



Supporting Disabled Staff at LSHTM – Procedure and Guidance

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1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This document outlines London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine's (LSHTM) procedure and guidance with regards to supporting disabled staff and should be read alongside the Staff Disability Policy. This document applies to all staff employed on LSHTM terms and conditions of service.
- 1.2 Information about support for students can be [found here](#).
- 1.3 LSHTM's aim is to move towards an approach to disability inclusion based on the [Social Model of Disability](#). The social model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference. As such, the language of this policy follows that used within the social model (e.g. disabled person, impairment).
- 1.4 LSHTM recognises that the words we use to describe identities change over time and stresses that it is important to respect and use the language people have chosen to describe and define themselves.

2. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The LSHTM mission is to improve health and health equity in the UK and worldwide. Embracing and valuing our diverse staff and student community and embedding inclusive practice across all operations is an essential element in enhancing LSHTM's contribution to the improvement of health worldwide.

- 2.2 We are committed to fostering a supportive, enabling, and inclusive environment, where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect, and where there is equality of opportunity for all regardless of characteristics or background.
- 2.3 Under the Equality Act, LSHTM has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. A 'reasonable adjustment' is a change or adaptation to the working environment or schedule that has the effect of removing or minimising the barriers within the environment that impact the disabled person in the workplace. This is to ensure the disabled person can undertake their job duties, or apply for a job, without being at a disadvantage. Failure to make 'reasonable adjustments' is one of the most common types of disability discrimination.

3. PROCEDURES

Recruitment and Selection

- 3.1 LSHTM is a [Disability Confident Employer](#). This means LSHTM encourages applications from candidates with a disability and will make reasonable adjustments where possible at all stages of the recruitment process.
- 3.2 Under the Disability Confident Scheme, LSHTM has committed to the following in terms of recruitment:
- Provide a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process
 - Offer an interview to disabled people who fully meet the essential criteria for the job (as outlined in the job description)
 - Make reasonable adjustments as required
 - Provide job shadowing opportunities
- 3.3 Under the Disability Confident Scheme, LSHTM has committed to the following in terms of employment:
- Encourage our suppliers and partner firms to be Disability Confident
 - Ensure employees have sufficient disability equality awareness
 - Promote a culture of being disability confident
 - Support employees to manage their disabilities or health conditions
 - Ensure managers are aware of how they can support staff who are sick or absent from work
 - Value and listen to feedback from disabled staff
- 3.4 Applicants may opt to disclose their impairment on their application and indicate whether they wish to apply under the guaranteed interview scheme. Disability disclosure information is not made available to shortlisting panels. Should an applicant who has applied under the guaranteed interview scheme meet the essential criteria for the post but not be shortlisted, the HR Officer will let the panel chair know that the applicant needs to be shortlisted.
- 3.5 The hiring manager has a responsibility to accurately and fairly complete the interview and assessment information provided to the HR Officer coordinating the interview and assessment process.
- 3.6 The HR Officer will ask the applicant if any adjustments are required to enable them to participate in the selection process. The HR Officer will liaise with the hiring manager to accommodate the adjustments required, seeking advice from the EDI team where necessary.

Pre-employment stage

- 3.7 New employees are encouraged to discuss any adjustments they may require whilst working at LSHTM with their line manager prior to starting to enable suitable arrangements to be put in place in ahead of their start date. The line manager is responsible for arranging these adjustments prior to the employees first day, where possible to do in advance. The HR Officer may support in facilitating this conversation with the new starter.

Employees already in work

- 3.8 Employees who require adjustments for the first time while they are employed, either because they become disabled or because the impact of their disability changes such that adjustments are warranted, are encouraged to discuss their needs with their line manager as soon as possible.

3.9 Stage 1 - Initial dialogue

- 3.9.1 The initial step is for the employee to talk to their line manager about their support needs. Employees are also encouraged to record the nature of their impairment in MyView*.

* Staff should note that changing their disability status on MyView will not alert anyone. The data is used for monitoring purposes only. Direct communication with the line manager is required to start the process of identifying support needs.

If the line manager is aware of an individual's impairment, then they should initiate a discussion with them about support needs.

