



Rethink
Mental
Illness.

What's reasonable at work?

A guide to rights at work for people with a mental illness.

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Who we are

Rethink Mental Illness is a charity that believes a better life is possible for millions of people affected by mental illness. For 40 years we have brought people together to support each other. We run services and support groups across England that change people's lives and we challenge attitudes about mental illness.

Who is this guide for?

Many people with a mental illness have a legal right to ask an employer for changes to be made to their jobs and workplaces. These changes ensure that, as long as you have the rights skills for it, there are no barriers to you being able to apply for or carry out a job.

Changes of this kind are called 'reasonable adjustments'. Employers must provide reasonable adjustments to people who are eligible, including people with a mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or depression. Identifying the right changes at work for you will reduce the impact of your health condition on your ability to work, and ensure you are getting the right support. This should also include planning ahead to agree arrangements in case you become unwell. Your support should be reviewed regularly.

This guide helps you think about what changes you could request as an employee, and how to go about this.

We would like to hear whether this guide has been useful to you. Please let us know by calling 0300 5000 927, or complete our short online survey at www.rethink.org/reasonableatwork

Where else can I find information or support?

There are local sources of information and support for people who need reasonable adjustments to be made by an employer, whether you are looking for work, or in work.

ACAS

ACAS is an organisation which can help resolve disputes with employers if they are failing to provide reasonable adjustments where they are needed. ACAS stands for Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, and they run a helpline which is open to you as an employee, as well as employers.

To contact ACAS call their helpline on 08457 474747 or visit www.acas.org.uk

What rights do I have at work?

You are entitled to have reasonable adjustments if you are 'disabled' in the eyes of the law. These could be changes to the way the role is carried out, to the work environment or any other arrangements.

Please note that 'reasonableness' of adjustments relates to whether an employer has the resources to provide a certain change, and also whether it is not excessively disruptive either to the role or other workers. Please see more about this on page 13.

The benefits to both the employee and the employer of providing reasonable adjustments in this way usually far outweigh the effort of putting them in place.

The Citizens Advice Bureaux

The Citizens Advice Bureaux has branches all over the UK, and can advise you on your rights at work and what to do if you are not being treated fairly.

To find your local bureau, visit www.citizensadvice.co.uk or see your local telephone directory.

Trade Unions

If you are in work and you are a member of a trade union, your union representative can help you get the reasonable adjustments you need at work. If you want to join a union, the TUC can help you find the right one for the type of work you do.

To contact the TUC (Trades Union Congress), call their 'Join a Union' line on 0870 600 4882.

Some employers have little understanding of their legal responsibilities, or how simple it can be to identify reasonable adjustments and put them in place. This is especially the case for 'invisible disabilities' such as mental illness.

Referring to the law can make some employers nervous or defensive. It is your decision how you approach this, but it may be advisable to talk about reasonable adjustments without referring to the law itself, at least initially.

Am I a 'disabled person'?

You may not think of yourself as a 'disabled person'. But if you have a mental illness, you may be affected by it in such a way as to be considered disabled in the eyes of the law (Equality Act 2010).

You do not have to have any particular diagnosis to be entitled to support. In this legal context, you are considered disabled if you would be affected in more than a minor or trivial way in carrying out 'day-to-day activities'. Day-to-day activities include anything which you would normally expect to be able to do, if you did not have a health condition e.g. travelling alone, waking at certain hours.

If you are receiving treatment, you are still considered disabled if you would be affected day-to-day without this treatment.

Your health condition has to have lasted 12 months (or be expected to last 12 months) to be protected by the Equality Act. These criteria can apply to a wide range of long term health conditions, including mental illness.

You are also protected by this law if you have met the above criteria in the past and have now recovered.



What adjustments do I need?

You will need to think about how your health impacts on your ability to carry out your job. The issues you identify could be around your work routine, the way you do the work or your work environment. Then you can start thinking about what changes would help address these issues.

