

EFD presses MPs to keep new disability legislation simple

EFD has given evidence to an influential group of MPs on what employers want to see in the forthcoming Equality Bill.

The bill will bring together nine pieces of legislation and around 100 other laws, covering disability and other forms of diversity. The government is still drafting the bill, which will replace the Disability Discrimination Act.

EFD gave evidence to the work and pensions select committee, which is holding an enquiry into what the bill should contain.

“We outlined areas of concern and ideas for how legislation can make it easier for employers to recruit disabled employees and serve disabled customers,” said Nick Bason, EFD’s public affairs manager.

EFD emphasised the need to publicise the Access to Work scheme and to make sure it is more consistently delivered to employers.

Remove IT barriers

The committee also wanted more evidence on how

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inaccessible technology is a barrier and how the bill might address this.

EFD gave evidence alongside the CBI and Federation of Small Businesses, with whom it has worked closely to maximise the impact of employer views on the bill. EFD’s response was based on wide consultation with members in 2007.

Once the select committee has made its recommendations on what the bill should include, the government is required to respond to that report. Publication of the Equality Bill is expected in late spring.

For a full transcript of the evidence session, email Nick Bason at nick.bason@efd.org.uk

Reasons to be confident

As we go to press, the CBI is warning that by the end of the year 2.9 million people will be out of work and the economy will shrink by 3.3 per cent. Recession is predicted to last until early 2010. So let’s remind ourselves why disability confidence is good for business.

Britannia has reported cost savings linked to customer awareness training (p13) and the Commission for Social Care Inspection says assistive technology is improving efficiency (p17). A structured approach to recruiting disabled people has helped Stockport council to ‘add value’ to services (p18) and many EFD members now harness disabled employee networks (p14) to improve their business operations. These may be turbulent times, but these stories demonstrate tangible benefits of developing disability confidence.

Liza Ramrayka, Editor



Evidence to MPs will help to shape bill

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News



New map will help range of passengers

New Tube maps help travellers avoid problems

London Underground has launched two new maps to make life easier for Tube passengers, including disabled and older travellers.

The Step-free Tube Guide gives details of step-free stations and shows where to change lines without encountering steps or escalators.

In the new guide the previous wheelchair symbols have been replaced by:

- green, amber or red symbols on step-free access stations to show the height of the step between platform and train, with a ruler to help people visualise the height
- information about the width of the gap between platform and train
- different symbols to show stations which are step-free when changing between lines, but where it is not possible to get in or out of the station without using stairs or an escalator.

The other new map shows male, female and wheelchair-accessible toilets, location inside or outside ticket gates and baby changing facilities.

Wayne Trevor, London Underground's accessibility and inclusion manager, said: "This information is vital for many mobility impaired people. It will also be useful for many older people, people with temporary injuries, and those travelling with buggies or lots of luggage."

London Underground worked with disabled people to ensure the new guides would meet their needs. Fifty-four Tube stations are step-free, and 25 per cent of stations will be step-free by 2010.

London Underground is among EFD members taking part in the disabled access register, www.directenquiries.com, which allows people to search for accessible transport and services.

BT and Remploy partnership deal offers specialist support

BT has signed a partnership with Remploy to offer support to employees with a disability or health condition.

The contract, which covers BT's entire UK workforce of over 90,000 people, provides access to Enable, a specialist service which offers expert advice and support on disability or health-related employment issues.

Line managers can refer employees who are experiencing problems and – in a unique move – individuals can also self-refer to Enable.

Employees who access the service will work with a vocational rehabilitation consultant who will identify any workplace adjustments required, help to implement them and provide impartial advice on disability issues.

Adjustments can include changes to working hours, training or job coaching, specialist equipment such as adjustable chairs and desks, alterations to premises or, in a few cases, assisting an employee in moving to an alternative internal role.

BT director of people and policy Caroline Waters said: "I am delighted to welcome Remploy as our Enable partner. BT's vision on disability and inclusion is to anticipate and accommodate the needs of all our people. Enable allows us to do this as well as retain

skilled and talented employees. We believe this gives us the commercial edge in a highly competitive market."

Remploy's employment services director, Beth Carruthers, said the service built on existing partnership work with BT,

which has recruited or retained over 300 disabled employees in the past five years.

"Through Enable, we can help even more people with health conditions or disabilities to remain in work and to develop their careers," she said.



Carruthers: BT partnership will help disabled people stay in work

Survey reveals misery at work

People with a disability or a long-term health condition face higher levels of negative treatment at work, according to research by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The survey covered nearly 4,000 workers and found low expectations, bullying and even physical violence.

Persistent unfair criticism of their work was reported by 22.5 per cent of people with a

disability or long-term illness, compared to 13.4 per cent of people without a disability or long-term illness; 13.4 per cent said they had been humiliated or ridiculed in connection with their work compared to 8.7 per cent for people without a disability or long-term illness; and 11.6 per cent said they had experienced actual physical violence at work compared to 5.5 per cent of people without a disability or long-term illness.

The report is available at www.equalityhumanrights.com

Lloyds TSB wins Radar award

Lloyds TSB's approach of integrating disability equality right across customer service and employment helped it scoop the business category in the recent Radar awards.

Equality and Human Rights Commission chair Trevor Philips presented the award to Lloyds TSB's Tim Taylor, manager – group equality and diversity, and Rebecca Parr, co-chair of Lloyds TSB's Access network. Radar said the group “have gone way beyond welfare to work – and enabled disabled people to fully develop their careers”. Achievements include making reasonable adjustments for 3,500 staff and personal development courses that have significantly increased disabled



Trevor Philips (centre) presenting the Radar best business award to Tim Taylor and Rebecca Parr

people's participation in management grades.

Ranked first in EFD's Disability Standard 2007, Lloyds TSB is

also making customer services such as call centres, websites, bank statements more accessible and requires its contractors to meet accessibility standards.

Another EFD member, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service was highly commended in the public sector category. The judges praised the service for its “commitment and innovative thinking on reducing the risk of fire for people with every type of impairment or health condition”.

Sue Maynard Campbell, the leading disability campaigner and long-standing EFD Associate who died last year, was posthumously awarded Radar's lifetime achievement award.

Further information about the Radar awards from www.radar.org.uk or call 020 7250 3222

From No 10 to Channel 4

Channel 4 has appointed broadcaster and former MP Oona King as head of diversity.

King, who currently advises the prime minister on equalities and diversity, will have a brief to champion diversity across all Channel 4's activities. She will work with production companies and other suppliers to ensure that standards and policies are consistent.

Channel 4 is “an amazing platform” for diverse voices, said King, but more needed to

be done to connect and reflect social minorities within mainstream broadcasting.

Channel 4's editorial manager, disability, Alison Walsh, will report to King, who will report to chief executive Andy Duncan.

The broadcaster has produced guides to improving diversity on and off screen, and runs an annual production training scheme for disabled people.

Channel 4 is a member of EFD's Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN), which was set up to make it easier to recruit and retain disabled people and to promote and share best practice.

Visit www.channel4.com/about4/diversity for more information on Channel 4 and diversity. For more on BCIDN, visit www.efd.org.uk

PwC network will help to raise awareness

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) has launched a disability network to raise awareness about living and working with disability.

Launching the network, UK chairman and senior partner Ian Powell said supporting people with disabilities was not about disability but “about talent”. Giles Long, three times Paralympic gold medal winner (and a speaker at EFD’s annual conference in June), also spoke.

Before establishing the network, PwC set up a small focus group to look at lessons from its other established people networks and from other employers with disability networks. Employees were then invited to group meetings held around the country to discuss the possibility of establishing a network. Over 160 staff had an



Powell: disability network is “about talent”

opportunity to give their views on how a network might help PwC become more disability-confident.

PwC is among the organisations featured in a new guide on disabled employee networks (see page 14).

