

Career Essentials: Discussing disabilities or health conditions with employers

Penny Longman

Careers Consultant

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Why this topic?

- 77% of students and recent graduates with disabilities fear they will be discriminated against if they disclose their disability to employers
- 48% of disabled people have worried about sharing information about their impairment/condition with their employer

You are not alone

- 1 in 5 individuals of working age in the UK have a disability or long-term health condition
- Equality Act (2010) definition: “A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities”

What we plan to cover

- Terminology
- Whether to 'disclose'
- If so, when
- If then, how
- Disability friendly employers
- Useful organisations
- Resources
- How we can support you



Terminology

- Disclose
- Discuss
- Share

- Visible
- Invisible/non-visible
- The Equality Act (2010)
- Reasonable adjustments



Whether to disclose

- Sometimes an easy decision
 - You know you will need adjustments made
- Sometimes a responsibility
 - Health and safety of yourself and others
- Sometimes necessary
 - Affects capability to do core tasks
- Sometimes preferable
 - Best for you
- Sometimes unnecessary



Pros

- Protection under Equality Act (2010)
- Reasonable adjustments – you are entitled to them
- Show the positives
- Be in control of the information
- Be yourself

Cons

- Discrimination?
- Colleagues suspecting 'unfair' advantage?

- Imposter syndrome (is my condition serious enough)?



The law:

Health related questions can be asked only to:

- help decide whether there is a need to make reasonable adjustments to the application/selection process
- help decide whether an applicant can carry out an essential part of the job
- monitor diversity amongst applicants
- take positive action to help disabled people
- ensure an individual has a disability where there is a genuine requirement to have a disability

Employers are expected to do all they 'reasonably' can to find out if an employee is disabled.

If so, when?

- Before applying?
 - In application?
 - Once offered assessment centre/interview?
 - At assessment centre/interview?
 - Once offered job?
 - After accepting job?
 - When you start work?
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- Key principle: always think what's best for you...but considering employer's perspective is also relevant

Application stage

Why

- Gaps in CV because of disability/health
- Lacking work experience because of disability/health
- Lower attainment because of disability/health
- Guaranteed interviews (Disability Confident scheme)

How

- Emphasise positive attributes – perseverance, determination, empathy...
- Reflect on what you have done (even if not traditional work experience)

Before assessment centre/interview

Why

- To give you the best chance of doing well
- Level the playing field
- Avoid surprise factor

What

- Establish format of assessment centre/interview
- Identify potential issues
- Name potential solutions

If then, how?

- Practicalities
 - By phone?
 - In person?
 - In writing?



What might you say?

My condition	How it affects me	Solutions
Fibromyalgia	On bad pain days mobility is limited, also writing by hand	Allow extra time between activities; schedule activities in adjacent rooms; ensure all activities can be undertaken on laptop
Dyslexia	Processing takes longer	Extra time on task
Visual impairment	Use screen reader	Ensure all documents are compatible with screen reader
Hearing impairment/deaf		

Before/after accepting job

Why

- So that reasonable adjustments can be put in place
- To ensure protection under Equality Act
- So you can be yourself

What

- Your condition (basic information)
- How it affects you
- What adjustments would help

If then, how (2)?

- Practicalities
 - By phone?
 - In person?
 - In writing?
 - Who should be told?