It is important that you think carefully about what would be effective for you, as no one knows what you need better than you. An employer should not try to identify adjustments to make without taking your views on board.

Examples of adjustments for a mental illness:

These examples of adjustments at work are based on the real experiences of people with a mental illness who have had changes made to their workplace.

We gathered these through several focus groups with people using Rethink Mental Illness employment services, to find out what issues affected them at work and what support was helpful. The examples and quotes included in this guide come from these focus groups.

Everyone is different so these are just some ideas for you to think about:

Time out

A basic change could be having time off to attend appointments for treatment or therapy related to your mental health. Some employers have a 'Disability Leave' policy to cover this. If you are becoming unwell, it could be beneficial to agree a short time off, even a day or two, to rest and prevent symptoms from worsening, which might require a longer period off work.

It can be helpful to know that you are able to leave the workplace for a break if you need some time out. Some symptoms, can come on suddenly and it is best that you can go and take some time to recover from this without having to explain.

“Everyone is quite different. It is important not to assume anything about what people want or what is right for people.”

“If my manager can see I’m getting into a panic attack, then she’ll say to me ‘Do you want to go out and have five minutes and then come back?’.”

Support with managing workload

Managing workload and priorities can be difficult for a range of reasons, including problems focusing, or a tendency to take on too much. Some people benefit from having extra support with this, on either an ongoing basis, or just when they need it. It may be helpful to focus on fewer, manageable pieces of work for a while.

“I have a monthly supervision but there’s an open door policy. At times when I’ve not been feeling great, I’ve been able to have a weekly or even daily supervision.”

“I couldn’t think about one thing, I could only think about a million things. My manager stops me taking on too much.”

Flexible hours

Someone with a mental health condition may find it very difficult to wake up early in the morning, often due to side effects of medication. Other issues, such as anxiety, can make getting to work or using

transport difficult so it may take longer to get to work. Agreeing start and finish times which are more manageable can be beneficial and prevent unnecessary pressure.

Some people find it useful to have a set number of hours per week, which they complete when they are feeling at their best. This is especially useful when your health fluctuates a lot.

“My hours are 10.30 til 4.30 which is perfect because that’s the earliest I can manage and I don’t have to deal with rush hour.”

“I do 25 hours, and they are happy for me to do it, to organise my own diary and fit my hours around. I get a lot of flexibility, which really helps.”

Change contracted hours

Working too many, or even too few, hours can be excessively stressful and may trigger relapse for some people when they are becoming unwell.

Depending on your individual experience, it may be best for you to work the same hours as usual, or fewer hours, to recover good health.

“If I was doing two or three days a week, I could manage that. But if I was expected to do five days a week, I would break down.”

“Someone else might prefer shorter hours, but for me, it’s important to keep busy.”

Training and events

Training or other events may be residential, longer hours than you are used to, require different travel arrangements or simply more intensive than your usual day. If this is likely to have an impact on your health, your employer should discuss alternative arrangements so that you don’t miss out, or perhaps a shorter day or day off immediately afterwards so that adverse effects on your health can be avoided.

“It’s very important that employers and training organisations have to understand that it can be very difficult. It does matter because you miss out.”

Too noisy or too quiet?

The level of activity in the workplace can have an effect on how people are able to work. A noisy, busy workplace can be difficult to cope with for some. For others, lack of contact with others and too much quiet can be unhelpful.

It can be useful to explore options such as moving to a workspace in either a busier or quieter area, or using aids such as earplugs or headphones. Working from home from time to time could also be helpful, if appropriate to the job. Alternatively, changing the workspace physically, by installing or removing barriers, could help.

“If I don’t perhaps want to answer the telephone that day, or if I’ve got a lot on and I don’t want be in the hustle and bustle of the office, I can just take the computer into a separate office.”

Attitudes of colleagues

If a lack of awareness of mental health issues among colleagues impacts on you negatively, this should ideally be addressed. Attitudes of colleagues can undermine adjustments which would otherwise be effective.