Return to work after serious illness needs careful handling

Making reasonable adjustments for employees returning to work after illness could help to tackle depression, according to a Mental Health Foundation study.

‘Returning to work, the role of depression’ found that almost half (45 per cent) of those with a condition such as cancer, heart disease or back pain experienced mild to moderate

depression. But they were more worried about telling their employer about their mental health issues than about their physical condition.

While most line managers were initially supportive, the study found they were not aware of the long-term effects of a serious illness or condition on an employee’s mental health and ability to work.

The report is available at www.mentalhealth.org.uk/return-to-work

President Obama has pledged to implement regulations requiring the US government and its contractors to employ people with disabilities. Obama’s administration will also provide employers with “resources to accommodate employees with disabilities”, encourage them to use existing tax benefits to hire more disabled people and support small businesses owned by people with disabilities.

● www.whitehouse.gov/agenda/disabilities/

The UK government has announced the first ever National Dementia Strategy, which is designed to transform the quality of dementia care. Backed by £150 million over the first two years, the strategy will increase awareness of dementia, ensure early diagnosis and intervention and improve the quality of care.

● www.dh.gov.uk

Dr Michael R. Taylor has been appointed chair of accessible technology group AbilityNet. Dr Taylor, who succeeds David Livermore, has led the Information Management Directorate within the Cabinet Office since 2001.

● www.abilitynet.org.uk

Government plans to tackle long-term unemployment are welcome but can only succeed if accessible to disabled people, says EFD. Under the plans, employers could be given ‘golden hellos’ of up to £2,500 for every long-term unemployed person they train. EFD said welfare reforms must not overlook a key factor of their likely success: removing barriers to disabled people getting the right skills.

At a glance: internet usage

- Around 21.9 per cent of the world's population uses the internet*
- North America has the highest percentage of users per population (73.6 per cent); Africa has the lowest (5.3 per cent)*
- Britons spent a total of almost 34 billion minutes on websites and Internet-related applications on average each month**
- Consumer generated media, search and entertainment sites in the UK are experiencing the biggest increases in visitor time**
- UK visitors to online newspaper and magazine sites grew by 23 per cent in 2008**
- 78 per cent of US internet users research products before buying online***
- 68 per cent of US internet users purchase online***

Sources: *www.internetworldstats.com; **www.nielsen-online.com; ***pewinternet.org

EFD bespoke training service gets a boost

EFD is improving its tailored training for members with the appointment of a dedicated service coordinator.

Phoebe White, senior training and events coordinator, will help members to use this bespoke service to improve their disability confidence. Options range from training in basic disability equality and making reasonable adjustments to encouraging disclosure in the workplace.

White explained: "We will conduct a full training needs analysis and design a course in conjunction with your organisation to meet your needs, drawing on the expertise and training talent available to us through our staff and pool of disabled associates.

"We can also repeat any open training event – such as the DDA masterclass – tailoring scenarios, group work and case studies to the needs and level of your audience," she said. "If you have a number of staff you would like to benefit from our training, this can prove the most cost-efficient way to meet the needs of your staff and ultimately your diverse customers."

Further information from Phoebe White on 020 7403 3020 or email phoebe.white@efd.org.uk

Barclays Wealth disability champion is new trustee

Richard Thomas, a managing director and head of compliance for Barclays Wealth, has joined EFD's board of trustees.

Thomas is responsible for a global team that ensures Barclays Wealth's business is conducted ethically and meets regulations. He is also the disability champion for

Barclays Wealth and sponsored a confidential helpline that was launched to develop practical solutions to challenges involving disability.

EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker said: "We are delighted to welcome Richard to our board. His business expertise and disability experience will be a great boost to our mission to make it easier for employers to recruit and retain disabled employees and to serve disabled customers."

Richard Thomas said: "EFD has a distinguished history of approaching the challenges surrounding disability in a practical and pragmatic way. Barclays has long been a supporter and I am very happy to be able to work more closely with them."

Telephone tutorials

EFD's telephone tutorials, which enable participants to access valuable training from their desk, are now free to Gold members. Topics include managing sickness absence, reasonable adjustments and promoting disability confidence.

www.efd.org.uk/events

New disability minister to speak at EFD's annual conference

Disability minister Jonathan Shaw will address business leaders and diversity practitioners at EFD's 2009 annual conference on 23 June.

'Disabled people: valued employees, customers and stakeholders in a changing world' will be hosted by Clifford Chance at its Canary Wharf offices in London. EFD is delighted to be welcoming the minister, who was appointed in October 2008.

EFD's events team has put together an outstanding group of speakers for its flagship event, chaired this year by Stephen Duckworth, EFD Associate and director of Disability Matters (www.disabilitymatters.com). Their insight will help delegates become and remain disability confident in a turbulent economic climate.

Keynote speaker Paul Flatters, partner at social and consumer trends experts Trajectory (www.trajectorypartnership.com), will help delegates to understand the changing world and its impact on customers, both now and in the future. He will also examine demographic, social, legislative and policy trends in order to gauge the future needs of disabled people.

Ben Page, chairman of social research group Ipsos MORI (www.ipsos-mori.com), will reflect on the public perception of disabled people and disability against the views



Conference speakers (l-r) Jonathan Shaw, Giles Long and Ben Page

and aspirations of disabled people themselves.

Three-time Paralympic gold medallist Giles Long (www.gileslong.com) will draw on his experience of beating cancer and becoming a world-class swimmer to inspire and motivate delegates to effect change in their organisation.

Other speakers include EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker and EFD Associate Rick Williams of Freney Williams (www.freneywilliams.com).

Delegates will also hear about the government's current welfare programme to get disabled people into work, and

hear the latest news about the Single Equality Bill and changes to the Disability Discrimination Act. Hands-on workshops will provide an opportunity for practical discussion and debate.

Joanna Wooten, head of membership at EFD, said: "The aim of the annual conference is to inspire you to think afresh about your disability strategy, as well as giving you hands-on information that can be easily implemented."

EFD members can attend for the special price of £170 per person (£255 last year; £270 for non-members).

For further information or to book a place, visit www.efd.org.uk/events, telephone 020 7403 3020 or email events@efd.org.uk

Accessibility health check for websites

E-check is EFD's new website accessibility health check for members. Launched in response to demand from EFD members and offered in partnership with EFD Associate Rick Williams of Freney Williams, E-check (usual cost £350) is a short, expert check that will indicate whether disabled people might experience difficulties in using a website.

Call Vanessa Hardy on 020 7403 3020 or email e-check@efd.org.uk

Design workshop will show how to combine accessibility and creativity

Ensuring your organisation's design and marketing is both creative and inclusive is the theme of EFD's 'Beyond big type 2009' workshop in March.

Organised in partnership with Wire Design, the one-day event will show how to produce accessible design while not compromising creativity.

Wire Design's director John Corcoran and senior designer Daniel Collins are among the speakers who will share their experience and expertise with participants. Simon Minty, EFD Associate and director of Minty & Friend, will chair the event and look at the business drivers



Inclusive design benefits all

for making communication and marketing accessible.

Severn Trent access manager Peter Green will give a perspective on how his organisation worked with designers to ensure what they

create remains accessible but also creative. Drawing on Mencap's rebranding, Lucie Brown, creative manager, will focus on how the charity worked with design agencies, consulted with its audience and ensured it created "something which is all about moving forward and being inclusive".

Robin Christopherson, head of accessibility services at AbilityNet, will demonstrate good and bad website practice and give guidance on how accessibility can be achieved.

For further details call the events team on 020 7403 3020 or visit www.efd.org.uk/events

Government report welcomed

EFD has welcomed government plans to raise the employment rate of people with a learning disability.

'Valuing people now: a three year strategy for people with learning disabilities' is the government's blueprint for improving health, housing, employment and care services for people with learning disabilities. The strategy follows a comprehensive consultation involving more than 10,000 people.



