

# An easy to read guide to the Disability Discrimination Act



## Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act is a law to help disabled people. It says disabled people must be treated fairly. The law also says that disabled people must not be discriminated against.



## Discrimination:

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.



## Disability Discrimination:

Disability discrimination is treating someone worse than other people because of their disability

## Chapter 1: What does the law say?



The law says that disabled people should be treated fairly at work.



The law also says that disabled people should be treated fairly when they go to school or college or university.

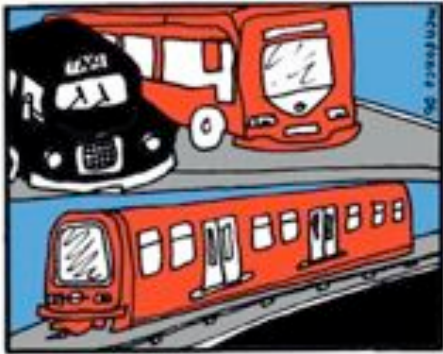
The law thinks that public places should make it easier for disabled people to use them. They have to treat disabled people fairly. Here are some of the places that must do what the law says:



- \* Shops
- \* Banks
- \* Restaurants
- \* Pubs
- \* Sports centres



\* Hospitals, doctors and dentists



\* Buses and Trains



\* Estate agents and housing associations



A new law also says that disabled people should be treated especially well by public organisations like the council or social services or hospitals.

This law says in the future these public organisations must think hard about the way they treat disabled people and make a big effort to try to make their lives better.

## Chapter 2:

### Do I have rights under the law?



The Disability Discrimination Act gives rights to disabled people. You only have rights under this law if you have a disability.

The law says that you are disabled if

- \* It is very hard for you to do normal every day things because of your disability; and
- \* You have found these things hard for a long time, at least one year.

There are lots of disabled people in this country and they have lots of different disabilities. Disabled people are not the same we are all different. It is very important to remember that not everyone has a disability you can see. Sometimes we can't tell if someone has a disability just by looking at them.



- \* Some disabled people find it difficult to walk or to lift things.



- \* Some disabled people find it difficult to see or hear.



\* Some disabled people have a health condition like arthritis which makes their joints and bones hurt. This kind of disability may slowly get worse over time. The law does not want people to have to wait a long time to be protected from disability discrimination. If you have a disability that will get worse overtime the law will protect you as soon as your disability starts to makes things difficult to do.



\* Some disabled people have disabilities like epilepsy or asthma. These kinds of disabilities may mean the person is unwell for short periods but fine at other times. The law says if you have a disability that has a big effect on you some of the time, you do not need to prove it has this effect all of the time. You just need to show it will come back again.



\* Some disabled people find it difficult to learn or understand things. Others may find it difficult to remember things. This might be because they have a learning disability or a mental health problem.



\* Some disabled people have cancer, HIV or MS. If you have one of these disabilities then the law will protect you.



\* Some disabled people take medicine or go to the doctors. This makes them feel better. The law says that just because your medicine or treatment makes you feel better does not mean you don't have a disability. This is because if someone took your medicine away you would still find normal everyday things hard to do.



\* Some people used to have a disability in the past but have now completely recovered. The law can still help you even if you are no longer disabled. This means other people can't treat you unfairly just because they know you had a disability or health problems in the past.



Not everyone has a disability. For instance, just because someone has broken their leg does not mean they have a disability. Even if their leg really hurts for a short while it will get better. Then the person will not find it hard to walk again. A disability is something that must last a long time.

## Chapter 3: My rights at work

The law says there are rules about how your **employer** treats you at work.



### **Employers**

Employers are the people or businesses that give us jobs. Employers have people working for them.



All employers have to do what the law says no matter how big or how small they are. The only people who are not protected by the law when doing their jobs are soldiers in the army, sailors in the Navy and airmen and airwomen in the Royal Air Force

**You must not be discriminated against**



### **Discrimination:**

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.



### **Disability Discrimination:**

Disability discrimination is treating someone worse than other people because of their disability

The law says employers must not discriminate against you if you work for them or if you are looking for a job and apply to work for them. Also employers must not treat you unfairly if you do **work experience** or **training** for them.

### **Work Experience:**

This is when you do a job for a short time to see what it is like and to learn new skills. Some people do work experience when they are at school or college, other people do work experience when they are looking for a job.

