

Support for Deaf and Blind Employees

Support for Deaf Employees

Finding and retaining employment can already be challenging, and it's even tougher if you have been registered deaf or hard of hearing. There is no need to despair, though. A range of resources are available to assist anybody that is hearing impaired in the workplace.

This guide will discuss your options, ensuring that you are treated fairly and equitably by an employer – whether seeking a new job, or adapting to a change in circumstances regarding your hearing.

Legal Rights

First thing's first – you should ensure that you are completely aware of your legal rights as a deaf or hearing-impaired employee.

- The government's [Equality Act of 2010](#) makes it a criminal offence for any business or employer to discriminate against an employee on the grounds of deafness or restricted hearing. In many cases, deafness is considered a disability by law. Check if this applies to your circumstances. If so, this status ensures particular protections.
- [Your rights at work - RNID](#) discusses the 'reasonable steps' that employers should be expected to take to accommodate a deaf or hard of hearing employee.
- [The Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) is also a handy source of information.

If you have any doubt at all that you are not being treated fairly at work due to your hearing, take action. There are multiple steps in this process, escalating if you feel that your concerns are not being addressed.

- Discuss your issues and concerns with your line manager, outlining changes that you would like to be made.

- Make a complaint to the Human Resources department of your business if these concerns are not addressed, or [contact your trade union representative](#) if applicable.
- [Report this issue to HSE](#) to request formal action.
- Seek legal advice if necessary. [The Disability Law Service](#) should be your first port of call here, as free advice is available.

Very few businesses will allow things to progress this far. In most cases, maintaining an open dialogue is the best and most fruitful approach. All the same, it pays to be aware of your rights – and how you can react if these rights are not being respected.

General Advice

Not all diagnoses and issues with deafness are equal. There are many charities in the UK dedicated to aiding those with hearing problems, whether caused by birth, illness or an accident.

Some examples of these include:

- [Action on Hearing Loss](#)
- [The British Deaf Association](#)
- [Sign Health](#)
- [The National Association for Deafened People](#)

Never be shy about seeking help or advice from these bodies. They have been established with the aim of aiding and assisting people that experience difficulties with their hearing. The assistance, advice and support they offer can be invaluable.

Finding Work

Seeking work while registered deaf is not always easy. Fortunately, there are schemes and programmes that will aid you in finding employment. Remember though, as a deaf or hard of hearing person, you are legally entitled to apply for any appropriate job.

[Deaf and Equal](#) discusses this in more depth. While a hearing-impaired individual may need a little additional support or technology, the right to work – and length and breadth of opportunities – should not be impacted by hearing.

- [Deaf Unity](#), while not a job placement site, does collate and list employment opportunities for the hearing impaired.
- [The Royal Association for Deaf People](#) has a team of employment specialists dedicated to aiding the hard of hearing, offering CV reviews, career guidance, connections to courses and much more.
- [Vercida](#) is an employment portal that specialises in finding opportunities for disabled individuals, including the deaf and hard of hearing.
- [The Association of Disabled Professionals](#) provides support for deaf individuals seeking work or career advice.

There is no need to rely on Universal Credit if you are deaf or hard of hearing. There are opportunities to find work. Perhaps more importantly, your legal right to retain your job after losing your hearing remains enshrined.

It should also be noted that you have no legal requirement to disclose deafness or hearing problems to a potential employer ahead of an interview. If you do so, however, the onus will be on said employer to comply by all relevant law and guidance surrounding equal opportunities.

Financial Support

Even if you are in full-time employment as a deaf or hard of hearing person, you may be entitled to financial assistance. This is designed to provide the greatest possible quality of life and independence, in and out of the workplace.

- [Royal National Institute for Deaf People - RNID](#) discusses the financial aid that is available to deaf and hard of hearing people in the UK. These include grants, which may be able available from your local authority.
- Most national grants are reserved for children with hearing loss. Charities such as [Turn2Us](#) provide the opportunity to search for

unique grants though, based upon your location and unique circumstances.

- Central government makes a range of grants and benefits available to deaf and hard of hearing individuals. These include:
 - [Disability Living Allowance](#)
 - [Personal Independence Payments](#)
 - [Employment Support Allowance](#)
 - [Attendance Allowance](#)

- Unfortunately, it can sometimes be difficult to convey the circumstances of deafness using standardised government templates and forms. It is worth discussing your situation with the [Citizen's Advice Bureau](#). Here, you will find a wide range of experts that can provide tailored advice and guidance as to how you can ease any fiscal burden.

Not all these financial options will be open and available to working people, regardless of hearing impairment. It is always advisable to investigate your options, though. Help is out there. It's often just a matter of asking.

Assisting Technology

To perform duties in the workplace, deaf employees may need a little more assistance. A workplace 'buddy' should always be assigned, designated to assist during fire alerts or similar emergency evacuations.

Other support is available, however. Take lipreading, for example. [The Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults](#) teaches classes in lipreading, which may be a huge benefit to any employee. In addition, anybody that works with a deaf employee would likely benefit from learning [British Sign Language](#).

As an employee with hearing difficulties, you may also benefit from other advances in technology.

- [AbilityNet](#) discusses smartphone apps that will hugely aid anybody that is hard of hearing.
- [The National Deaf Children's Society](#), while not directly concerned with workplace issues, also lists out adaptive technology that may be useful to adults.
- [Living Made Easy](#) has a list of suggestions for life hacks and technology that will change a deaf employee's life.
- [HearingLink](#) largely focuses on suggesting items for the home, but some of the apparatus suggested can also be used at work.
- [Hearing Dogs for Deaf People](#) provide canine companionship to anybody requiring assistance following hearing loss.