Three year strategy

EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker said work needed to be credible in the eyes of employers as well as disabled people: "The government, employers and disability groups need to work together to ensure this strategy helps employers realise the potential of people with learning disabilities."

See page 18 for more on learning disability, including EFD's newly updated 'Valued in public' guide. 'Valuing people now' is at www.dh.gov.uk/publications or telephone 0300 123 1002

Accessibility workshop

Latest developments around accessible technology will be discussed at a special EFD roundtable on 11 March.

The event will update members on the new British Standard on Accessibility (BS8878) and offer the opportunity to learn more about the work of EFD's Business Taskforce on Accessible Technology. EFD Associate Rick Williams will chair the event; EFD's legal director Bela Gor will provide a legal update.

For details, call the events team or visit www.efd.org.uk/events. See page 16 for more on accessible technology



Jones: employers need sensitive understanding of mental health

Welsh forum focuses on mental health issues

Members from across Wales were welcomed to EFD's Welsh forum event by Gareth Jones, CEO and registrar for companies for England and Wales, Companies House.

The mental health-focused event opened with a keynote address by Jenny Randerson, Assembly Member for Cardiff Central. The day was facilitated by Phil Friend, EFD Associate and director of Minty & Friend.

Eversheds' Simon Lambert provided a legal update and Ruth Coombs of Mind Cymru shared information about support and experience of working with both employees and employers.

Speakers from EFD member Rolls-Royce shared their successful 'case management approach' to managing mental ill health. Delegates were particularly inspired by Martha Wiseman's account of her experience of mental ill health

and her successful return to work at BT.

"Companies House was delighted to host an EFD event, especially on the subject of mental health," said Gareth Jones. "With the need to have a sensitive understanding of mental health issues becoming increasingly important, the event was timely and extremely useful."

- IT was the focus of EFD's recent Scottish forum event in Glasgow. Paul Friel, head of international product development, Barclays Wealth (Brokerage), said: "The event allowed our information technology team to share best practice with a range of IT and HR professionals." The next Scottish forum event is sponsored by HBOS and will take place at its Edinburgh offices on 19 May.

Further information about EFD's regional forums from www.efd.org.uk

EFD is delighted to welcome insurance, banking and asset management group Allianz as its latest gold member. EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker said the move showed the group's commitment to disability as a business priority. Gold members can participate in EFD's Disability Standard free of charge and can attend bi-annual exclusive networking events.

- **To discuss the benefits of gold membership, contact Ian Hastie on 020 7403 3020 or email ian.hastie@efd.org.uk**

EFD has launched 'Reasonable adjustments: Line manager guide'. Sponsored by Unum, the guide provides practical advice on how making reasonable adjustments will help managers get the best from all their employees, not just those with a disability.

- **See page 25 for further details**

Congratulations to Miriam Futter from John Lewis who has won our readership survey prize draw. Miriam wins a bottle of champagne for sharing her views. Thanks to everyone who responded to the survey (see Update, autumn 2008).

- **We're looking at how to respond to your views so watch this space for details.**

EFD head of communications Catherine Grinyer is now on maternity leave until December 2009. In the meantime please contact Liz Nightingale, EFD communications manager, with any communications queries.

Why disability is at the bottom of the equality agenda

Disability is best managed as a distinctive diversity priority, writes Susan Scott-Parker

As employers do everything possible to minimise the impact of the recession, some may feel under pressure to make the case for their work on disability confidence.

We know that disability discrimination must be addressed separately because of its unique nature. Treating everyone the same does not lead to equality of opportunity. People must be treated differently, according to their needs, if they are to be treated fairly and enabled to realise their potential.

This difference is recognised in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), which requires reasonable adjustments to be made for disabled people. Many employers and service providers, however, struggle to understand both the concept of reasonable adjustments and how to make them. Policies and assumptions which seek not to discriminate generally on grounds of, say, sex, race or disability fall short because they rarely take into account

the need to both actively remove disability-specific barriers for groups of disabled people and to make reasonable adjustments for individuals.

Removing barriers

The DDA came into force two decades after equivalent legislation for sex and race discrimination. That perhaps explains why disability discrimination is still not widely recognised as a rights issue in the same way as sex or race discrimination.

By law disabled people have the right to learn, work, travel, shop, manage their finances and be active citizens. If they are to exercise these rights, employers and providers of services and government functions need to remove disability-specific barriers and welcome them as valuable customers and employees. They can only do this by addressing disability equality separately from the other strands, and fully

recognising the different approach needed.

The comparison of results from the 2005 and 2007 benchmarks on disability (EFD's Disability Standard), gender (Opportunity Now) and race (Race for Opportunity) shows disability equality still lagging significantly behind – disability comes out bottom on every key question precisely because disability-specific action has not been taken.

The Disability Standard measures the unique aspects of disability equality and how disability affects your entire business. Disability confident organisations benefit from disability specific investment. The only way to become inclusive is by first becoming disability confident, which requires specific investment.



Susan Scott-Parker is chief executive of Employers' Forum on Disability

For more information on the Disability Standard 2009, visit www.disabilitystandard.com

“ People must be treated differently, according to their needs, if they are to be treated fairly and enabled to realise their potential ”

Available free to all members: expert and impartial advice

EFD's Disability Directions service offers bespoke answers to members' needs, writes Liz Nightingale

Disability is a complex issue that affects many areas of employment and customer service. That's why the Employers' Forum on Disability offers its member organisations access to an exclusive and unique information service that provides answers to disability queries as they affect business. Yet not all members are aware of this free member benefit.

EFD's Disability Directions is a professional consultancy service, giving confidential, tailored advice. It is the ideal service for people who want to become more 'disability confident' but need practical information on how to do it.

Kerry Smith, Disability Directions manager, says: "EFD has had some kind of information service for its members for many years. Two years ago, we listened to member feedback and relaunched and renamed the service to make it clear that Disability Directions is a professional, bespoke service.

"We also found that many members didn't know about it, so it was a great opportunity to raise awareness of this membership benefit."

The Disability Directions service is provided by a team of four highly trained staff: Kerry Smith,

Brendan Roach, Josie Diep and Carrie Druce. They provide prompt and impartial advice, based on best practice, on any disability-related query.

The team had 2,000 queries in 2008, and 94 per cent of all calls were dealt with within 24 hours. All the advisers receive training from Bela Gor, an expert on discrimination law.

"Because we are a small consultancy service rather than a call centre, callers will often find themselves speaking to the same adviser," explains Kerry. "That helps us understand the unique culture of each member and provide tailored advice."

The team has a 'no job too small' philosophy, which means they provide advice on anything relating to disability as a business issue.

Says Kerry: "We often get queries about dyslexia, what a 'reasonable' adjustment is,

sickness policies and monitoring information about staff with disabilities. We also provide advice on particular projects by members.

"For example, one of our members asked us to review their

policy on reasonable adjustments. As a result, employees at this organisation are now regularly asked about their reasonable adjustment needs, rather than just being made aware of the policy.

"This helps make disability less of a taboo subject and encourages staff to ask for adjustments, which could be as small as asking for a new chair but make a big difference."

“ We are a small consultancy service, so callers will often find themselves speaking to the same adviser. That helps us understand the unique culture of each member ”

To contact the Disability Directions team, call 020 7403 3020, email disabilitydirections@efd.org.uk or visit www.efd.org.uk/disability-directions, Textphone: 020 7403 0040. Fax: 020 7403 0404

Hate crime moves up the agenda

Recognising and reporting disability hate crime is the key to tackling this issue. Liza Ramrayka reports

When members of EFD's police and law enforcement network (PLEN) got together recently to network and share good practice, high on the agenda – at the request of members – was the increasingly concerning issue of disability hate crime.