- 3.9.2 If for any reason the employee does not feel able to have the initial conversation with their line manager, they should talk to the HR Partner for their department. The HR Partner will seek to facilitate a three-way dialogue involving themselves, the employee and their line manager.
- 3.9.3 It is not necessary for line managers to be 'experts' in disability equality, but line managers should demonstrate:
- an open-minded, problem-solving approach to making adjustments
 - a positive and accepting attitude
 - an open style of communication.
- 3.9.4 The [Reasonable Adjustment Request form](#) can be completed or used as a framework to facilitate the conversation. It may be useful to discuss:
- the nature and current level of severity of the impairment
 - the barriers that are impacting upon the employee's work
 - the impact of work upon the health of the employee
 - reasonable adjustment requirements.
- 3.9.5 In many cases the employee will know what adjustments are necessary; in other cases, it may be appropriate to seek specialist advice (Stage 2). Any reasonable adjustments implemented should be done in full consultation with the employee.

- 3.9.6 If any potential or actual Health and Safety issues are identified, for example fire safety and the need for a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(PEEP\)](#), these need to be brought to the attention of Health and Safety immediately (safety@lshtm.ac.uk).
- 3.9.7 It is important to not disclose, either directly or indirectly, a person's impairment without their prior consent. It may be useful to discuss what information the employee is happy to be shared with others, if required.
- 3.9.8 Requests for Flexible Working arrangements as a reasonable adjustment should be made through the [Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure](#). Employees should state that they are applying as a reasonable adjustment requests and managers should take this into account when considering the decision. You should consult with your HR Partner if you have any questions.

3.10 **Stage 2 – Assessment of impacts and needs**

- 3.10.1 Once the nature of the impact on work is established in discussion with the employee, reasonable adjustments may then be considered to support the individual to undertake their role. At this stage it may be appropriate to seek specialist advice from the following sources:
- [Workstation assessments](#) for musculoskeletal issues can be carried out by DSE assessors
 - [Occupational Health](#) can provide specific advice. At the request of the line manager or the employee, the OH practitioner will produce a report with recommendations for adjustments to the work/working environment. Advice can be sought from OH through two routes:
 - Line Manager referral – where the line manager makes the referral, providing the job description for the post
 - Employee self-referral – where an employee would like to have a conversation with OH, possibly before they have spoken to their manager, they may self-refer.
 - **Access to Work** is a grant that funds practical support if you have a disability, health or mental health condition and can involve a workplace needs assessment. Access to Work can also pay for travel to and from work, or a support worker, if appropriate. If any equipment or software is likely to cost over £1000 then LSHTM expects the employee to apply for an Access to Work grant, with support from their HR Partner. More information, including how to apply, [can be found on the Government's website](#)

3.11 **Stage 3 – Consideration**

- 3.11.1 Once advice and recommendations for adjustments, if necessary, has been received the line manager should consider the recommendations.
- 3.11.2 Line managers are responsible for meeting LSHTM's commitments to provide a supportive and inclusive workplace. Recommendations should be considered in the context of whether the adjustments are reasonable.
- 3.11.3 Line managers should consider:
- will the adjustment remove or reduce the disadvantage for the disabled person?
 - is it feasible to make?
 - could the adjustments impact the health and safety of others?

- 3.11.4 The test for what is considered “reasonable” is an objective one and each case should be assessed on its particular circumstances. Ultimately, if there is a failure to reach agreement, it is the courts who decide what is reasonable.
- 3.11.5 If a line manager feels that an adjustment may not be reasonable or feasible to implement, advice should be sought from their HR Partner in the first instance.

3.12 **Stage 4 - Outcome and action**

- 3.12.1 Once the line manager has considered the requested adjustments, the line manager should meet with the employee to confirm what adjustments will be put in place. If the recommended adjustments cannot be implemented, the line manager should communicate the reasons to the staff member, and a discussion about alternative adjustments should happen.
- 3.12.2 The outcome of the meeting should be communicated to the employee in writing.
- 3.12.3 If the request is accepted, one or more of several courses of action may be required. This may include but is not limited to:
- **Reasonable adjustments to role or working arrangements.** In some cases, it may be that the member of staff may be unable to undertake certain duties associated with their role. Where the changes are minor and do not substantially affect the role, it may be possible to redistribute work within the section so that they can continue in their role. However, where adjustments to the role are significant, discussions regarding the impact of these adjustments need to take place. Flexible working could be considered as a reasonable adjustment (see 3.9.8). This could include a change in start and finish times, working from home, or a move to part time working.
 - **Provision of equipment or software.** This might range from a specialist operator chair for someone experiencing back, neck or shoulder pain, to voice activated software for someone diagnosed as dyslexic through to a suite of equipment for someone with a serious visual impairment.
 - **Provision of physical adjustments to estate.** In consultation with LSHTM’s Estates team, physical adjustments to the estate as a reasonable adjustment may be actioned e.g. the installation of a ramp, changes to the layout of furniture.
 - **Redeployment options.** Where it is concluded that the nature and impact of the disability means it is not possible to make adjustments for the member of staff to safely continue in their current role, LSHTM has an obligation to explore whether there are vacancies in roles that the member of staff could undertake. HR manages LSHTM’s redeployment register, and the member of staff may be added to this for a defined period on grounds of disability.
- 3.12.4 If an employee is not satisfied with the outcome, they are encouraged to send an appeal to the appropriate Dean of Faculty or Head of Professional Service (Chief Operating Officer or Registrar and Secretary) who should seek advice from the designated HR Partner to try and resolve the issue informally. Employees may also contact an [Anti-Bullying and Harassment Advisor](#) if they are experiencing bullying or harassment.
- 3.12.5 If all informal efforts to resolve the issue have been unsuccessful or, in exceptional circumstances, where the issue warrants an immediate formal approach, the final option is to raise a formal grievance through the [‘Grievance Procedures for Academic staff’](#) or the [‘Grievance Policy and Procedure for Professional Support Staff’](#).