If you feel your manager has been willing to support you individually, you might suggest that reasonable

adjustments are extended to all staff, to reduce stress levels or if they have less severe health conditions. This could foster understanding flexible working and adjustments, and can be good practice for all to prevent work related stress.

Your manager may also be able to suggest that the organisation incorporate mental health into any relevant training, or that they run a mental health or well-being awareness campaign. If you do not feel able to ask your manager to do something about the attitudes of colleagues, you may be able to seek advice from a Human Resources department or from a trade union representative.

Methods of working

Sometimes there can be barriers to being able to do the work, which could actually be removed if a different method was considered. If there is something preventing you being able to do a piece of work, perhaps you could do it a different way.

“I’m a published writer but I have a problem with computers when I’m feeling depressed. If an editor says my writing has to be typed before they’ll look at it, then that can be a problem. It’s better if I can present it in a different way.”

“They trust me the same as they did before, but it’s not assumed that I would take all the responsibility back until I’m ready.”

Phased return

After time away from work due to illness, it may be unrealistic to return to your full role straight away. Your employer may have a policy about bringing people back to work from sick leave on a 'phased return'.

This means that you can build up from fewer hours and simple tasks up to your usual role, either over a set number of weeks, or as many weeks as suit you.

This may be on full pay or paid for the work you do, depending on the policy. Your line manager should always discuss with you what the phased return will involve. The focus should be on what you feel you can manage, in terms of the type of work and hours worked. It is important to review how you are managing regularly during the phased return.

“They started me back with simple, routine jobs, but I’ve since increased my role and responsibilities.”

For information about Access to Work, see page 19.

Building confidence

Support to rebuild certain skills can help address this. It could be useful to arrange for a support worker to help with this, perhaps using the Access to Work grant.

“Doing certain things takes confidence and if you’ve been out of work or you’ve been in hospital, to do those things takes a lot. It would be so simple to have somebody actually be willing to help you take those first steps.”

Job redesign and redeployment

If there are no adjustments which will enable you to continue in your original role, you may be unable to continue with that particular job. Whilst it is not always possible to create a job specifically for someone, many employers are able to redesign the role or 'redeploy' you to a more suitable role within the organisation.

This counts as a reasonable adjustment, but should not be decided without taking on board your views and wishes. The focus of job redesign or deployment should be on what you are able to do, and you should not be offered something below your skill level, or which is inappropriate for you.

Stigma – and the impact it can have on your health.

Having a mental health condition can also impact on how you feel others see you, and even how you see yourself. It's often difficult to talk about your experiences, and there may be a sense that other people don't understand what you're going through.

We can think of these negative perceptions of others about you, and how you view yourself as 'stigma' and 'self-stigma'. 'Stigma' is a term which means that you are viewed negatively, as different. Stigma is a negative term and is closely linked with prejudice against people, and discrimination. Fear of stigma can also be a very real source of stress.

People with a mental health condition who took part in the focus groups explained that stigma, or fear of stigma, can affect your health. It can make people feel so worried that others won't understand that they have to pretend that they are fine when they are not. Stigma from others can lead to feelings of frustration and 'self-stigma'.

Stigma at work is a valid issue to ask your employer for support with, because the potential stress they cause could impact on your health and your ability to work.

Does an employer have to make these adjustments?

The law states that an employer has to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to prevent you being at a disadvantage as a result of any ‘physical feature of the premises, or by any provision, criteria or practice of the employer if you are disabled’.

This means that they have to make any ‘reasonable’ changes to the actual workspace, to the way they recruit and also the way they require you to carry out a job, so that you are not prevented from working.

Others, such as people with caring responsibilities, might also have adjustments made for them, though this is not a legal requirement. Carers have a legal right to ‘request’ flexible working.

When is an adjustment ‘reasonable’?

Even if you are entitled to adjustments at work, you are not able to demand any adjustment you like. Employers have a duty to provide adjustments which are ‘reasonable’ for the type and size employer they are.

