

Diabetes and Employment

Diabetes & Your Choice of Job

It is important to show that having diabetes does not make a difference to your ability to work. You need to have stable diabetes control and be able to adjust your diabetes treatment around your working day if necessary. Diabetes UK believes that everyone should have an equal opportunity to apply for employment and individuals should be treated on their own merits.

If you are on diet alone, diet and tablets, diet, tablets and injecting a GLP 1, most jobs are possible providing you do not have complications of diabetes.

The situation is different if you are treated with insulin.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out principles for employers to follow in their treatment of people with a disability. People with Diabetes will not consider themselves to have a disability but they can be protected by the provisions of this Act. It is unlawful for an employer to operate a blanket ban on recruiting people with Diabetes. People should be assessed on an individual basis as to their suitability to a job.

The UK armed forces are exempt from the Equality Act, but recruitment and retention of people with Diabetes to the Police, Fire and Ambulance Service should be subject to individual medical assessment. In some NHS Ambulance Trusts, there can still be restrictions in place for people with Diabetes who wish to be part of the ambulance crew. If you develop Diabetes while in employment, your employer may offer to change certain aspects of your job, but modern Insulin regimens offer more flexibility so shift work is now easier to manage.

What to tell your employer

The Equality Act 2010 now makes it unlawful for employers to ask about an employee's health prior to offering them a job. This is subject to specific identified exceptions, but should not be used to discriminate against a person's suitability for the role. In some professions there are specific rules regarding certification and physical qualification and you will have to disclose your Diabetes. The decision to inform the employer about the diagnosis of Diabetes is up to the individual but if the employer does not know you may not be able to rely on the Equality Act if you feel you have been discriminated against.

What to tell your work Colleagues about your Diabetes

Emphasise the positive aspects of Diabetes. Looking after Diabetes requires a responsible attitude and an awareness of time- both of which are positive attributes at work.

Tell your colleagues about your Diabetes, this makes it easier for them to help you if necessary, e.g if you have a hypo.

Try to arrange clinic appointments to fit in around your job. Give your employer plenty of notice of when and why you will be absent.

When you are ill, seek prompt medical attention and keep your employer informed of what is happening.

Other Useful Information

If problems arise, discuss with your manager, the Occupational Health staff or your Diabetes Team

Further confidential advice can be obtained from the Diabetes UK Careline, Call: 0345 123 2399*, Monday to Friday, 9am–7pm*

*The lines are open 9am-7pm for membership enquiries, however if you require emotional, social, psychological or practical support from the Helpline, please be aware that they are temporarily operating a reduced service of 9am-5pm whilst training takes place.

Email: **helpline@diabetes.org.uk**

Directgov: This government website has information about disability rights and employment. **www.gov.uk**