3.13 **Stage 5 – Review**

3.13.1 It is important to keep communication lines between line manager and employee open. A review of the reasonable adjustments put in place should take place 3 months after implementation and then annually to ensure they are still effective and appropriate. The employee may request this review earlier if they are struggling with the arrangements.

4. FUNDING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

4.1 Most adjustments are relatively inexpensive if not free. However, at times there may be costs incurred for putting in place a reasonable adjustment e.g., specialist equipment. In many cases the costs associated with providing appropriate technology or equipment are relatively small and should be met through faculty / departmental budgets.

4.2 Access to Work can provide funding for reasonable adjustments including:

- aid and equipment in the workplace
- adapting equipment to make it easier for them to use
- travel to work
- travel in work
- communication support at interviews
- a wide variety of support workers
- Mental Health Support Service

4.3 In this case, faculties / departments will need to cover the initial £1000 and then 20% of costs up to £10,000. Access to Work will cover the remaining 80% plus anything over £10,000.

4.4 Access to Work will consider paying grants of up to 100% for:

- people who have been working for less than 6 weeks when they first apply for Access to Work
- the Mental Health Support Service
- support workers
- additional travel to work and travel in work costs
- communication support at interviews

LSHTM or faculty / departments will only have to share the cost for:

- special aids and equipment
- adaptations to premises or equipment

4.5 Employees are responsible for initiating the Access to Work process. [More information for employees can be found here.](#)

4.6 [More information for employers can be found here.](#)

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 **The employee:**

- make their line manager aware of a disability, which is having an impact upon their work if they wish to disclose
- work with their line manager, HR Partner, Occupational Health and other departments in finding the most constructive option to help with their support needs

- apply to Access to Work for financial assistance with the costs of equipment or additional support, if required

5.2 Line managers:

- handle the disclosed personal information with sensitivity and discretion
- create an environment where staff are comfortable to declare a disability and encourage them to do so
- meet LSHTM's commitments to provide a supportive and inclusive workplace
- consult with the appropriate HR Partner and other stakeholders (e.g. Estates) to decide what adjustments can reasonably be made in the specific context in which the member of staff is working. This should be continued on an ongoing basis so that adjustments continue to be effective.
- ensure that the appropriate adjustments are put in place for staff with a disability

5.3 HR Partners

- facilitate dialogue between the line manager and the member of disabled staff, if required
- signpost the line manager to sources of specialist advice at LSHTM including Occupational Health
- advise the line manager about reasonable adjustments, if required
- advise the line manager about the process of agreeing changes to the member of staff's role as a reasonable adjustment
- advise the member of staff and their line manager about the redeployment procedures, if appropriate

5.4 Deans of Faculty/Chief Operating Officer/Registrar and Secretary

- responsible for handling and addressing appeals from members of staff in their areas, informally in the first instance
- seeking support from their HR Partner

5.5 Faculty Operating Officer (for faculty staff)/Departmental budget holder (for PS staff)

- purchase any equipment or software agreed as a reasonable adjustment
- support the employee through the Access to Work process, if required

5.6 The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team

- raise awareness of disability equality, relevant resources & policies, and support groups for disabled staff e.g., Disability Network
- contribute to LSHTM's efforts to move towards an approach to disability equality based on the Social Model of Disability

5.7 Occupational Health

- accept management and self-referrals of members of staff
- undertake an assessment of the individual's impairment and its impact upon their role. This may involve seeking information from the medical advisers of the member of staff.
- produce a report with recommendations for adjustments to the work/working environment upon request
- discuss with the member of staff the content of the report to be forwarded to their line manager, including recommendations of adjustments if made.

