

DFID is a diverse organisation working to fight poverty in a diverse world.”

[Douglas Alexander, Secretary of State]

DFID's mission is to eliminate world poverty. The latest White Paper - *Eliminating world poverty: making governance work for the poor* - sets out what the UK Government will do to reduce world poverty. Over the next five years DFID will:

- promote better governance across the world
- manage climate change
- improve people's quality of life
- create an international development system that is fit for purpose

To meet these global challenges, we have to be a flexible, imaginative and diverse organisation *and* we need to be diverse in how we deliver our business. This means benefiting from the different and distinctive talents of each individual in DFID and addressing exclusion in all its aspects.

Graham Teskey, Disability Champion, says:

Unlike some people with disabilities my own disability was thrust upon me unexpectedly. Returning to work as a disabled person opened my eyes to the barriers that can be faced. I found great help and much moral support. I know that others have not been so fortunate. We must ensure that everyone has the help they need to deliver their potential.

Making sure we understand the importance of addressing disability issues in the way we behave, for the people we employ and for the way we deliver our services is the responsibility of everyone in DFID.

DISABILITY TWO TICKS SCHEME

DFID is committed to:

- interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a post
- ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss how disabled colleagues can be helped to develop
- make every effort to ensure employees stay in employment should they become disabled
- take action to ensure all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness
- review progress against these commitments annually and let employees know about progress.

What is a disability?

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 says that a disability is a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Examples include:

- cancer, HIV infection, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions
- hearing or sight impairments or a significant mobility difficulty
- mental health conditions or learning difficulties such as dyslexia

The exclusion experienced by disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments. It is due to discriminatory attitudes and barriers created by society.

Do people with disabilities receive special protection?

People with disabilities receive protection against discrimination at work from the DDA 1995. The DDA says that it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against you if you are disabled:

- in the terms of employment offered
- in the opportunities for promotion transfer training or receiving any other benefit
- by refusing to offer you, or deliberately not offering, any such opportunity
- by dismissing you, or subjecting you to any other negative treatment that is disability-related.

This Act has been significantly extended, including by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. It now gives disabled people rights in the areas of:

- employment
- education
- access to goods, facilities and services
- buying or renting land or property, including making it easier for disabled people to rent property and for tenants to make disability – related adaptations

The Act now requires public bodies to promote

equality of opportunity for disabled people. It also allows the government to set minimum standards so that disabled people can use public transport easily.

SIX STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR DIVERSITY

1. **Improving accountability for diversity outcomes.**
2. **Changing behaviour: more inclusive managers.**
3. **Creating an even more diverse workforce, particularly by encouraging recruitment and promotion on merit of individuals willing to declare their disabilities.**
4. **Developing a culture of greater openness on sensitive diversity issues.**
5. **Better monitoring and evaluation to show how diversity supports the work DFID does.**
6. **Applying supportive policies effectively, such as flexible working practices.**

What is a reasonable adjustment?

The DDA defines a reasonable adjustment as a reasonable step taken to prevent a disabled person suffering a substantial disadvantage compared with people who are not disabled.

Knowing and understanding that everyone is different is key to becoming confident about managing disabled colleagues.

Recognising difference and knowing when and how to change the way work can be done is called making a reasonable adjustments. A reasonable adjustment can be as simple as adjusting a job holder's success criteria in the objectives of the performance management form.

Do I have to register?

No, but to create an inclusive environment at DFID, we would encourage staff with a disability to declare it so we can take positive action to support individuals. Monitoring has always been and will remain **confidential**.

In DFID, we monitor information from the YOURSELF facility on Insight. The question relating to disability on YOURSELF is:

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

The drop-down menu will provide the following options: yes, no, do not wish to answer, don't know?

There is further guidance on the YOURSELF homepage.

Some examples of what DFID is doing...

- we published our Disability Equality Scheme (DES) in December 2006. The scheme and detailed action plan outline how DFID will meet its obligations under the Disability Equality Duty. A summary of the scheme was also published
- we strengthened our employee disability network, with the help of a consultant, so that it can help staff deal more effectively with disability issues. The network has 27 members and £2,500 for seminars and other activities
- we published a line managers guide on working with disabled colleagues together with a disability communications guide to help raise awareness and provide support to managers
- new guidance on disability for DFID country offices was launched in November 2007 by the Equity and Rights team. We will continue to work closely with them.

DFID has made significant progress in promoting disability equality in the past year. We have been praised for our Disability Equality Scheme and received external recognition. DFID was one of only four departments to be commended by the Disability Rights Commission for our scheme.

However, we need to do more so staff are comfortable about declaring their disability. As a result of improved communication and monitoring, the self-declaration rates on disability have increased by 10%. We will continue to work on this. We will also closely monitor our commitments against the DES Action Plan and report progress in the Annual Diversity Report.

For further information please email The Diversity Team at: diversity@dfid.gov.uk

Useful websites:

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC):
www.equalityhumanrights.com

Office of Disability Issues:
www.officefordisability.gov.uk

Employers Forum on Disability
www.efd.org.uk