### **Training**

This is where someone helps you to learn things and teaches you how to do things. At work you might be given training to learn how to do your job. You might also get training when you are looking for work



The law says employers must not treat you worse than other people just because you have a disability.



The law also says that employers must not let anyone bully you or call you names because you have a disability.

**This is discrimination and is against the law.**



The law says sometimes disabled people have problems because of their disability. Also some disabled people have missed out on things other people take for granted.

For example:



Some disabled people find it harder to read things and others cannot drive a car.



Other disabled people are sometimes sick or get tired easily at work.

The law says that employers should think about what you find hard and why you find these things difficult. If the reason you find things harder than other people is because of your disability employers must not treat you worse than other people unless they have a very good reason.

One example of a very good reason might be if your disability meant that you could not do big parts of your job. However, before your employer thinks about treating you worse than other people the law says they must think about making changes to make things easier.

## **Making changes to make things easier**

The law says that employers must make changes to help you do your job. The law calls these changes "**reasonable adjustments**"

### **Reasonable Adjustment**

If you find something difficult at work because of your disability your employer must try to change things to make it easier for you. This is the law.

If you are disabled, you can ask for changes at work if you think they would help you to do your job.



For example if you use a wheelchair you could ask your employer to put a ramp in so you can get into the building easily.



If you are finding something hard to understand you could ask your employer to spend more time with you to explain things. Or ask if your **supporter** could come to work and help you while you learn.

### **Supporter**

A supporter is someone who helps you to make decisions or to understand things that you may find difficult. The supporter can be a friend or a member of your family. Or they could be somebody who works for a supported employment agency or an advocacy group



If you find things hard to read you could ask if someone could explain them to you or if your employer could change the information so it is easy to read with simple words and pictures



If you get tired easily you could ask if you could take a break during the day or work flexible hours.

The law says that employers must treat disabled people fairly. Sometimes to treat someone fairly you have to do things differently. The law wants employers to make changes and let disabled people do things differently so it is not hard for disabled people to do their job.



Sometimes it might be too difficult or expensive for an employer to make changes to help disabled people. Then the law says they might not have to. But employers must always try their best to find a way to help you.



The government also wants to make it easier for disabled people to get good jobs. If you are looking for a job your local Jobcentre Plus can help you. They can also help if you need changes to be made at work because of your disability. For example if you need a special computer to do your job **Access to Work** could pay for this.

### **Access to Work**

Access to Work is a scheme run by the government. They give money to disabled people to help them to buy equipment or make changes at work so they can do their job. They also help to pay for things disabled people need at interview for example a sign language interpreter for someone who is Deaf and communicates by British Sign Language.

## Chapter 4: My rights at other places



The law says that disabled people should be able to go to places, buy things, have fun at places and get good help and information just like anyone else.

If a place gives **services** to customers it may have to do what the law says.



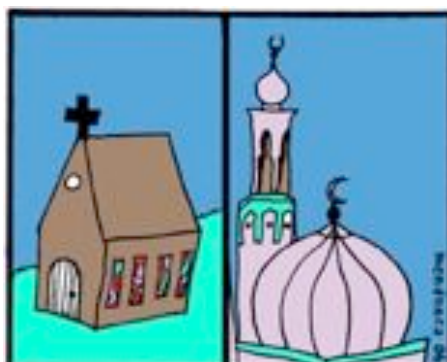
### Services

Organisations that help us by selling or giving us things we want or need are offering services.



Disabled people have rights at places that offer services like:

- \* shops and banks
- \* cafes and pubs
- \* sports centres and cinemas
- \* libraries and councils
- \* hospitals, doctors and dentists
- \* churches and mosques



The law says that these kinds of places should not discriminate against disabled people.

All of these places have to do what the law says no matter how big or how small they are.

## You must not be discriminated against



### **Discrimination:**

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.



### **Disability Discrimination:**

Disability discrimination is treating someone worse than other people because of their disability





Places should not tell you are not allowed to use their services just because you have a disability. This means it is against the law for a gym to say you can't join because you have a disability.



The law also says that places must not treat you worse or give you a worse deal than other people. If a shop says you can't try on a shirt before you buy it, but they let all the other customers try things on using the changing rooms this could be treating you worse than other people.

The law says places must treat you fairly just like other people. Places must not discriminate against you because you have a disability.



**Places must make changes to help disabled people.**

The law also says that places should changes things when it is very hard for disabled people to use their services. Making changes makes it easier for disabled people.