The ‘reasonable’ part of these changes refers to what is feasible from the employer’s perspective. The employer will consider how effective, practical, affordable and also how disruptive any adjustment would be. If the adjustment is ‘reasonable’ with their resources, they would have to defend a failure to provide it in a court of law.

Some adjustments will not be ‘reasonable’ because a certain practice is essential to the business or service, such as being able to use a phone in a call centre, or being able to deal with people in a customer facing role. It is therefore important that you think carefully about the requirements of the job role, and the type of work, so that you can think ahead to whether the kind of adjustments you would need would be ‘reasonable’.



I am currently in work – how can I raise these issues with my employer?

Depending on the type of organisation, the employer may have policies in place about how support should be offered. The opportunity to discuss this might be a regular ‘supervision’ meeting where you discuss your performance and support needs.

It’s best to see what opportunities there are already in place so that you can make the most of these. Your manager or Human Resources department may raise the subject of ‘adjustments’ proactively when you first start, if you have disclosed when applying for the job.

Some managers place the onus on the employee to let them know what they need, as and when they need it. They may refer to this as an ‘open door policy’. If this is how they say it works, you can ask them to set some time aside to see you to discuss your support.

If your manager has *not* offered any opportunity to raise your concerns, you may need to approach them to ask for a meeting. You can let them know in advance that this is what you’d like to talk over with them.

It is your decision whether you would like to quote the Equality Act. Some people find that this can sometimes make an employer defensive. On the other hand, it could help ensure your needs are taken seriously.

I am thinking about going into work – when should I tell an employer about my mental health condition?

Protection from discrimination under the Equality Act is triggered when you formally ‘disclose’ your disability (inform the employer); or your employer has evidence to ‘reasonably indicate’ that you have a disability e.g. you become unwell and they receive a certificate from your doctor, or your conduct at work suggests that you are becoming unwell.

The Equality Act 2010 has replaced the Disability Discrimination Act. This new law continues to provide protection from discrimination and gives disabled people the right to reasonable adjustments. Due to a campaign led by Rethink Mental Illness, the Equality Act has also made it illegal for an employer to require non job-related information about an applicant’s disability, until after they have offered the job. They are allowed to ask for voluntary information – as applicants may need adjustments to be provided to attend an interview.

Some employers ask applicants for voluntary information about disability because they are monitoring the diversity of their staff, and wish to promote equality.

They may be signed up to a scheme such as ‘Positive about Disability’ (which has a ‘two-ticks’ logo) where disabled candidates are guaranteed an interview (if they meet the minimum requirements). Look out for any statement commitments to disability equality on the application materials.

You might choose to mention your mental health condition in a personal statement or covering letter, so that you have the chance early on to raise the issue and present it in a positive light.

If the employer has a Human Resources department, you can inform them, and they will ensure your line manager provides reasonable adjustments.

If you are not ‘disabled’ as defined by the law when you begin working for an employer, but become ill later, employer duties will be triggered at the point that they become aware of your illness. They cannot say you’re not protected because you didn’t tell them about it when you started working, if you didn’t know yourself that the illness would develop.



Planning ahead.

You may wonder what would happen at work if you became unwell and had to have some time out. It can be a worry not to know where you would stand with regards to returning to work, or how this would be arranged. Lack of certainty about these issues can add additional pressure, so it's best to plan ahead.

Your employer may have policies or guidance for managers about how sickness leave should be handled, and also what your entitlements to sick pay would be. It's a good idea to start by looking at these to see what is usually in place. You may have some additional suggestions e.g. what kind of contact would work for you during any sick leave.

Your manager will benefit from knowing how best to support you during any period you are becoming unwell, and how to recognise that this is happening. Some practical information, such as who to contact in this case, will be helpful for them.

Wellness and Recovery Action Plan – agreeing your reasonable adjustments and planning ahead

You could think about writing an agreement with your line manager about what would happen. Hopefully, this will simply be a safety net and you may never need it.