It's difficult to know exactly how prevalent disability hate crime is; the government collects statistics on offences aggravated by race and religion but not specifically on disability-related crimes. And until 2007, data on disability hate crime prosecution was not collected separately.

Yet Sir Ken Macdonald, director of public prosecutions until last year, is on record as saying that "it is my sense that disability hate crime is very widespread". He speculated that "a vast amount" was not being picked up at the lower end of the spectrum and called this failure "a scar on the conscience of criminal justice".

A report published in 2008 shows that visually impaired people are four times more likely to be verbally and physically abused than sighted people and 90 per cent of adults with a

What is disability hate crime?

A disability hate crime is a criminal offence motivated by hatred or prejudice towards a person because of their actual or perceived disability. Disability hate crime is not a separate offence but section 146 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 imposes a duty on the courts to increase the sentence for any offence aggravated by hostility towards the victim based on their disability.

Further information: www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/disability.html

learning difficulty report being bullied. Disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence as non-disabled women.

The report, published by Scope, UK Disabled People's Council and Disability Now, suggests that failure to recognise disability hate crime when it occurs is the biggest barrier to tackling it.

The disability equality duty requires public bodies such as police forces to "eliminate disability-related harassment", which has led to forces collecting evidence of disability-related hate crime or bullying.

Phil Friend, EFD Associate and director of Minty & Friend, chaired the workshop, which was held in November and hosted by West Midlands Police. He says: "We're used to hearing about attacks because of race but disability hate crime is less publicised. PLEN has realised that there needs to be greater awareness among operational officers and backroom staff about this issue, which causes disabled people much distress."

Participants at the event discussed how to offer crime victims individualised support and how to ensure practices are non-discriminatory. EFD hopes PLEN members will share their experiences of recognising and reporting hate crime by taking part in future network events.

For further information contact Disability Directions on 020 7403 3020 or email disabilitydirections@efd.org.uk



Pictured (l-r): PLEN co-ordinator Richard Dixon, Maria Watson of West Midlands Police, event chair Phil Friend and Kath Griffin of West Midlands Police



Customer service

Britannia branches out into disability confidence

Liz Nightingale reports on how Britannia Building Society is getting it right for disabled customers



A tailored approach to training has helped Britannia Building Society to increase the disability confidence of its branch staff.

Britannia launched Employers' Forum on Disability's 'Welcoming disabled customers' guide as a training tool for its 5,000 staff during its National Customer Service Week in 2008.

Britannia's group diversity manager, Sarah Emery, explains how the training need was identified: "We undertook a lot of research in 2006 and 2007 for our four-year diversity plan, and it was clear disability would be a big part of this.

"Staff working in our branches had a strong desire to give all customers a good customer service experience, but a lack of knowledge could mean people would panic when faced with a visible disability – or another form of diversity – that they were not familiar with."

'Welcoming disabled customers' was launched on the staff intranet – Britnet – along with a prize draw quiz to encourage staff to use the

guide and help stimulate online discussion. More than 2,000 branch staff were allocated one hour of training time to access the guide.

Says Emery: "Staff who are desk-based can easily access our intranet, and we also wanted to be sure that colleagues in our 250 branches had time to do so too."

Emery says the results have been impressive: staff at local branches have gained the confidence to meet disabled customers' needs while good practice has been shared nationally.

"Staff found that it was often small changes that made a big difference," concludes Emery. "For example, one branch posted a message on Britnet explaining how to change the printer settings for large-print documents. This has saved us money and customers' time, because we no longer need to use an external supplier for this."

For information about licensing EFD publications, contact the publications team on 020 7089 2410 or email publications@efd.org.uk

Is poor service losing you customers?

Good customer care for everyone, including people with disabilities, is crucial if your business is to survive the economic downturn.

That was the message from disabled people during a recent debate on Ouch!, a BBC website that reflects the experiences of disabled people.

One contributor said: "The tiny little family business who

operate out of a rented shop in a Victorian building with a step at the door...as long as they've made a little effort...I will give them the benefit of the doubt, and my custom.

"Larger companies who are in new, initially accessible developments which they are free to adapt as they see fit, who choose to install inaccessible

mezzanines...and use the accessible loo for storage space, I will avoid, and gripe about to my friends."

Ouch! is at www.bbc.co.uk/ouch.

EFD's Disability Directions service offers free confidential advice to members on a range of topics, including customer service. See page 22 for contact details

Sharing experiences can help bring the barriers down



Kate Nash explains why disabled employee networks are good for business

Over the last decade we have seen the growth of disabled employee networks (DENs) across all sectors. This is partly because organisations are becoming more disability and diversity confident but also because disabled people are becoming more comfortable about expressing their needs at work and feel more able to come together in networks of support. Disabled people are also increasingly aware of their economic influence.

To become employers of choice for talented disabled people, organisations need to have a good track record in accommodating their needs in more sophisticated ways.

Now the challenge is for employers to foster new thinking and practice – to build, as the Equality and Human Rights Commission suggests, a Britain that is at ease with its diversity. A DEN provides a mechanism to glean, at first hand, information about the barriers to your organisation while also mining the talent of all sections of the community.

The trigger for a DEN and therefore its nature will vary from employer to employer. There are no hard and fast rules. Ensuring an organisation's structure is consistent with its objectives demands a systematic approach.

A DEN can be a mechanism for enabling disabled employees to share experiences, information, support and learning. Some organisations call them affinity groups. It can also be a mechanism for enabling the employer to get a better understanding of the causes of discrimination and improve its strategies designed to promote diversity. These two functions – and others – can sit together comfortably within the same DEN, but they have different purposes and a balance needs to be struck.

Our premise is that concentrating on process is the only real way to achieve a successful DEN. To demonstrate this, we have harnessed the experience of 50 organisations to produce

What is a DEN?

There are three types of disabled employee network:

- Peer group or alumni networks: set up primarily by disabled people themselves in response to growing need for peer support
- leadership or champion groups: usually set up by the organisation to help it become more disability confident and raise awareness of disability across the business (sometimes called steering or advisory groups)
- consultation forums: set up primarily to act as a consultation group for the organisation to test out policies, practices and procedures.

Source: 'Disabled Employee Networks: a practical guide'

'Disabled employee networks: a practical guide'. Endorsed by EFD and Radar, it includes a detailed action plan for establishing a DEN and case studies where organisations talk about how they set up their DEN and what the benefits are.

Living with ill-health, injury or disability is often challenging and sometimes upsetting. And yet if you talk to these people they stress how important it is for them to stay in work and how much they want to deliver in their job and for their organisation. Often the most important aspect of a disabled employee network is the



interaction – the sharing of personal stories, and anecdotes, about how to keep positive during a very difficult period.

Getting the adjustments you need is ultimately a people thing – and networks can help people ask positively and with confidence what would help them most to deliver at work.

Kate Nash runs Kate Nash Associates, a consultancy which advises on diversity strategy and employee networks. Call 07904 018 939 or email kate@katenashassociates.com

'Disabled employee networks: a practical guide' is available at www.katenashassociates.com or from EFD at www.efd.org.uk/publications

Case studies

Lloyds TSB

When Access, the Lloyds TSB network, introduced a Yahoo email group they hoped it would be a useful way for members to get in contact. But they didn't anticipate it also becoming one of their most valuable tools to influence the working environment.

Members are able to contact Access when and where it is convenient for them. They are far more likely to tell someone about problems when they are current rather than waiting for a survey. Some members also find it easier to talk to other disabled staff about issues.

Access put a strong focus on career development, and one of the key ways they do this is through their website and newsletters, where they feature testimonials and signpost members to the wealth of training and development support available through the bank's corporate university.

In particular, they promote the personal development programme for disabled staff – a great way to help members get out of a rut, kick-start their careers and switch on to development issues.