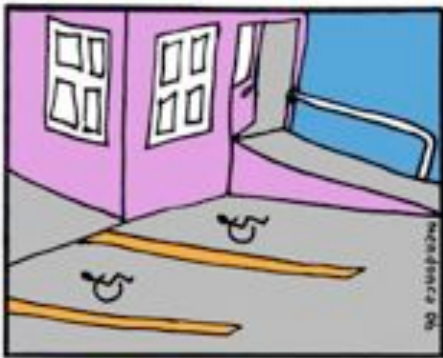


Places might have to:

- \* give you extra help or special equipment to use their services



- \* change the way they do things so that you can use their services for example letting you ring up to talk about what you want if you find writing difficult



- \* change their building so that disabled people can go inside and use the services



Sometimes it is very hard for a place to make all the changes that disabled people would like. It might cost a lot of money or might be very difficult. This can be hard for places especially when they are small and do not have a lot of money.

The law says that places do not always have to make all the changes we would like, but they must do their best to welcome disabled people.

## What might be changed?

People in charge of buildings may have to make changes to:

- \* the signs they use inside and outside their buildings
- \* the way into and the way out of their buildings
- \* steps and stairs and lifts
- \* telephones
- \* toilets and places to wash
- \* the information and help they give people
- \* the way they train their staff so they give good help to disabled people



## Are there times when it is ok to treat me differently?

Sometimes places might have to treat you differently for a very good reason. This will not be against the law.



This might be because they are worried that it will be dangerous to let you do something and someone might get hurt



It might be because you are making a big decision and they want to make sure you really understand what you are doing.



It might be because to do things differently for you would mean no one else could use the service.



Or it might be because you want them to do something extra special for you. This might mean they can ask you to pay more.

## Chapter 5: My rights from public organisations

The law says that **public organisations** like councils, hospitals and the police offer very important services to people. Because these services are so important the law wants public organisations to think hard about how they treat disabled people and try to make their lives better.



### **Public organisations**

The Government are in charge of lots of important services. To give us all the services we need, the government needs help. Public organisations and the people who work for them help the Government, by giving us things we need for free like schools, the police, hospitals and our Benefits. The government thinks public organisations are very important and keeps a close eye on how they are run.

The law wants big public organisations to plan how to make things better for disabled people. This means planning how to makes things better for disabled people who work for them or would like to work for them. It also means making things better for disabled people who use their services.



The law says public organisations must work with disabled people when they make their plans. The law says public organisations must ask disabled people what they want. They must also ask disabled people what they think of their ideas to make things better.



The law wants public organisations to write down what they are going to do to make things better for disabled people. What they write down will be called a disability action plan.

Public organisations will have to do this by December 2006.

## Chapter 6: My rights to use transport

The law says that disabled people should be able to go to places just like other people.



### Transport

Transport gives us ways of getting to other places. It lets us go wherever we want, like the bus that takes us to the shops or the aeroplane that takes us on holiday.

There are lots of different kinds of **transport**:

Buses

Coaches

Tubes and Trains

Trams

Ferries

Aeroplanes

Taxis and minicabs

People who give us with transport have to do what the law says.

The law says that people and places that sell us tickets or let us wait for our bus, or boat or train have to treat disabled people fairly and not discriminate against them.



**You must not be discriminated against**



**Discrimination:**

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.



**Disability Discrimination:**

Disability discrimination is treating someone worse than other people because of their disability

**For example:**



If you go to the railway station to buy a train ticket the ticket officer should not bully you or be rude to you because you have a disability.

The law also says that people who give us transport must not treat you worse or give you a worse deal than other people. This means if you need help to buy your ticket the ticket officer should not tell you to come back later because they are too busy.

## **People and places that help us use transport must make changes to help disabled people**

The law says that sometimes it is very hard for disabled people to use transport. This might be because buildings like train stations and ferry ports are not very easy to get into or to use. Sometimes it might be because it is hard for disabled people to use telephone services or websites. Also sometimes it is because information and timetables are hard to read. The law says people and places that help us use transport must:



\* give extra help or special equipment to use their services. For example changing their timetables so they are easier to read or making sure they have a textphone for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.