At Rethink Mental Illness we use a tool called a Wellness & Recovery Action Plan (WRAP). This is a document drawn up by you, based on what you know about your own experiences. Sometimes this type of document is referred to as an Advance Statement.

You and your manager can agree that you complete this WRAP on your own and that you will share relevant information with them and /

or other colleagues of your choice. If you have a key worker or care co-ordinator you could ask them to help you with this.

Your WRAP should be divided into the following sections:

1. Daily maintenance plan

Describe how you are when you are well, and what you need in place to maintain this level of wellness (i.e. reasonable adjustments).

2. Triggers

What factors, at work or otherwise, can trigger ill health. How can you be helped to either avoid or manage triggers, depending on what they are?

3. Early warning signs

What subtle changes might there be when you are becoming unwell? Does your mood or behaviour change slightly? Include signs which your manager will be able to recognise. What can your manager do to support you at this stage? Do your reasonable adjustments need to be changed?

4. When things are breaking down

If things are beginning to break down, how would your manager or

colleague be able to recognise this? What will you want your manager to do? Will you need to change your reasonable adjustments? What kind of support is appropriate?

5. Crisis plan

Crisis refers to the point of ill health where things have broken down to the extent that you cannot keep yourself safe at work. How will your manager recognise that this is happening and what should they do? Is there someone your manager can contact if they are concerned about your safety?

6. Recovery plan

This is a plan to use following a crisis, to help you return to work. This should include the kind of contact you would have whilst away from work, including other people your manager can speak to for updates if necessary (e.g. Community Psychiatric Nurse, partner, family member etc.)

You can also specify what you would like your colleagues to be told about your absence and what sort of contact you would like from them. You can agree in advance the approach to a return to work e.g. phased return.

Access to Work – help identifying and paying for adjustments.

Access to Work is a government scheme which can cover some or all of the costs of adjustments at work. The scheme also provides advice to the employer and the employee. They can arrange expert advice and assessment from a specialist mental health organisation if necessary. Recommendations from a mental health organisation would go to the Access to Work adviser to help them assess your need for adjustments.

You may be able to get Access to Work if you are:

- in a paid job
- unemployed and about to start a job
- unemployed and about to start a Work Trial
- self-employed

You should apply for an Access to Work assessment so that the level of support can be agreed. You can contact them directly or ask a Disability Employment Adviser at JobCentre Plus about this.

The agreed Access to Work support can then be claimed by the employer. This funding is under-used for mental health – perhaps

due to lack of awareness about what it could be used for.

Some of the uses for people with a mental health condition include:

- job coaching or mentoring
- counselling
- support worker e.g. to accompany someone travelling
- taxis if someone is unable to drive or use public transport
- equipment to minimise noise at work

The amount of funding provided for each person is reviewed every one to three years.

For more information, see www.directgov.co.uk

Looking for work – top tips.

- Look carefully at job descriptions to make sure that a role will be suitable for you, and that any adjustments would be ‘reasonable’ within that role or organisation
- Get in touch with organisations which can advise you on rights and reasonable adjustments before you start applying for work
- Think about whether you would benefit from a work placement scheme
- Look out for employers which are signed up to equality schemes, such as Positive About Disability (‘two ticks’)
- Think about how your health affects your day to day life, so that you can have an idea of what kind of adjustments you might need in a work setting

Already in work – top tips.

- Use the examples in this guide to think about what adjustments would help you
- Think about what the best opportunity would be for you to raise your support needs with a manager and request a meeting if necessary
- Complete a Wellness & Recovery Action Plan and share relevant parts of it with appropriate manager/s, colleagues or Human Resources department at work
- If your employer is not being supportive, seek help from a trade union representative or an organisation which can provide mediation, such as ACAS

Example WRAP.

This is a real WRAP completed by a former Rethink Mental Illness staff member:

1. Daily maintenance plan

A typical working day for me is often very busy, with several competing demands and unexpected pressures to deal with. When I am well, I enjoy the buzz of the work and satisfaction in getting the job done.