Motability Operations

One of Motability Operations' strategic objectives is to enhance its disability expertise. In developing specific goals to meet this objective and address some suggestions made in the results of the EFD Disability Standard survey undertaken in 2005, the company identified the benefit of having an internal employee network. This group, called the Disability Working Group, was set up with the main aim of bringing together employees to share the company's plans to deliver its strategic objectives as well as to develop disability champions across the business.

As work got started it was vital that the group worked with the business to complement existing efforts and avoid duplication. For example, the group has proved to be an invaluable way to resource various conventions and exhibitions around the country. Mobility roadshows, for example, are a great opportunity for members to share information about the Motability scheme with prospective customers.

Everyone gains from making technology easier to use

As the UK government consults on digital inclusion, Update looks at how making technology accessible can win over customers and employees

In a BBC television interview earlier this year, singer Stevie Wonder called on technology companies to make their products more accessible to blind people.

Wonder, who is blind and uses a range of gadgets including a BlackBerry and a speech-enabled iPod, said manufacturers should think about adaptations for products like touch-screen phones at the design stage. "You have a growing number of people, ageing people that will need things to be more accessible – as well as the hundreds of thousands of blind people in the world."

The plea will chime with anyone – disabled or not – who has been excluded by inaccessible websites, online recruitment process and products. For employers and service providers, these frustrations are bad for business. The good news is that the idea of making accessibility a 'built in' and not a 'bolt on' aspect of technology is gathering momentum.

In October 2008 the UK government launched 'Delivering digital inclusion: an action plan for consultation'. This included examples of the role of assistive technologies and reviewed work to improve e-accessibility. Currently out for consultation, the action plan will be followed by a 'Digital Britain' report in early summer.

Last year Employers' Forum on Disability (EFD) set up the Business Taskforce on Accessible Technology (BTAT) to define and share best practice and encourage suppliers to deliver accessible products and services. Taskforce members include chief information and technology officers or senior IT directors from BBC, Department for Work and Pensions, GlaxoSmithKline, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), KPMG, Lloyds TSB, Sainsbury's and the Serious Organised Crime Agency.

Chaired by Steve Lamey, HMRC chief operating officer, the taskforce will also help global

Case study: BT

BT has teamed up with BrowseAloud to provide a text-to-speech service for its websites. The service highlights each word as it is spoken. This combination improves comprehension for those with literacy difficulties such as dyslexia and assists those with mild visual impairments who find it difficult to read text online.

After downloading free software from the BrowseAloud site, visitors to BT's websites can hear the text read out by either a male or female voice as they point their mouse over the sentence or words.

David Barrett, BT inclusion and accessibility manager, says: "We are always looking for ways to improve our corporate site. We have introduced BrowseAloud to help our online visitors access content more easily and this service is incredibly easy to use."

www.bt.com/aboutbt and www.browsealoud.com



Case study: Commission for Social Care Inspection

As part of a programme to modernise its inspection and regulations functions, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) has been building a new, more flexible IT system. The aim is to make it easier to submit inspection reports, increase efficiency and facilitate more flexible home working.

At the time of development, CSCI had 82 assisted technology (AT) users and an average two new users joining each month, many of whom work from home. The commission wanted to ensure that the needs of these users were built into the design, delivery and training of this new system.

Assisted technology co-ordinator Mary Hall met the system developers and recommended that software was tested by AT users at every stage of the process. She also advised on training materials and documentation development to support the new system, to ensure their suitability for assisted technology users.

After identifying individuals' training requirements and support needs, a three-day training

programme was devised. The training group size was limited to nine delegates; this helped to deliver staff with the appropriate level of support and enabled them to build relationships with other AT users.

CSCI has now successfully rolled out the system. Senior decision makers across the organisation now naturally consider the implication for AT users when considering new IT systems and working methods.

Hall comments: "It has been a really positive experience, primarily for users but also for all staff involved. The training has raised the profile of the needs of staff who use assisted technology... and brought staff together who otherwise may have felt isolated."

Regulation inspector Wendy Heal says: "The [training] experience has improved my knowledge and confidence in relation to my use of assisted technology. This means that my ability to perform my responsibilities as an inspector has been enhanced."

regulators understand what business needs from IT-related standards.

BTAT is working with AbilityNet, the British Computer Society and Radar to build the business case for accessible technology. This includes collating latest trends and data on the digital divide and internet use (see news, page 8). On a practical note, EFD recently introduced BrowseAloud speech-enabling software to its website.

EFD chief executive Susan Scott-Parker says: "The business case for accessible technology is compelling. IT that is accessible for disabled people is easier for everyone to use and improves everyone's productivity. Indeed, it's estimated that over 60 per cent of the workforce would be more efficient were they to use existing accessibility features."



Accessible technology can improve productivity

For further information or to share case studies, email Vanessa Hardy, EFD campaigns manager, at vanessa.hardy@efd.org.uk. EFD's 'Beyond big type 2009' workshop on 19 March will cover accessible design and marketing. For details visit www.efd.org.uk/events or call the events team on 020 7403 3020.

Information about assistive technology from AbilityNet at www.abilitynet.org.uk



Managers and HR specialists should follow redeployment plans

The case of Heatherwood and Wrexham Park Hospitals Trust v Beer illustrates the importance of taking a systematic approach to redeploying a disabled employee to a suitable alternative vacancy.

It also highlights the importance of separating redeployment as a reasonable adjustment under the DDA from any disciplinary issues about performance that might have led to the redeployment.

Monica Beer had worked for the Trust since April 1997. In November 2002 she was suspended from work after an incident involving a patient. During the course of 2003 her mental health and speech deteriorated. In May 2003 she was asked to attend a disciplinary hearing concerning the 2002 incident but was too unwell to attend.

In September 2003 Ms Beer was admitted to a psychiatric unit for depression. The following month, a disciplinary hearing took place in her absence but attended by her daughter. The outcome was that Ms Beer was given a final written warning and it was decided that she should no longer be involved with direct patient care. On 3 November 2003 Ms Beer was discharged from hospital; on 26 November 2003, Carol Pearson from the trust's occupational health department wrote to Ms Beer setting out the trust's plans to enable her to return to work.

This letter identified the steps the trust needed to take in order to redeploy Ms Beer, which were:

- to establish her skills and capabilities
- to have the human resources department supply occupational health with details of potentially suitable roles
- for occupational health to then consider whether those roles were suitable
- to facilitate a phased return to work into a suitable role
- to extend Ms Beer's sick pay while she was being found a suitable role.

These were eminently sensible steps because, as the tribunal noted, Ms Beer had a mental impairment that had an adverse effect on her memory and she had a "short attention span". She had lost the ability to sustain activity over a reasonable period and needed constant support from a close network of friends to deal with her own affairs and her day-to-day activities.

The trust needed to give careful consideration to the type of work that Ms Beer was capable of doing before seeking to identify a suitable post. In a hospital environment, the ability to communicate orally without difficulty and to concentrate would have been requisite qualifications for many jobs.

Failure to make adjustments

Unfortunately the trust never carried out the steps outlined in that letter but it did offer Ms Beer alternative roles. The first was working in the patient records department, but on arrival on her first day, there was no manager or deputy manager present and she was told that

“As the trust had failed to establish her skills in the light of her disability, they had failed to take the vital first step in making adjustments”

there was no work for her. She was later given a stack of test results to sort into piles.

She worked a further half day on 27 January 2004 but no check had been made with occupational health to assess whether a role in that department was appropriate for her.

Ms Beer was then given a position in an operating theatre but when she arrived for work she found she was not expected. She was sent away and told to return the following week. At no time was the nature of the theatre job made clear to her.

A competitive interview for a stock control position was arranged for Ms Beer on 19 April 2004. The trust's HR manager, Mrs Gibbs, agreed that she should go with her to the interview to provide support, but was then unable to do so.

