

The Department for International Development (DFID) manages the UK's aid to poor countries. Our work is focused on achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

We work with international organisations, charities and the governments of poor countries to find lasting solutions to the global problem of poverty. Many different things can contribute to development which reduces poverty, such as settling conflicts, increasing trade, tackling climate change, securing more and better aid, improving health and education, and tackling social exclusion.

To meet these global challenges, we have to be a flexible, imaginative and diverse organisation *and* we need to be diverse in how we deliver our business. This means benefiting from the different and distinctive talents of each individual in DFID and addressing exclusion in all its aspects.

### **Our commitment to diversity and equality is to:**

- have an open and inclusive culture;
- unlock the energy and potential of all staff;
- integrate equality and diversity into all areas of our work; and
- consistently act to challenge and eliminate all forms of discrimination and negative behaviour.

We understand the **importance of addressing disability issues** in the way we conduct ourselves, for the people we employ and for the way we deliver our services. Valuing diversity is the responsibility of everyone in DFID.

### **What is a disability?**

**The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995** defines a person as having a disability if they have a *physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities*. The Act also covers people who have had a disability in the past.

There are many types of disability, some more visible than others – an individual in a wheelchair has a visible disability compared to an individual with

diabetes or partial hearing. Hidden disabilities are not immediately obvious and can include heart conditions, learning disabilities, dyslexia, epilepsy, progressive conditions (such as arthritis), cancer, HIV and AIDS.

The exclusion experienced by disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments. It is due to discriminatory attitudes and barriers created by society.

DFID uses the **social model to inform disability** action planning. This means concentrating on the environment, removing barriers wherever possible that get in the way of a person with a medical impairment from doing their job.

### **Background to the Law**

People with disabilities receive protection against discrimination at work under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. The DDA says it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against you if you have a disability:

- in the terms of employment offered;
- in the opportunities for promotion, transfer, training or receiving any other benefit;
- by refusing to offer you, or deliberately not offering any such opportunity;
- by dismissing you, or subjecting you to any other negative treatment.

The Disability Equality Duty 2005, reinforced disability equality laws, by placing a public duty on public bodies to set minimum standards so that disabled people have equal access to education, employment, goods, facilities and services, and public transport.

In 2010/11 DFID will implement the duties in the new Equality Act 2010, which brings together over forty pieces of equality legislation into one single Act. The new Equality Act will therefore subsume the existing DDA 1995 and Public Sector Disability Equality Duty 2005. The Act will further strengthen the laws on disability equality for example, by protecting carers from discrimination.



## Under the **DISABILITY TWO TICKS SCHEME**, DFID is committed to:

- interview all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a post;
- ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss how disabled colleagues can be helped to develop;
- make every effort to ensure employees stay in employment should they become disabled;
- take action to ensure all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness; and
- review progress against these commitments annually and let employees know about progress.

## What is a reasonable adjustment?

Reasonable adjustments are removing barriers or making changes wherever possible to enable a person with a disability to do their job. We already make adjustments to enable staff to perform effectively at work, for example implementing flexible working hours or allowing a woman to take maternity leave and a man to take paternity leave.

DFID has a duty of care to staff under the Disability Discrimination Act and the Health and Safety at Work Act to make reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities.

Recognising difference and knowing when and how to change the way work can be done is called making a reasonable adjustments. We have produced a detailed guide on reasonable adjustments which includes a useful checklist for managers and employees – please refer to **DFID's Guide to Reasonable Adjustments** for further information.

## Declaration and Monitoring

DFID promotes an inclusive work culture and environment. Therefore we encourage all staff with a disability to declare it. This will enable DFID to gather statistical data on its workforce profile and take positive actions to support individuals to meet its commitment to equality and diversity across the organisation.

Individuals record voluntary diversity monitoring data in DFID's YOURSELF system, which is used solely for statistical monitoring purposes. This information is **treated confidentially**.

## Some examples of what DFID is doing...

- DFID's Disability Equality Scheme (first published in December 2006) has been extended to March 2011. The scheme and action plan outline how DFID meets its obligations under the Disability Equality Duty.
- Last year, DFID was **successfully reassessed for the Disability Two-Ticks Award** for movement and retention of disabled staff. Please see box on the left for more information.
- In 2009/10, for the first time DFID took part in a disability benchmarking standard run by the Employers' Forum on Disability - we achieved a **SILVER rating**. Overall DFID ranked joint 5<sup>th</sup> in the Central Government Department Sector, scoring well on commitment, motivation and taking action.
- The **Disability Forum Network** (a staff network) provides a support mechanism for disabled and non-disabled staff and works to raise awareness of disability issues in DFID. To join the network or for further information about the network and its activities, please email [Disability-Forum-Network@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:Disability-Forum-Network@dfid.gov.uk)
- We ran a number of targeted **disability equality training** sessions for staff in HR Division, Business Solutions Divisions, Health and Safety Team and Office Services.
- Equity and Rights Team produced a useful **How to Note: Working on Disability in Country Programmes**, which highlights why addressing disability is such a vital issue for DFID and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Although we have made some progress in promoting disability equality over the last few years, we need to do more to ensure individuals feel comfortable about declaring their disability and we will focus on increasing the representation of disabled people in DFID at all levels.

**For further information please email The Diversity Team at: [diversity@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@dfid.gov.uk)**

### Useful websites:

**Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC):**  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

**Employers Forum on Disability**  
[www.efd.org.uk](http://www.efd.org.uk)

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