A good, typical day

When I am well, I can handle the pressures of the work, feel reasonably relaxed and energetic, and able to focus and concentrate. I can distinguish between urgent priorities and less pressing work.

Coping under stress

When I am feeling stressed, like anyone else, I can feel overwhelmed and daunted by the volume of work to get through.





I can function at work under stress for significant periods of time, so long as I remember to eat properly, and get enough exercise, rest and sleep.

Being able to switch off after work and not dwell on what's happened during the day is crucial to this, and is something I've had to train myself to do better.

Personality or illness?

It can be hard to distinguish between personality and illness, and people are sometimes wary of voicing concerns about their state of mind for fear of misreading a situation and saying the wrong thing.

I don't expect my colleagues to monitor my moods or provide high levels of support. What helps is when colleagues voice serious concerns about my health, just as they would if someone came to work with a very heavy cold when it was clear that they were not well enough to be at work.

Just a single five minute conversation could be crucial because there is usually only a week to catch a hypomanic episode before it becomes much more serious. Please say something if you have concerns, particularly if you are not the only person to have them.

2. Early warning signs – trigger issues

There is a cross-over for me between normal, high stress levels and the early onset of hypomania. I can either find a way to calm down and turn back to a more normal mood pattern, or be overwhelmed by the stress which pulls me up to the peak of hypomania, or even worse, full-blown mania, which is much more serious. Several factors can make the difference between a difficult few days and a longer, much more serious period of illness:

a) Sleep

Getting enough sleep is crucial to staying well. If I have not slept well for several nights, and am under unusually high levels of stress and pressure, I may find it very hard to concentrate and focus on the here and now.

If high stress levels become too much, I am likely to be overwhelmed by my workload and unable to prioritise effectively, instead focusing my energies and efforts into one thing and blow it out of proportion. I am also likely to feel much more emotional and take things to heart unnecessarily.

How you can help

If you have noticed that I am not my usual self and I am extremely stressed, what helps is having someone help me work out what my priorities are so I can stick to them.

If there are pressures outside work that are adding to my stress levels, such as moving house or a bereavement, it could help to discuss this with my manager and see if I could work from home or take some annual leave.

I may be taking on too much on weekday evenings and not getting enough rest. If you know me well, you could ask what my plans are for that week, and if they seem unreasonable given my state of mind, then do tell me.

b) Eating well and exercise

If I am extremely stressed I may become rundown, not eat properly and take little or no exercise. Exercise is a great stressbuster and mood regulator. Having a good, healthy meal slows down the body and stops it running on adrenalin alone.



How you can help

Ask if I have been for a swim or to the gym etc. or am going that week. See if I am eating lunch and getting some fruit or vegetables during the day, or perhaps drinking too much caffeine or alcohol. The latter two are particularly bad for hypomania and I should try and avoid them if I am extremely stressed.

Ask other people

If other people have noticed that I'm not my usual self, that's a good indication that something is wrong and action is needed. If none of the above steps has worked, then there are still things colleagues can do to help me stay well.

3. When things are breaking down

The steps above can be enough to nip a potential hypomanic episode in the bud. Sometimes they are not, and more drastic action may be needed. Although I do have insight into my illness, it's not always enough to stop me becoming unwell.

If things are becoming more serious and my mood has not stabilised after a few days, what's needed is a few days off work sick, and plenty of rest. I have a prescription for the anti-psychotic drug for exactly this kind of situation.

How you can help

At this stage, being at work is not going to be helpful, so make sure I take time off. During my most recent episode, I found it very hard to admit to myself that I wasn't well, so even if I am reluctant to take time off, make it clear I need to see a GP before coming back to work. This might only need to be a day – say a Friday followed by a quiet weekend – but I'll need several nights' sleep to be back to normal.