\* change the way they do things so that you can use their services. For example training their staff to help you if you find a ticket machine hard to use



- \* change their buildings like stations and airports so that disabled people can go inside and use the services

## What might be changed?

People in charge of transport may have to make changes to:

- \* the signs they use inside and outside their railway stations, bus stops and airports
- \* the ways that you buy tickets like station ticket offices, telephones and websites
- \* the information and help they give people like timetables or maps
- \* the buildings that people use like their railway stations, bus stops and airports



## My rights on board transport

A new law says that disabled people must not be discriminated against when they are on-board certain types of transport. Transport like buses, coaches, taxis and trains that travel along the roads or the railways all have to do what the law says. They must do this from June 2006.

This means disabled people must be treated fairly when they get onto a bus or a train.



People who offer transport should not tell you that you can't use their services just because you have a disability. This means it is against the law for a bus driver to say you can't come on the bus because you have a disability. However, he might still say you can't come on because his bus is not built for you to use it.



The law also says that people who give us transport must not treat you worse or give you a worse deal than other people. This means that you should not have to pay more to use a taxi just because you have a disability.

### **Not all kinds of transport have to do what the law says.**

Transport that goes along the ground on the roads or railways must do what the law says.

But aeroplanes that fly in the air and boats that travel in the water do not have to do what the law says.

### **Transport must make changes to help disabled people.**

The law also says that transport should change things when it is very hard for disabled people to get on board transport. Making changes makes it easier for disabled people.

The law also says that people who give us transport should:



\* give you extra help or special equipment. For example a lift so people who use wheelchairs can get onto a bus, or someone to guide you if you find it hard to see.



\* change the way they do things so that you can use their services, like training their staff to help you.



\* build new vehicles like the buses and trains, to make them easier for disabled people to use.



Sometimes it is very hard for the people who give us transport to make all the changes that disabled people would like. It might cost a lot of money or might be very difficult. This can be hard for places especially when they do not have a lot of money.

The law says that places do not always have to make all the changes we would like, but they must do their best to welcome disabled people.

# Chapter 7: My rights at college and university

The law says disabled people should be able to go to college or university just like other people. The law wants disabled people to have the same chances to learn new things and to get qualifications as anyone else.



The law says that colleges and universities have to treat disabled people fairly.

**You must not be discriminated against.**



**Discrimination:**

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.



**Disability Discrimination:**

Disability discrimination is treating someone worse than other people because of their disability

Everyone who works for a college or university has to do what the law says like the teachers, the people who work in the school library and the people who work in the student canteen.

## Colleges and universities must make changes to help disabled people.

The law also says that places must:



- \* give you extra help or special equipment so that you can learn and take part in class



- \* change the way they do things like the way they teach you or test you.



- \* change their buildings like the class room, the library or the canteen so you can use them

## What might be changed?

People in charge of colleges or universities may have to make changes to:

- \* the way that they teach
- \* the information and help they give you like books and notes
- \* exams, tests and homework
- \* career advice - the help they give you so you can get a good job that you like in the future
- \* trips and holidays with your class
- \* clubs and groups like ones that offer sport or drama activities
- \* the buildings where you learn, or live or do things for fun.



Sometimes it is very hard for colleges to make all the changes that we would like. It might cost a lot of money or might be very difficult. This can be hard for places especially when they do not have a lot of money.

The law says that colleges and universities do not always have to make all the changes we would like, but they must do their best to welcome disabled people.

## Chapter 8: My rights when I am looking for somewhere to live

The law says that disabled people should be able to look for somewhere to live just like other people.

The law says that disabled people should be treated fairly by the places that help us find somewhere to live. There are lots of different people who help us to find a home like estate agents, people who work for the local council and people who work for housing associations. All of these people need to do what the law says.



The law says that people who sell us or rent us our homes should treat disabled people fairly.  
**You must not be discriminated against.**



### **Discrimination:**

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.



## Disability Discrimination:

Disability discrimination is treating someone worse than other people because of their disability

For example:



They should not tell you, that they don't want to help you find a new home just because you have a disability.

The law also says that disabled people should be treated fairly by their **landlords**.

### Landlords

Landlords are people who own houses where other people live. Some houses are owned by a person, others are owned by the council, or a housing association or a charity.

You might pay rent to a landlord so you can live in your house.

The law says that landlords must not treat you worse or give you a worse deal than other people. This means a landlord must not charge you more rent than they would charge anyone else.



## Places must make changes to help disabled people find somewhere to live.

The law also says that landlords should:



\* change the way they do things to make it easier for disabled people.



