment if it is not possible to recruit another individual to job share, or else the full time post may be advertised. Job sharers will hold individual contracts based on the agreed work arrangements.¹

FLEXIBLE WORKING

It is difficult to provide prescriptive guidance to cover all circumstances as there are many flexible working options and an even greater range of individual personal circumstances and departmental needs. However the Trust's Flexible Working Policy seeks to clarify how a request for flexible working, whether by an individual or group of staff, should be handled and outlines best practice.

¹ The 'Job Share' policy can be found on the intranet under 'Policies & Guidelines'

ACCESS TO WORK

Access to Work (AtW) is available to help overcome the problems resulting from disability. It offers practical advice and help in a flexible way that can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job. AtW can offer a grant towards the approved costs that arise because of an individual's disability.

AtW can help in a number of ways. For example, it can help pay for:

- a support worker, which allows the applicant to use the services of a helper. Types of support might include reading to a visually impaired person, communicating for a hearing impaired person via sign language (other than at interview which is covered by CSI), providing specialist coaching for a person with learning difficulties or helping a person with care needs;
- special aids equipment to help a disabled person function in the work place;
- adaptation to premises or to existing equipment;
- help with the additional costs of travel to, or in, work for people who are unable to use public transport.²

Dorset County Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust seeks to continuously improve its services and environment for all users and staff and welcomes any ideas or comments you might have on how we can develop. Please direct any queries, comments or ideas you may have to the Human Resources Department.

DISABILITY SYMBOL COMMITMENTS

Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is a Disability Symbol User and there are five commitments that must be fulfilled to maintain this status:

COMMITMENT 1 - RECRUITMENT

To interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for job vacancy and consider them on their abilities.

COMMITMENT 2 - CONSULTATION

To ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they can develop and use their abilities. This will take place at the annual appraisal and subsequent review. However, it is important that communication is an ongoing process and disabled staff can discuss their needs and development regularly.

² Taken from the Job Centre Plus Website;
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/HelpForDisabledPeople/AccessToWork/

COMMITMENT 3 – RETENTION

To make every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment. More information can be found in the Trust's Policy For the Employment of People with Disabilities Section 8.5.1.iii (Click on 'Staff Services', then 'Human Resources' and then 'Policies & Guidelines').

COMMITMENT 4 – AWARENESS

To take action to ensure that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work. Diversity training is provided to all new employees at the monthly Trust Induction. Additional training can be provided by Human Resources upon request.

COMMITMENT 5 – REVIEW

To review the commitments each year against what has been achieved, to plan ways to improve on them and to inform employees and Job Centre Plus about progress and future plans. The Trust Diversity Forum meets regularly to review the Trust's commitment to diversity and equality, this includes a review of the five commitments, progress and future plans.

If you have any queries relating to disability please contact the Human Resources Department on Ext 4622.