Be blunt

If I am so unwell as to need time off work, I won't respond to conversational subtleties or hints. Be direct, because at some level I will know I'm not well, and will eventually respond if I realise people are worried about me. You don't need to be rude, but just clear and firm, even if my behaviour is exasperating or bewildering.

Switch off your mobile and email

It might help to hand over my work mobile during this time, so I can't be tempted to make work calls on it. It might also help to agree that I won't check my work emails during this time.

You might also want to check what arrangements I've made with friends or family to hand over any credit cards and cheque books to avoid overspending (common behaviour during mania).

4. Crisis plan

It is possible I could be so unwell as to make the steps outlined under step three redundant and more drastic action may be needed. This would mean I would be at work in a manic state which could be disruptive to colleagues, and potentially dangerous or embarrassing for me.

In this instance, the best thing to do is to contact my parents on (phone number), or my friend, 'Amy' on (phone number). They have all agreed for my employers to have this number in case of emergency, and should have contact details for my relevant healthcare professionals.

What else is Rethink Mental Illness doing on this issue?

Line manager guides for employers

Rethink Mental Illness has produced a line manager's guide to reasonable adjustments for mental health for local authorities ('*We Can Work it Out*'). This is part of a Department of Health funded project which also includes the production of this guide for employees.

We are pleased that this work led to being commissioned by the Cabinet Office to produce a similar line manager's guide for central government departments. This resource for line managers forms part of their commitment to lead by example in increasing the number of people who use mental health services in work.

Good practice

1 in 5 of our staff members have used, or currently use, mental health services. We are committed to supporting staff and sharing responsibility for maintaining wellbeing. The good practice recommended in this resource is being promoted within Rethink Mental Illness. We have produced a version of this guide for staff. Rethink Mental Illness Senior Management Team members have

all completed WRAPs to encourage staff to use this helpful tool.

Employment and training services

Rethink Mental Illness continues to deliver high quality services that support people with mental illness into work. This directly helps employees and employers to better understand reasonable adjustments, the law and barriers to work. For information about our employment and training services, see www.rethink.org/employmentservices or contact us on 0300 5000 927.

Discrimination in recruitment

We are delighted to have won a change to the law to further protect people with mental illness from discrimination. The Equality Act had amended disability law so that employers are now unable to require non job-related information about an applicant's disability, until a job offer has been made. We believe that this will create clarity around whether applicants are being discriminated against, as up to this point, it has been hard to prove because people with mental illness will have been screened out before interview stage. We are hopeful that this will raise the profile of equality in the workplace, and lead to greater understanding and provision of reasonable adjustments.

- We have 250 services which help people live independently, make the most of their lives, make their voice heard, cope in a crisis without hospital and find out about their rights. We may have a service near you, go to www.rethink.org/services to find out.
- We have 150 support groups where people can share experiences and find understanding. We may have one near you. Go to www.rethink.org/groups to find out.
- We campaign to improve people’s rights to care and put an end to stigma and discrimination. www.rethink.org/campaigns
- We have a network of thousands of members who feel part of a movement to improve the lives of people affected by mental illness. Join us today www.rethink.org/join
- We provide reliable information on topics from medication to housing rights. Go to our website www.rethink.org or call 0300 5000 927.
- We have specialist advisors who help with benefit problems, debt, access to services, medication and rights under the Mental Health Act. Call 0300 5000 927, Monday to Friday, 10am to 1pm or email advice@rethink.org
- Join our online community ‘Rethink Talk’, where people connect to others with similar experiences www.rethink.org/talk
- We train teachers, the police, and everyone who needs to understand mental illness better. Call 0300 5000 927 to find out more.
- Our research gives new perspectives on mental illness and improves the evidence base. Visit www.rethink.org/research

Acknowledgements: This booklet has been funded by the Department of Health.

Please note: All quotations in this leaflet are from people who have been affected by a mental health condition but do not relate to the individuals photographed.





**Leading the way to a better
quality of life for everyone
affected by severe mental illness.**

For further information
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