

Personally it could help you to negotiate for reasonable adjustments in the workplace and give you legal protection if you feel you have been treated unfairly at work because you are disabled.

Generally disclosing will ensure that the University's monitoring data is a more genuine reflection of the numbers of staff who are disabled. The University will be better placed to make good decisions in its planning if the data it's using in that decision making is accurate.

What to do next

If you would like your views and opinions to be taken into account then please complete the attached questionnaire.

If you are disabled but have not told the University then you can let us know, even if you don't want or need any adjustments to be made in the workplace. You can inform your link HR manager asking that the information be kept confidential and used for monitoring only.

If you'd like to find out more before making a decision on whether or not to declare a disability, or you would like to know more about the sort of support available and adjustments that could be made you can talk in confidence to the University's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Manager (Michelle Holliday - 01865 (48)5929, mholliday@brookes.ac.uk) or your School or Directorates Equal Opportunities and Diversity Co-ordinator. Visit the website www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/eod/eodcs.html to find out who it is if you don't know.

If you are disabled and would like to find out more about your rights visit www.drc-gb.org/knowyourrights/index.asp. For further information on the new legislation visit www.brookes.ac.uk/services/hr/eod/disability/index.html

Disability Equality

a chance to
have your say...

OXFORD
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Directorate of Human Resources

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New legislation on disability has come into force. Its aim is to ensure that universities and other public sector bodies adopt an approach to disability that focuses on celebrating diversity and actively promotes equality of opportunity for disabled people.

Oxford Brookes has to produce, publish and implement a Disability Equality Scheme. The Scheme will focus the University's attention on areas of our activity of most relevance to disabled staff and students and on areas where the potential impact on disabled staff and students is most significant. It will also set out a plan of action for the University that will cover the next three years.

It's vital that in drawing up the scheme we involve and engage with staff and students. The attached questionnaire is just one of a range of consultation exercises that will be taking place over the coming months.

Please take the time to complete the questionnaire, it should take no more than 10 minutes. We're interested in the opinions of all staff – whether or not they are disabled - but we would especially like to receive feedback from disabled staff. If you require this leaflet or the questionnaire in an alternative format please contact Michelle Holliday on 48(5929) or mholliday@brookes.ac.uk

In order to ensure that the responses we get are as honest as possible the questionnaire is anonymous. If you would like to take a more active role in the drawing up of the Disability Equality Scheme contact Michelle Holliday.

What is meant by disability?

A disabled person is defined in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as someone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

This definition includes people with cancer, diabetes, HIV, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions and people who have a hearing or sight impairment (except where the person's sight can be corrected by glasses or contact lenses) or a significant mobility difficulty. It also includes people with hidden disabilities such as diabetes, epilepsy, and dyslexia and people who have mental health conditions or learning difficulties.

While they are officially considered to be 'disabled', people don't always choose to use that term about themselves – and very many people with rights under the DDA don't.

It's estimated that today about one in five people of working age are 'disabled' and it's important that people who have rights are aware of them. However a recent survey showed that 52 per cent of people who qualified as 'disabled' under the DDA and had rights not to be treated unfairly because of their disability or health condition did not consider themselves disabled.

Declaring a disability

It is generally acknowledged that there is a significant underreporting of disability in the workplace. Even when people are aware of their rights declaring a disability can sometimes be difficult. You might worry about getting or keeping a job, you may not want to ask for help because you feel you can manage or because you don't want a fuss or you could be worried that colleagues will treat you differently.

All these concerns are understandable. However if you are 'disabled' under the terms of the DDA there are good reasons to let the University know.