

## **Employment of People with a Disability in the London Borough of Hillingdon**

**Contact Officer:** Mike Talbot  
**Telephone:** 01895 558681

The London Borough of Hillingdon has been awarded Disability Confident Employer (level 2) status under the Government's Disability Confident scheme which recently replaced the 'Two Ticks' Positive about Disabled People scheme.

This award indicates that the Council has an inclusive and accessible recruitment process and is proactive in making reasonable workplace adjustments to support employees with a disability to maintain productive employment.

The Council operates a guaranteed interview scheme ensuring that anyone with a disability who meets the minimum requirements of the role is automatically short-listed for interview during the selection process. While the Council always looks to select on merit the guaranteed interview scheme ensures that people with a disability are fairly represented within the selection process.

The definition of disability relevant to employment legislation under the Equality Act 2010 is very broad applying to any mental or physical condition that is long term (likely to last over 12 months) and significantly impairs the individual to complete normal 'day-to-day' activities.

All manager's are trained in disability awareness and the duty to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace for people with disabilities using a dedicated e-learning module.

We subscribe to an absence management service called FirstCare which monitors all absence and provides employees with point of contact medical advice from trained nurses. Manager's have the support of an occupational health service and are able to refer employees with a disability or potential disability so specialist advice on managing the health condition in the workplace can be provided.

Government research indicates that 83% of people actually acquire their disability while in work (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign>) and the Council proactively monitors the health of employees through a Health Surveillance programme. This involves regular health checks for employees to ensure that, for example, working with noisy machinery or vibrating tools does not have a negative impact on the long-term health of the worker. Of course, personal protective equipment (PPE) is issued to employees where relevant.

Two of the highest causes of absences are mental health conditions and musculoskeletal injuries, both of which can develop into disabilities if the condition is likely to persist for over a year. We have introduced initiatives to support employees including a regular physiotherapy clinic. As a preventative measure around mental health we have introduced a management course in workplace stress awareness and a course in building personal resilience for employees.

We also partner with Access to Work to provide assistance to disabled employees. For example, last year we were able to employ a blind social worker after securing funding to support a personal assistant who is able to support the employee when travelling on social work visits.

The Council has a Equality & Diversity policy as well as a specific Equalities in Employment policy and we annually publish equalities data to the Council's website. The most recent data published in March 2016 covers the financial year 2014/15 and this will be updated to include 2015/16 this quarter .

The equalities data indicates that 2.1% of the Council's employees have declared a disability. The data also indicates the positive impact of the guaranteed interview with 5.1% of applicants declaring a disability in 2015/16 resulting in 5.2% of offers being made to people with a disability.