

# TRAILBLAZERS

## Muscular Dystrophy UK

Fighting muscle-wasting conditions



We aim to fight the social injustices experienced by young disabled people and to ensure we can gain access to education, employment and the services we require.





I joined *Trailblazers* because I want to meet new people, especially people my age who also have muscle-wasting conditions; to be at the forefront of protecting the rights of young disabled people; to make policy-makers at local, regional, and national level acknowledge us and invest money into Muscular Dystrophy UK's research programme; and to create and experience exciting projects for *Trailblazers*.

Sulaiman Khan, London Trailblazer





# Higher Education

**I chose my college primarily on the accessibility of the bar! I felt it was very important to be able to access the social centre of college, and the bar was it.**

Zoe Hallam, Graduate of University of Oxford





# Choosing a course and university

Select the right  
course for you.

Start early – at  
least one year in  
advance!

Talk to current or  
former students.

Call the university's  
disability support  
team and ask any  
questions you may  
have.

Make and keep photocopies  
of all the paperwork you will  
accumulate over time.

If possible, visit as  
many of your  
short-listed  
universities as you  
can.

Think where you want to live:  
Near or far from home? Town  
or rural?



# Accommodation

Make a list of all the equipment you will need in your room, kitchen and communal areas.

Look at as many rooms as you can before selecting the one that best suits you and your needs.

Let the accommodation and disability teams know what needs to be adjusted or adapted.

Decide if you want to stay at home, on campus or off-campus.

Take a tape measure when you view so you can compare bedroom/bathroom sizes.





## Care Packages

Make sure you are  
receiving DLA or PIP  
at the right rate.

Take some time, well in  
advance, to find out about  
local care agencies near  
your university. Consider  
whether they could meet  
your requirements.

Make sure you speak  
to your direct  
payments team to  
find out about your  
responsibilities as an  
employer.

You may have the option  
of managing your care  
through direct payments  
– you'll need to organise  
a care assessment.

You can also employ  
people privately,  
including fellow  
students.

If you will need  
more hours in  
your care  
package, make  
sure to book a  
re-assessment.



## Once you've decided...

Get hold of your study timetable as soon as you can

Have meetings with course directors, visit your lecture theatres and discuss your exam preferences.

Have a good look around your chosen university, take guided tours of the campus, halls, lecture and seminar rooms, student union, etc. and write a list of questions of concerns.

Work with the disability advisor or support unit to iron out problems.

Ask what services are available to support you, e.g. note-taking in lectures.



# Employment



“Fifteen years after the implementation of the DDA, there is still a tendency for employers to expect disabled people to make adjustments. When in fact it’s the employers who should be making adjustments to the barriers to employment.”  
Tim Jones, Disability Adviser  
Brunel University





# Why work?

## Social benefits of being in employment

- ▶ Meeting new people
- ▶ Bringing unique insights and skills to a workplace.
- ▶ Enhances quality of life.
- ▶ Developing specific skills





# Barriers to Work?

## Access and Transport

- ▶ Inaccessible public transport
  - Inaccessible train stations and platforms- in London currently only 67 out of 270 Tube stations have some degree of step-free access.
- ▶ Overcrowding when commuting
  - Overcrowded buses and/or uncooperative bus drivers.
- ▶ Inaccessible workplace
  - For example a building without a lift or some form of step-free access to office.
  - Other barriers could include inaccessible toilets, narrow doorways or no accessible parking.

## Attitudes/knowledge of colleagues.

There a variety of barriers that aren't physical but can be harder to overcome. Some of these could be:

- ▶ Stigma around disability
- ▶ Lack of accommodation for extra breaks or the need for flexible hours
- ▶ Not allowing extra time for certain activities
- ▶ Being overlooked for certain tasks.



## Your Rights...

Everyone with a disability is covered by the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

These Acts were passed to make sure you are treated fairly and equally in your place of employment. The Equality Act 2010 includes (but is not limited to) protection in the following areas:

- ▶ application forms
- ▶ interview arrangements
- ▶ aptitude or proficiency tests
- ▶ job offers
- ▶ terms of employment, including pay
- ▶ promotion, transfer and training opportunities
- ▶ dismissal or redundancy
- ▶ discipline and grievances



# What are reasonable adjustments?

Your employers are required, by law, to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ in your place of employment so that you can continue to do your job in a reasonable and safe manner. You and your employer should discuss what is considered ‘reasonable’, which could include the following adjustments:

- ▶ Flexible or altered working hours, to help you attend hospital appointments or allow for increased travelling time.  
(Note: Another law was passed in June 2014 allowing everyone the right to request flexible working hours after 26 weeks of employment.)
- ▶ More regular breaks.
- ▶ Moving your desk to a more accessible area of the office.
- ▶ A car parking space by your nearest entrance to work.
- ▶ A workstation assessment – simple things like adjusting screen brightness on computers can help.
- ▶ The option to work from home.



# When should you tell your employer?

You do not have to tell your employer about your disability.

Your employer is only allowed to ask you about your condition or disability before offering you the job under very limited circumstances, for example if they need to:

- ▶ make 'reasonable adjustments' (for example, during the interview)
- ▶ make a decision about whether you are able to do something that is an essential part of the job.

Under the DDA, your employer cannot discriminate against you in their recruitment and selection processes. You also have the right to a clear discussion about your needs and any adjustments that might need to be made. If it makes it easier, you can ask your consultant or a regional care advisor to write a letter on your behalf.





## What support is available?

*Access to Work* is a government scheme that provides practical advice and support to people with a disability, whether working, self-employed or looking for employment.

- ▶ This scheme helps provide financial assistance towards equipment or support that you need to be able to carry out your job. It can also provide grants towards other employment-related costs such as travelling to work if you cannot access public transport.
- ▶ Note: You can only contact Access to Work six weeks before your start date for your job.
- ▶ You may be eligible for support from Access to Work if you are:
  - 16 or over
  - about to start a job or work trial
  - in a paid job or self-employed.



# Work Experience

Trailblazers offers work experience placements to young disabled people in our head office.

In addition, with generous funding from the City Bridge Trust, we are working with companies to provide external placements.



# Muscular Dystrophy UK

Fighting muscle-wasting conditions



## Thank you

Lauren West

[l.west@muscular dystrophyuk.org](mailto:l.west@muscular dystrophyuk.org)

02078034846

@MD\_Trailblazers