The tribunal concluded that, if Mrs Gibbs had really wanted to assist Ms Beer at the interview, “she would have at the very least bothered to alert her to the fact she would be unable to attend the interview and would explain to the panel the [claimant's] circumstances”.

EAT ruling

Ms Beer was offered a post in June 2004 but she was sick at the time and refused it. She then brought a successful claim for disability discrimination which the trust subsequently appealed. One of the trust's many complaints

was that the Employment Tribunal (ET) had failed to consider Ms Beer's refusal to accept the post offered in June 2004.

The Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT), however, held that the ET had quite rightly found that, as the trust had failed to establish Ms Beer's skills in the light of her disability and then identify a suitable post for her, they had failed to take the vital first step in making adjustments. So even if she been well enough, this post had not been identified as a suitable alternative vacancy by the trust.

The EAT also rejected the trust's assertion that the competitive interview process did not place Ms Beer at a substantial disadvantage. Ms Beer had difficulty communicating orally and concentrating – both of which would affect her performance at interview. (This took place before the House of Lords held in *Archibald v Fife Council* that disabled people who need to be redeployed should be transferred into suitable alternative vacancies rather than being required to take part in competitive interviews.)

The EAT held that the ET was also entitled to conclude that “Ms Gibb regarded the trust's treatment of the claimant as being part of a disciplinary process and thereby ignored the requirements of the DDA”.

The employer's occupational health department in this case had identified all the steps it needed to take to successfully redeploy a disabled employee. However, line management and the human resources department then failed to implement these steps. This was what resulted in the employee's successful claim for disability discrimination.

Bela Gor is EFD's legal director

EFD is playing key role in ‘Valuing people’ initiative

Understanding the needs of people with learning disabilities is the key to unlocking their potential, writes EFD’s key projects co-ordinator Suzi Mackenzie

Last month the government launched ‘Valuing people now’, a three-year plan to improve services for people with learning disabilities.

Learning disability affects all employers, particularly public sector organisations who are required to meet the Public Service Agreement (PSA) 16 on the needs of vulnerable adults. Among other things, this calls for an increase in the proportion of adults “with moderate to severe learning disabilities” in employment and training. Yet it is often the most misunderstood disability.

An estimated 1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability, a lifelong condition that EFD defines as “having a reduced ability to understand new or complex information and to learn new skills”. There are many different types of learning disability, but they are all caused by the way the brain develops before, during or soon after birth.

Case study: changing the HR rule book

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council was one of the first EFD members to learn from the Valued in Public model. The council now employs 25 people with learning disabilities, and 19 are working more than 16 hours a week. This achievement was recognised by Stockport’s shortlisting for the Pinsent Masons award for workplace diversity at Personnel Today’s 2008 awards.

Carmel McKeogh, head of human resources, says: “The first thing we had to do was to put our own house in order. The encyclopaedic and prescriptive manual was replaced by a one-page recruitment policy, with guidance notes to support it.

“Our policy allows the creation of roles from within roles, customised to suit the talents of people with a learning disability and often taking out tasks that others find time-consuming and repetitive.”

Managers can place vacancies with supported employment agencies and the job centre without having to advertise them elsewhere. They work with the council’s supported employment partner to set up interviews, support people through training and even provide daily support.

Says McKeogh: “We made managers aware of the successes that we have had and so the word spread. Our chief executive was very supportive of the work done in this area and spoke directly to those making the biggest impact about what they had done and what value it had added – taking that message back to elected members, who are very committed to making progress on this issue.”

For further information, email Carmel McKeogh at carmel.mckeogh@stockport.gov.uk

A number of associated conditions are commonly found in people with a learning disability such as Down's syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and autism. Everyone with Down's syndrome and many with Fragile X syndrome has a learning disability, but lots of people with other associated conditions do not. A learning disability is not the same as a mental health problem like depression, or a 'learning difficulty' such as dyslexia.

Sixty-five per cent of unemployed people with a learning disability really want to work, but only 17 per cent are in employment. That represents a substantial source of untapped commitment and talent. A candidate with a learning disability can often be the best person for a particular job.

Making the business case

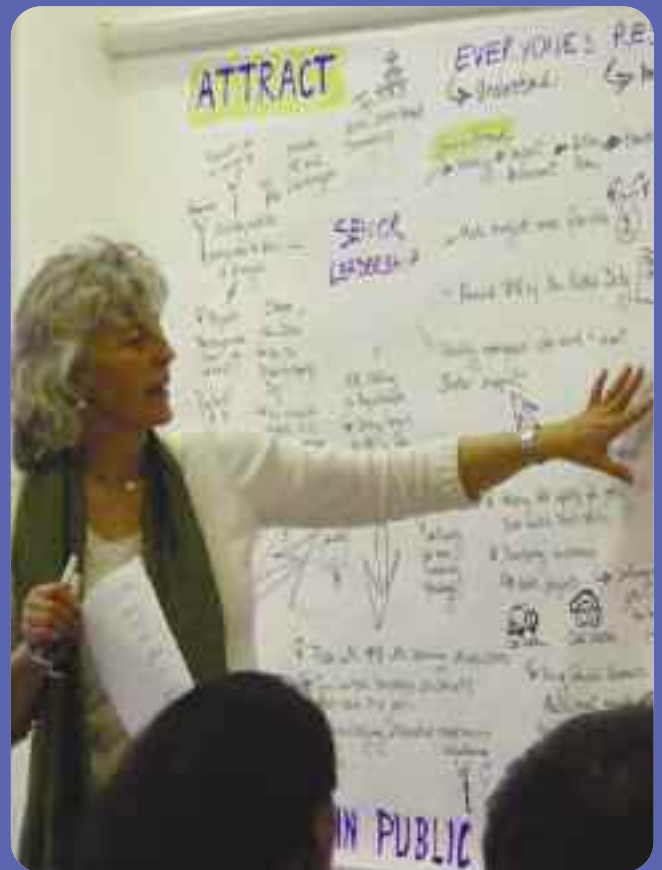
In 2008 EFD produced a range of publications and ran several events to help members make the business case for learning disability. These included an Afterhours discussion to discuss PSA 16. Panel members included Social Exclusion Task Force director Naomi Eisenstadt.

EFD also continued its Valued in Public (VIP) action learning events, which helped 22 people with a learning disability find work in 2006-7 (see case study). Events were held in London, Leicester and Bristol. Participants included local authorities, police forces, primary care trusts, a fire and rescue service and the Cabinet Office.

Initial feedback suggests that Valued in Public has helped participants to give learning disability a higher profile, and provided ideas for creating more flexible recruitment processes, using tools such as working interviews.

Through membership of the Learning Disability Task Force, EFD has helped to inform the government's 'Valuing people now' strategy. We are currently working with government to produce a 10-point public sector Agenda for Action. This will provide a structure for senior commitment and support public sector organisations to employ and develop people with learning disabilities.

For more information contact EFD's Disability Directions team on 020 7403 3020 or email disabilitydirections@efd.org.uk



Hands on: 'Valued in Public' co-author Anne O'Bryan at a recent presentation

VIP guide: updated and free

'Valued in Public' (VIP) was originally written by Anne O'Bryan and Stephen Beyer in 2005. EFD recently completed a comprehensive update of this guide in association with the government's Valuing People support team and supported by the Care Service Improvement Partnership.

VIP is useful for anyone interested in improving the employment opportunities for people with a learning disability. It supports organisations to make the business case, manage the recruitment process and monitor disability confidence once new employees are in place.

The guide includes a comprehensive action planning section, with key actions for the HR manager, line manager and supported employment provider/job broker.