\* give extra help or equipment to make it easier for disabled people to use their buildings



Sometimes it is very hard for landlords to make all the changes that disabled people would like. It might cost a lot of money or might be very difficult. This can be hard for places especially when they are small and do not have a lot of money.

The law says that places do not always have to make all the changes we would like, but they must do their best to welcome disabled people.

The law says that places do not have to change their buildings to make it easier for disabled people to live there.



Disabled people might want to make some changes to their home and to pay for these themselves. If you want to do this you must ask your landlord for permission.



If the reason you want to make these changes is because of your disability, your landlord must not say "no" unless they have a good reason.

## Chapter 9: What do I do if I think I have been treated unfairly



The **Disability Discrimination Act** says disabled people must not be discriminated against.



### **Discrimination:**

This means treating someone worse than other people for some reason.



### **Disability Discrimination:**

Disability discrimination is treating someone worse than other people because of their disability

If you think someone has treated you unfairly or discriminated against you because of your disability you can:



\* Talk to the person in charge like the manager



\* Ask someone for help like your friend or supporter



\* Ask the Disability Rights Commission for help

### **Disability Rights Commission**

The Disability Rights Commission wants all disabled people to be treated fairly. They can help you to understand your rights and tell you what to do if you have been treated unfairly

Tel: 08457 622 633

Text: 08457 622 644

Web: [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)



\* Go to court. At court a judge will decide whether anyone has broken the law. People have to do what the court says.



## Who else can provide advice?

### **DRC Helpline**

Telephone 08457 622 633

Textphone 08457 622 644

If you'd like to write to the helpline you can send a letter to this address:

DRC Helpline  
FREEPOST  
MID 02164  
Stratford upon Avon  
CV37 9BR

Or you can write them an email by going to the DRC website: [www.drc-gb.org/helpline](http://www.drc-gb.org/helpline). On this web page, you can make an appointment to talk to the helpline on a videophone.

### **Jobcentre Plus**

Look in your telephone directory for your nearest Jobcentre Plus. If you visit Jobcentre Plus you can talk to a Disability Employment Adviser.

### **The Learning Disability Helpline - run by Mencap (England only)**

Telephone: 0808 808 1111

Textphone: 0808 808 8181

Email: [help@mencap.org.uk](mailto:help@mencap.org.uk)

Fax: 020 7608 3254

You can contact the helpline 24 hours a day. If an adviser isn't there to take your call, you can leave a message and they will get back to you.

If you'd like to write to the helpline you can send a letter to this address:

Learning Disability Helpline  
123 Golden Lane  
London  
EC1Y 0RT

### **People First**

Central England People First Limited  
PO Box 5200  
Northampton  
NN1 1ZB  
Telephone: 01604 721 666  
Email: [northants@peoplefirst.or.guk](mailto:northants@peoplefirst.or.guk)  
Website: [www.peoplefirst.org.uk](http://www.peoplefirst.org.uk)

### **Enable Scotland**

6th Floor,  
7 Buchanan Street,  
Glasgow  
G1 3HL  
Telephone: 0141 226 4541  
Fax: 0141 204 4398  
Email: [enable@enable.org.uk](mailto:enable@enable.org.uk)  
Website [www.enable.org.uk](http://www.enable.org.uk)

### **Advocacy Resource Exchange**

162 Lee Valley Techno Park  
Ashley Road  
London N17 9LN  
Tel: 020 8880 4545  
Fax: 020 888 04113  
Email: [arx@advocacyresource.net](mailto:arx@advocacyresource.net)  
Website: [www.advocacyresource.net](http://www.advocacyresource.net)

### **Valuing People**

Email: [valuing.people.info@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:valuing.people.info@dh.gsi.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.valuingpeople.gov.uk](http://www.valuingpeople.gov.uk)

## **DIAL**

(Disability Information Advice Line)

DIAL UK is a national organisation which has a network of approximately 130 local Disability information and Advice Line services run by and for disabled people.

The website gives details of your nearest DIAL service. Or call the Head Office number and you will be given the details of your nearest centre.

St Catherine's

Tickhill Rd

Doncaster

South Yorkshire

DN4 8QN

Head Office telephone number (covers England, Wales and Scotland): 01302 310 123

Textphone (please use voice announcer):  
01302 310 123

Website: [www.dialuk.info](http://www.dialuk.info)

## **NACAB (National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux)**

You can find your local Citizens Advice Bureau in the phone book. Alternatively call 020 7833 2181 for your nearest centre or log on to the website [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)



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