5.8 Health and Safety:

- work with the member of staff in creating a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), where appropriate.

5.9 Estates:

- to take anticipatory action as far is reasonably practicable to provide inclusive access to the estate
- advise the line manager about how reasonable any adjustments which involve adaptations and/or adjustments to the University's physical estate are.
- to work with the member of staff to implement adjustments which involve any adaptations and/or adjustments to LSHTM's physical estate.

5.10 Information Technology Services:

- work with the line manager and member of staff to implement any adjustments that involve IT equipment or software.

6. Useful Resources

[Access to Work](#) - A grant that funds practical support if you have a disability, health or mental health condition.

[Access to Work Mental Health Support Service](#) – A free confidential service delivered by Remploy to people in employment with depression, anxiety, stress or other mental health issues affecting their work.

[AbilityNet My Computer My Way](#) – A step-by-step guide to individual adjustments you can make to your computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone to make it easier to use.

[D&A \(Disability & Ability\) Resources](#) – D&A have compiled a list of accessible software, reviews, and guides.

[D&A \(Disability & Ability\) Access to Work guidance](#) – this video from D&A explains the Access to work process.

7. Frequently Asked Questions

- **When someone discloses a disability at the recruitment and selection stage how does that then carry forward if they are offered the job?**

Disclosures at recruitment and selection stage are not automatically carried forward. If, for example, no adjustments were required at interview stage, the line manager may be unaware of this disclosure. New employees are encouraged to discuss any adjustments they may require whilst working at LSHTM with their line manager prior to starting to enable suitable arrangements to be put in place in ahead of their start date. (See section 3.7). Staff should also note that changing their disability status on MyView will not alert anyone. The data is used for monitoring purposes only. Direct communication with the line manager is required to start the process of identifying support needs.

- **Someone was asked to provide proof of their disability in order to provide a reasonable adjustment, is it an assertion by declaration or does LSHTM ask to see medical records, should there be a referral to Occupational Health?**

LSHTM's aim is to move towards an approach to disability inclusion based on the Social Model of Disability which focuses on social and environmental barriers rather than the Medical model which focuses on the individual and their impairment or difference.

In many cases the employee will know what adjustments are necessary and it will be possible to make adjustments based on these needs rather than requiring a medical diagnosis; in other cases, it may be appropriate to seek specialist advice (See 3.9.5 and stage 2 of the procedures). Any reasonable adjustments implemented should be done in full consultation with the employee.

- **Will there be guidance for line managers on how to best bring up and deal with those type of conversations?**

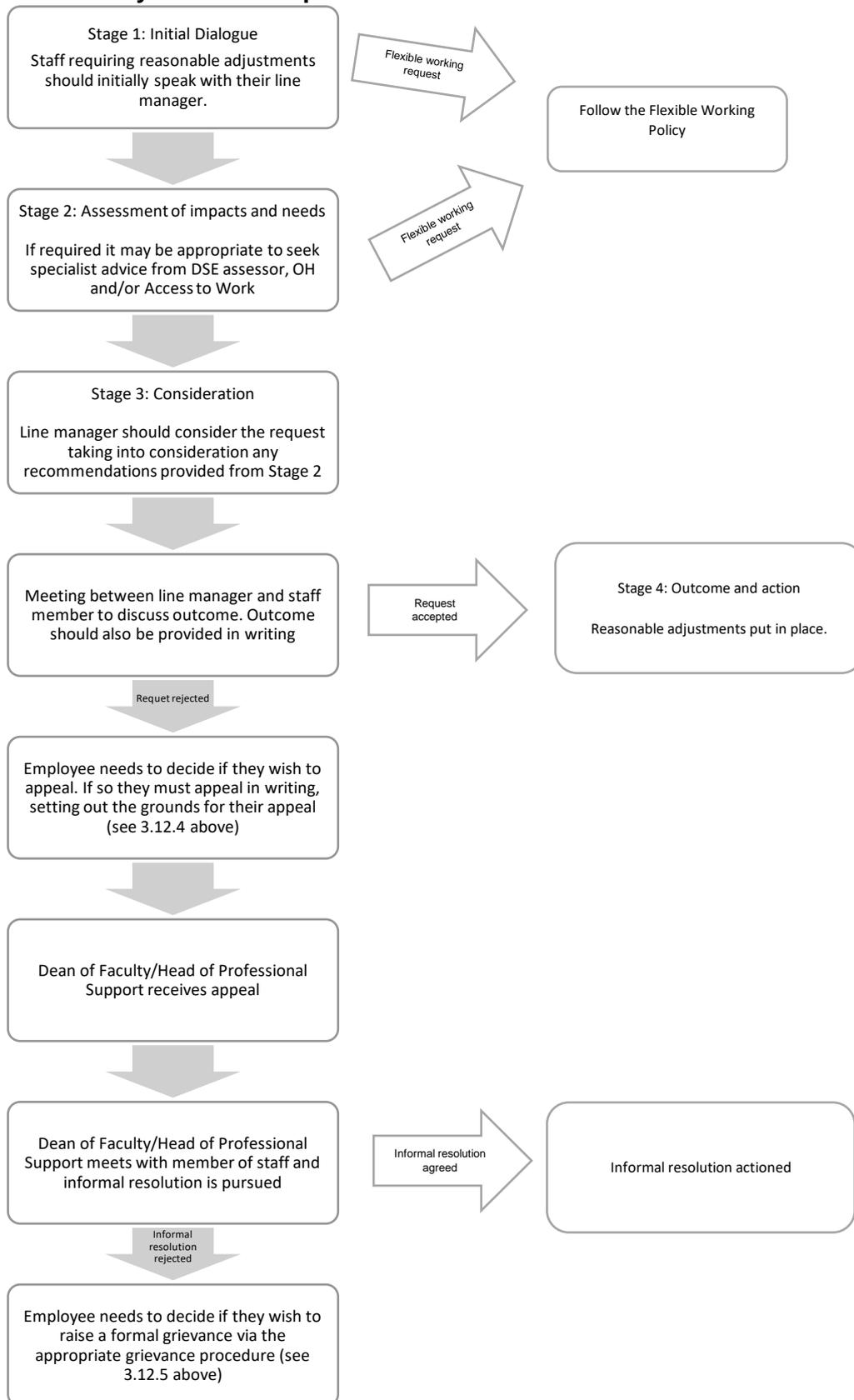
Disability awareness sessions are embedded within the Talent and Educational Development programme, including both online disability awareness modules and interactive sessions including the Good Management Practice series. Line managers can also contact their HR Partner for advice.