VIP is free to download in PDF and accessible Word format from www.efd.org.uk/publications/valued-public. For a printed copy, contact the publications team on 020 7089 2410 or email publications@efd.org.uk

open to questions

A selection of recent queries that the Disability Directions team has helped members to address

Q We are a public sector organisation about to implement a new system to monitor workforce diversity. Employees will be asked to complete an online 'profile' of personal details, including whether they have a disability. We know that the DDA requires us to make reasonable adjustments, so the system provides for an email prompt to be sent automatically to an individual's line manager if they indicate that they are disabled. However, our disabled staff network has raised concerns about confidentiality and the effectiveness of this system.

A You need to be clear about what you are trying to do and why. Do you want to know how many disabled people work for you, or are you trying to devise a system for making reasonable adjustments for disabled employees who need them?

Monitoring can help an organisation to determine how representative its workforce is compared to the labour force as a whole and to monitor success in improving this figure. If this is what you want to do, you will get a better response if employees can declare their disability anonymously. Your system is unlikely to produce

Disability Directions...

... is the free confidential advice service for Employers' Forum on Disability members who need to know about disability as it affects their business. Advice is available on a range of topics – from which



The team offers tailored responses to queries

impairments are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act to more complex questions about reasonable adjustments, company policies and procedures. All calls are confidential and there is no cost to members, other than the price of a phone call.

We offer:

- tailored responses – no call is scripted
- two hours' free work on individual projects with no limit on the number of these extended queries
- access to the Connect service for disabled colleagues and customers experiencing difficulties with member organisations
- signposting to EFD publications, events and other disability resources
- advice desks at selected EFD events.

To contact Disability Directions, call 020 7403 3020 (minicom 020 7403 0040), fax 020 7403 0404 or email disabilitydirections@efd.org.uk. The service is open weekdays 9am-5pm

accurate figures, as employees who don't need adjustments will not declare their disability if they don't want their manager to know about it.

If you want to know whether a disabled employee needs a reasonable adjustment, you should ask just this. You should also provide examples of adjustments, such as changing working hours or time off for treatment. But it is essential to provide quick and effective follow-up. To do this you will need to ensure that:

- all your line managers are trained in disability awareness, the DDA and the duty to make reasonable adjustments
- you have someone ready to co-ordinate the process of getting expert internal and external advice on adjustments
- you have a process for line managers to follow to determine what is reasonable. For example, if the manager considers the adjustment to be unreasonable, does someone more senior sign off this decision?
- someone has responsibility for ensuring that adjustments are implemented within a reasonable timeframe.

You will also need to ensure that you comply with the Data Protection Act and safeguard the confidentiality of personal and medical information. You need to make it clear that, by clicking 'yes' to the disability question, the employee is consenting to this information being disclosed to their line manager.

Line managers also need to understand that they cannot pass on the information unless it is absolutely necessary, that they must have the person's explicit consent to do so, and that disclosure is permissible only if it is necessary to facilitate the person's ability to do the job.

You should decide what it is you want to achieve and then involve your staff network in developing a process that fulfills that purpose.

Q We are a retail group and recently had extended sales in our stores. We have received a complaint from a customer whose young son has autism. The customer asked the manager of a particularly busy store for a wheelchair for her son, claiming this would

make it easier for her child to cope with the busy environment.

The manager refused, explaining that the store's wheelchairs were only for use by customers with mobility impairments. The customer is now alleging that the manager discriminated against her son. Does she have a claim?

A Under the Disability Discrimination Act a service provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to the way in which their service is provided if disabled customers find it unreasonably difficult or impossible to use. The case of *Roads v Central Trains* held that this duty is twofold.

First, you have an 'anticipatory duty' which means that you must anticipate the needs of your disabled customers and make adjustments for them in advance. Adjustments you could have made in anticipation of the needs of people with autism include low arousal design features such as softer lighting, reduced noise levels and unpatterned wall designs.

If, however, even with anticipatory adjustments, a disabled person still finds it impossible or unreasonably difficult to use the service then you as a service provider must make a further adjustment specifically for that person.

You have anticipated that a person with a mobility impairment might need a wheelchair to move around the store, but your store manager failed to recognise that a wheelchair could also enable a customer with a cognitive impairment such as autism – exacerbated by busy environments – to access the store.

The most important adjustment is often to attitude. Any member of staff who serves customers should have had disability awareness training as well as training on how to make reasonable adjustments to enable all disabled customers to use your service.

As the disabled person in this situation is a child, his mother could bring a DDA claim against you on behalf of her son. You could consider asking her and her son to help you make your stores more welcoming to people with autism when trying to resolve this case.

Your questions answered

HM Revenue and Customs, the Home Office and UBS are the latest gold members to make the commitment to take part in the Disability Standard 2009. As Update went to press, 86 organisations had confirmed their participation in the Disability Standard, the only management tool that enables you to accurately measure your performance on disability, in every way it affects your business.

Arts Council England, the Department for International Development, Deutsche Bank, Disability East, the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Tower Hamlets and Skillset have also recently signed up. A full list of participants is available at www.disabilitystandard.com

Since December the Disability Standard team has been running workshops to guide participants through the completion process, work through practical examples, demonstrate the online assessment and answer queries.



When does the 2009 Assessment take place?

The eight-week self-assessment period runs from 2 March until 27 April 2009. Assessments should be completed at www.disabilitystandard.com. Once all participating organisations have submitted their assessment, EFD will begin to analyse the information provided.

What support is available?

The Directory, guide to completion and help text are all designed to ensure participation is as straightforward as possible. The Disability Standard team is available via phone or email (see details, below) to support with technical queries or questions about the content of the assessment.

How do you ensure our submission is secure?

EFD issues participants with a single username and password providing access to secure materials such as the online assessment. The key contact from each organisation will also be provided with an assessment submission code

to avoid the risk of the assessment being submitted before completion or sign off.

Will the scores be made public?

For the first time, a list of the top 10 scoring organisations from Disability Standard 2009 will be made public.

All results will be used to compile the benchmark report. Individual organisation scores will, however, remain strictly confidential. Organisations may, of course, publicise their own results.

While an organisation's individual score will remain confidential, participants will be awarded a rank of Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze or Participant. These ranks will be available as a graphic for corporate use by participants.

We haven't registered yet. Is it too late?

Registrations are accepted until the assessment opens on 2 March 2009. Registrations continue at the regular price (see website for details). EFD gold members can participate free of charge.

For more information contact the Disability Standard team on 020 7089 2470, email disabilitystandard@efd.org.uk or visit www.disabilitystandard.com

Line manager guide

Making it easier to make adjustments

Are you a line manager of a disabled employee? Do you know how to make adjustments to support them at work?

Practical advice is now available in EFD's just-launched publication, 'Reasonable adjustments'. Sponsored by Unum, this guide is the latest addition to our series of practical line manager guides.

The Disability Discrimination Act requires employers to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace, both to the physical environment and working arrangements, if they make it difficult for a disabled person to do their job. But what is 'reasonable'?

Line managers should not think about managing disabled employees as separate to their duties as a manager as a whole; learning how to make reasonable adjustments and manage disabled employees is all part of being a good manager for all staff. Good managers know how to manage difference in order to get the best from every member of their team.

Practical advice

'Reasonable adjustments' makes it easier for managers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people by helping to:

- identify who needs an adjustment
- identify how work can be done differently to maximise the potential of disabled and non-disabled staff who may also benefit from the changes made
- decide if an adjustment is reasonable
- ensure you treat disabled colleagues fairly
- make sure you do not break the law
- know where to go for more help and advice.

Reasonable adjustments

Line manager guide



Good managers know how to manage difference

The guide is packed with practical examples based on queries to our Disability Directions information service. It costs £10.20 for members (minimum order of five copies) and is also available to license for your organisation's internet

For further information call Leander Feltham or Keith Harris on 020 7089 2410, email publications@efd.org.uk or visit www.efd.org.uk/publications

Half-price 'Briefings' offer

Order five or more copies of 'Reasonable adjustments' by 31 March 2009 and receive a full set of EFD Briefings at half the regular price (£15/£30 for non-members).