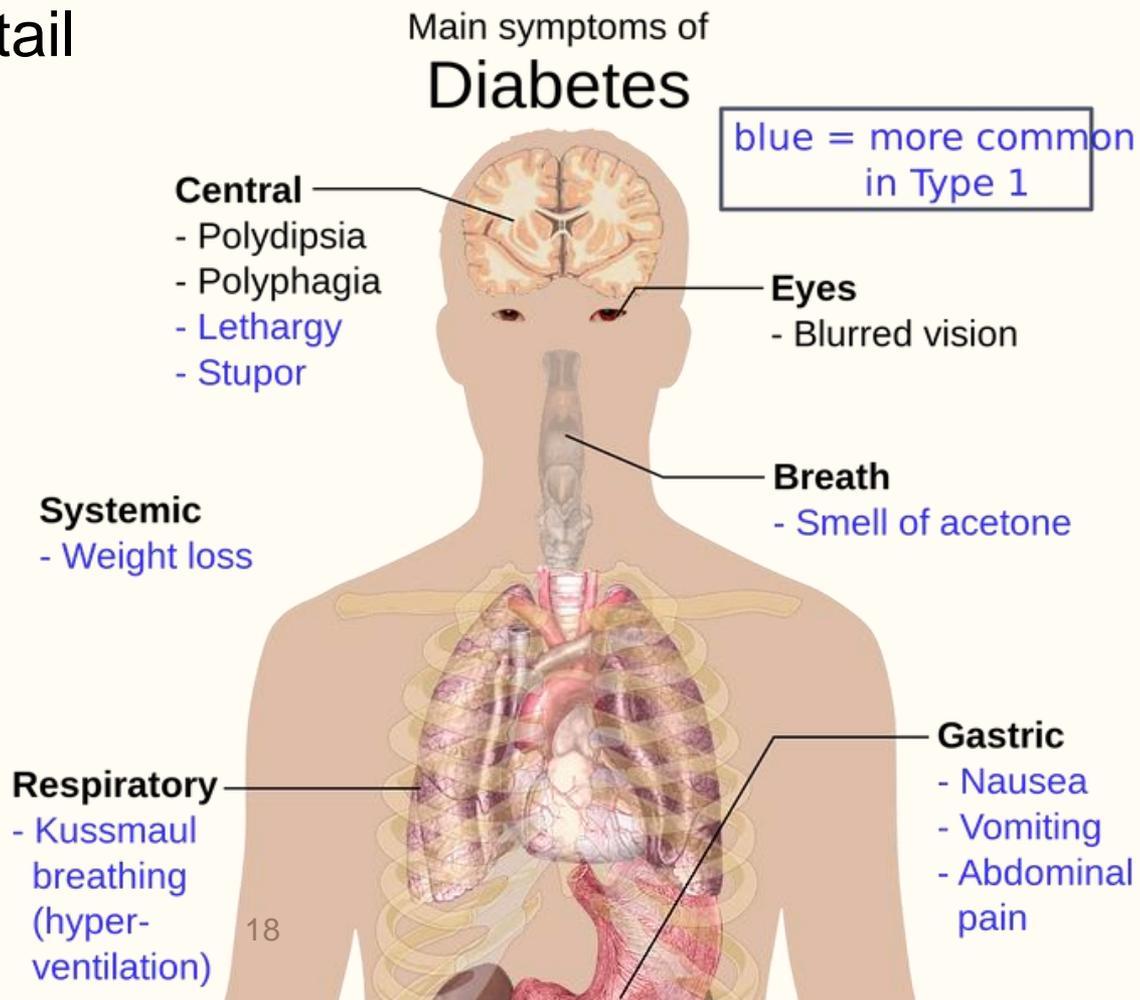


What might you say now?

My condition	How it affects me	Solutions
Chronic fatigue	It is hard for me to commute and work a full week without a break	Work from home one day a week; adjust length of days to incorporate breaks
Visual distress syndrome	Lines of text jump around and reading extensively then gives me headaches	Orange filters on computer screen
Anxiety	Very crowded places can trigger panic attacks	Adjusted working hours to come in before (or after) the main rush hour

What do you not need to say?

- Lots of medical detail



Working out what to ask for – components of the working day

Activity	Issue	Solution
Travel to and from work	Panic attacks in busy, crowded transport	
Travel to and from work	Mobility issues	
Break times	Uncertainty in social interactions	Buddy
Meetings away from the main workplace		Information in advance about ramps/stairs
Client meetings with presentations	Visual impairment may mean cannot interpret presentation fully	Presentation in alternative format provided in advance

After starting the job

Why

- Now know the job and realise adjustments would be helpful
- Condition has changed

What

- Your condition (basic information)
- How it affects you
- What adjustments would help

Adjustment needs may change

On-going conversation with employer

- Your condition may change
- Your job may change
- As you learn more about the job you may think of new adjustments that would help

Disability friendly employers

- **Disability Confident Scheme**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>

- But form your own judgements through recruitment process

Useful organisations

- Leonard Cheshire Foundation
<https://www.leonardcheshire.org/>
- Run the [Change 100 programme](#) – and internship programme for disabled students (final or penultimate year) and graduates
- Deadline for applications: 8 January 2020
- Webinars
 - Monday 2nd December: 15:00 - 16:00
 - Tuesday 10th December: 17:00 – 18:00
 - Monday 6th January: 14:00-15:00

Other useful organisations plus further resources

Visit [UCL Careers – About Us – Diversity and Inclusion – Disability](#)

Topic headings:

- Organisations providing advice and support
- Disability positive employers
- Legal rights
- Neurodiversity and Autism
- Job listings
- Internships, work experience and graduate schemes
- Finding work opportunities through UCL
- Funding

How we can support you

You can email us on careers.disability@ucl.ac.uk to request:

- An extended one to one appointment with a careers consultant
- A careers appointment over Skype or phone
- Reasonable adjustments for an event or workshop you will be attending (please email at least 48 hours in advance)
- Access to the quiet half hour at the start of one of our [Careers Fairs](#)
- To receive careers information for students with disabilities or long-term health conditions (or visit your profile on MyUCLCareers to sign up)

You can view the accessibility of different teaching rooms and venues on the UCL campus on the [AccessAble website](#).

What we do

One to one appointments

- Careers guidance – discuss ideas
- Applications advice
- Interview preparation

Workshops

- Some online versions
- Recordings and slides



What we do (contd)

Employer events

- Your chance to meet them before applying

- Skills sessions

Themed weeks

- Panel discussions
- Immersive workshops

Ask for adjustments as needed

Have we covered?

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Questions, feedback, action planning