- **In the event a person may feel uncomfortable disclosing to their line manager but do need reasonable adjustments, is there is an alternative pathway through HR?**

If for any reason the employee does not feel able to have the initial conversation with their line manager, they should talk to the HR Partner for their department. The HR Partner will seek to facilitate a three-way dialogue involving themselves, the employee and their line manager (see Stage 1 of the procedures – 3.9.2)

8. APPENDICES

8.1 Summary flowchart of process



8.2 Reasonable adjustment case studies

<p>Toni works in a call centre and has type 1 diabetes. Toni often needs to use the toilet urgently, so they ask if they can come off the calls and do paperwork instead. The company does not have a paperwork-only job.</p> <p>Toni and their line manager meet to talk through options. These include giving a desk nearer the toilet and being flexible with breaks so Toni can manage their diabetes as they need. Toni is also given the option to review start and finish times in case early starts affect Toni's management of their diabetes.</p> <p>The manager and Toni agree to review the new arrangements after a couple of weeks to see if they're helping.</p>
<p>Fatima is a wheelchair user and finds it difficult to reach the light switches and shelves in her office.</p> <p>Fatima speaks to her line manager to explain the issue. Fatima's line manager raises the issues with the estates teams who relocate the light switches and shelves so that Fatima can access these more easily.</p>
<p>Francisco works as a handyman and his job involves occasionally going onto the open roof of a building. Francisco has recently become disabled and his impairment involves severe vertigo.</p> <p>As a result, Francisco's employer transfers roof-based work to another worker while Francisco takes on additional ground-based work.</p>
<p>Sanjeev returns to work after a six-month period of absence due to a stroke. Their employer pays for Sanjeev to see a work mentor, and allows time off to see the mentor, to help with his loss of confidence following the onset of his impairment.</p>
<p>David is arranging in-person training for his entire team to upskill them on a new software package. David knows that Chris has a hearing impairment so asks Chris if there are any adjustments he needs to ensure he can fully participate in the training.</p> <p>Chris request that a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter is present and that he has a reserved seat at the front so he can easily see the interpreter. David arranges this and notifies the trainer in advance.</p>
<p>Ijeoma is the Director of Communications and has a severe visual impairment. Ijeoma has a sight dog and requests a desk in a quiet area of the open plan office so that the dog can rest when not working.</p> <p>Ijeoma also requests a support worker for note taking when in meetings. In consultation with her employer, Ijeoma applies for an Access to Work grant to pay for the support worker. Ijeoma also requests that IT provides the support worker with access to her work drive so that the support worker can save notes for Ijeoma to easily access.</p>