The set of 18 Briefings equip each team in your organisation with up-to-date guidance and examples of how businesses recruit and retain people with disabilities.

DWP is turning policy into reality

Ciaran Osborne on DWP's aspirations to be a great employer of disabled people

One of the key roles of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is to lead for the government on disability, and we take this responsibility very seriously.

We run a number of programmes within the department, alongside vital disability legislation introduced by the government, in order to ensure disabled people are treated fairly and equally.

Currently 6.5 per cent of the 100,000 people employed by DWP identify themselves as being disabled, although over 13 per cent indicated they had a disability or a long-term health condition in our 2008 staff survey.

Like many employers, we know that not everyone feels comfortable or

chooses to make a declaration. We're working to get to the stage where most, if not all,

disabled staff are able to declare; the proportion of disabled people we employ in every grade matches the proportion of disabled people in

the wider workforce.

In 2007-8 disabled job seekers were significantly more likely to be

successful in getting a job at DWP than non-disabled people. Our disabled employees were less likely to leave the department than their

peers, and around 12 per cent of new starters identified themselves as being disabled. This is very close to the economically active rate, and double the declaration rate of our existing workforce. To build on this progress, we have set ourselves challenging targets for disabled representation by 2011, including 6 per cent at administrative officer level and 5.2 per cent for senior posts.

We have recently revamped our talent management programmes to ensure that disabled staff have an equal chance of success once in the department. As well as having a number of programmes open to all, we have for the first time established a programme designed specifically for disabled employees.

Launched in 2007, the 'Reach' scheme builds on an earlier talent management scheme open to ethnic minority employees, and aims to identify disabled and ethnic minority employees with the capability to progress. It provides them with additional coaching and support to help them realise their potential. We doubled the number of participants from 25 in 50 at the end of the first year, and plan to significantly increase the number again in 2009-10.

We also want to make step changes in the speed and efficiency of the delivery of adjustments, so we are centralising the service and setting up a specialist team dedicated to delivering adjustments. Following a successful pilot, we are now in the process of rolling this out across the department.

We do have more to do, but our aspiration is to be a great employer for disabled people. We are interested in learning from other EFD members about what works. If you want to share, please contact us and we will be happy to return the favour!

Ciaran Osborne works in the diversity and equality centre of expertise at the Department for Work and Pensions.

For further information or to share learning, email laura.somerville@dpw.gsi.gov.uk



▲ All welcome: DWP's employment practices reflect customer service approach

Forthcoming awareness events

Many charities run an annual awareness day, week or month, and most can supply leaflets, posters and even speakers to support your disability confidence work.

21 March World Down Syndrome Day
www.ds-int.org

1-31 March Marie Curie Cancer's Great Daffodil Appeal, www.mariecurie.org.uk/daffodil

12-18 April Mental Health Action Week
www.mentalhealth.org.uk

20-26 April Depression Awareness Week 2009
www.depressionalliance.org

1-31 May International ME Awareness Month
www.investinme.org

8-14 June: Carers Week

www.carersweek.org

In the UK over 6 million people look after an ill, frail or disabled family member, partner or friend. Following a ruling last year, carers working in the public or private sector are now covered by the same EU anti-discrimination laws that protect the disabled people they care for. Employers have been encouraged to ensure their flexible working practices reflect this.

Visit www.efd.org.uk to find out how our publications, events and other resources can support your work

EFD gold group

- Abbey
- Accenture
- Allianz
- AstraZeneca
- B&Q
- Barclays
- BBC
- British Airways
- BSkyB
- BT
- Bupa
- Cisco Systems
- Department for Transport
- Department for Work & Pensions
- Ernst & Young
- General Healthcare Group
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Goldman Sachs International
- HBOS
- HM Revenue & Customs
- Home Office
- InterContinental Hotels Group
- ITV
- JGP
- Jobcentre Plus
- KPMG
- Land Securities Group
- Learning and Skills Council
- Lloyds TSB Bank
- London Development Agency
- McDonald's Restaurants
- Merrill Lynch
- Microlink PC
- Ministry of Defence
- Mitie Group
- Motability Operations
- National Offender Management Service
- NHS Employers
- NHS Scotland
- PricewaterhouseCoopers
- Rockpools
- Royal Bank of Scotland Group
- Royal Mail Group
- Sainsbury's Supermarkets
- Serious Organised Crime Agency
- Tesco Stores
- Transport for London
- UBS
- Unum

The gold group's commitment underpins EFD's work. As core funders their support is fundamental in building our capacity to make it easier to employ disabled people, serve disabled customers and value disabled people as stakeholders. This core group enables EFD, its members and indeed society at large to actively promote the economic and social inclusion of disabled people. A full list of members can be found at www.efd.org.uk

Contact: Ian Hastie, head of business development. Email ian.hastie@efd.org.uk

Training and events March-June 2009

Our thanks to EFD members who sponsored or hosted an EFD event from November 2008 to February 2009. These included Advantage West Midlands, the Audit Commission, Barclays Wealth, Companies House, Deloitte LLP, Eversheds, HM Treasury, ITV, the Office of Fair Trading and West Midlands Police. We're also grateful to Mark Harper, shadow minister for disabled people, for hosting our gold member networking reception at the House of Commons in November 2008.

● New for 2009 are monthly telephone tutorials on a wide selection of topics. Combining valuable training with the convenience of easy access, the tutorials are free to gold members and are offered at a reduced price to members.

● Our popular 'Beyond Big Type' workshop for graphic designers and communication professionals features specialists to get to the heart of what makes good, accessible design.

EFD annual conference: 23 June 2009

'Disabled people: valued employees, customers and stakeholders in a changing world' takes place in London on 23 June. Hosted by Clifford Chance, it will provide a forum for members to discuss disability at a strategic level and as a business priority (see page 7 for details).

For the latest information, visit www.efd.org.uk/events

11 March Roundtable: update on disability (Accessible technology special), 9am-11.30am, London. Free.

19 March Workshop: accessible design – Beyond Big Type 2009, 9.30am-4.30pm, London. £275*/£399

26 March Telephone tutorial: disability and the redeployment process, 3pm-4pm. £60*/£99

31 March Telephone tutorial: becoming a more effective and disability confident manager, 3pm-4pm. £60*/£99

2 April Telephone tutorial: reasonable adjustments for people with autism, 3pm-4pm. £60*/£99

22 April Roundtable: introduction to disability, 10am-12pm, London. Free to members

22 April Telephone tutorial: PDF accessibility masterclass, 2.30pm-4pm. £60*/£99

6 May Telephone tutorial: managing stress in the workplace, 3pm-4pm. £60*/£99

***Price for members and charities, exclusive of VAT. All events include refreshments. For full details and to book, visit www.efd.org.uk/events or call 020 7403 3020**

12 May Disability Discrimination Act Masterclass Part II (employment), 10am-4pm, London. £299*/£420

19 May Scottish Forum: customer focus, 10am-4pm, Edinburgh. Free to members

19 May Workshop: reasonable adjustments – your questions answered, 10am-4pm, Manchester. £275*/£399

20 May Roundtable: update on disability, 9am-11am, London. Free to members

21 May Hot topic: encouraging disclosure of disability – more than just a tick box, 9.30am-2pm, Liverpool. £170*/£255

10 June Roundtable: introduction to disability, 10am-12pm, London. Free to members

17 June Telephone tutorial: attendance management, 3pm-4pm, £60*/£99

23 June Annual Conference 2009: 'Disabled people: valued employees, customers and stakeholders in a changing world'. 9.30am-4.30pm, London. £170*/£270

8 July Roundtable: update on disability, 9am-11am, London. Free to members



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Registered charity no: 1018463