If you have any particular needs in order to complete your workplace duties, discuss these with your employer. In most cases, a business should make these accommodations for you – including covering the financial cost. If this is not the case, investigate some of the funding sources that we previously discussed.

Support for Blind Employees

Finding and retaining employment can already be challenging, and it's even tougher if you have been registered blind or partially sighted. There is no need to despair, though. A range of resources are available to assist anybody that is visually impaired in the workplace.

This guide will discuss your options, ensuring that you are treated fairly and equitably by an employer – whether seeking a new job, or adapting to a change in circumstances regarding your eyesight.

Legal Rights

First thing's first – you should ensure that you are completely aware of your legal rights as a blind or partially sighted employee.

- The government's [Equality Act of 2010](#) makes it a criminal offense for any business or employer to discriminate against an employee on the grounds of blindness or restricted vision. Blindness is considered a disability by law, a status that ensures particular protections.

- [RNIB](#) (previously known as the Royal National Institute for Blind People) discusses the 'reasonable steps' that employers should be expected to take to accommodate a blind or partially sighted employee.
- The Government-based [HSE: Information about health and safety at work](#) elaborates further on the rights and reasonable expectations of visually impaired employees. [The Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) should also be investigated.

If you have any doubt at all that you are not being treated fairly at work due to your eyesight, take action. There are multiple steps in this process, escalating if you feel that your concerns are not being addressed.

- Discuss your issues and concerns with your line manager, outlining changes that you would like to be made.
- Make a complaint to the Human Resources department of your business if these concerns are not addressed, or [contact your trade union representative](#) if applicable.
- [Report this issue to HSE](#) to request formal action.
- Seek legal advice if necessary. [The Disability Law Service](#) should be your first port of call here, as free advice is available.

Very few businesses will allow things to progress this far. In most cases, maintaining an open dialogue is the best and most fruitful approach. All the same, it pays to be aware of your rights – and how you can react if these rights are not being respected.

General Advice

Not all diagnoses and issues with vision are equal. There are many charities in the UK dedicated to aiding those with vision problems, whether caused by birth, illness or an accident.

Some examples of these include:

- [Blind Veterans](#)
- [Fight for Sight](#)
- [The International Glaucoma Association](#)
- [Retina UK](#)

- [ORBIS](#)
- [The Thomas Pocklington Trust](#)
- [SeeAbility](#)
- [Sightsavers](#)

Never be shy about seeking help or advice from these bodies. They have been established with the aim of aiding and assisting people that experience difficulties with their eyesight. The assistance, advice and support they offer can be invaluable.

Finding Work

Seeking work while registered blind is not always easy. Fortunately, there are schemes and programmes that will aid you in finding employment. Remember though, as a blind person you are legally entitled to apply for any appropriate job.

[Sight Advice](#) discusses this in more depth. While a blind individual may need a little additional support or technology, the right to work – and length and breadth of opportunities – should not be impacted by eyesight.

- [Blind in Business](#) offers training programs and work placements for blind and partially sighted employees.
- [Vercida](#) is an employment portal that specialises in finding opportunities for disabled individuals, including the blind and partially sighted.
- [The Association of Disabled Professionals](#) provides support for blind individuals seeking work or career advice.

There is no need to rely on Universal Credit if you are blind. There are opportunities to find new work. Perhaps more importantly, your legal right to retain your job after losing eyesight remains enshrined.

It should also be noted that you have no legal requirement to disclose blindness or vision problems to a potential employer ahead of an interview. If you do so, however, the onus will be on said employer to comply by all relevant law and guidance surrounding equal opportunities.

Financial Support

Even if you are in full-time employment as a blind or partially sighted person, you may be entitled to financial assistance. This is designed to provide the greatest possible quality of life and independence, in and out of the workplace.

- [RNIB](#) discusses the financial aid that is available to blind and partially sighted people in the UK. These include grants, which may be able available from your local authority.
- Charities such as [Turn2Us](#) provide the opportunity to search for unique grants, based upon your location and unique circumstances.
- Central government makes a range of grants and benefits available to blind and partially sighted individuals. These include:
 - [Disability Living Allowance](#)
 - [Personal Independence Payments](#)
 - [Employment Support Allowance](#)
 - [Attendance Allowance](#)
 - [Blind Person's Allowance](#)
- [The Macular Society](#) lists out the many and varied benefits that blind and partially sighted people are entitled to. These include concessions on travel, which may be invaluable to anybody that cannot drive themselves to work.
- If you are financially struggling, be sure to discuss your situation with the [Citizen's Advice Bureau](#). Here, you will find a wide range of experts that can provide tailored advice and guidance as to how you can ease any fiscal burden.

Not all these financial options will be open and available to working people, regardless of visual impairment. It is always advisable to investigate your options, though. Help is out there. It's often just a matter of asking.

Assisting Technology

To perform duties in the workplace, blind employees may need a little more assistance. A workplace 'buddy' should always be assigned, designated to assist during fire alerts or similar emergency evacuations.

Other support is available, however. [Technology is making the workplace increasingly accessible](#) to the visually impaired, and as discussed, an employer will be legally expected to make appropriate adjustments.

- [Guide Dogs](#) are the most popular form of assistance for blind individuals, acting as a visually impaired person's eyes while also providing companionship.
- [Blind New World](#) discusses advances in technology from 2017. Imagine how far things have progressed since then!
- [Living Made Easy](#) discusses the multitude of everyday items that can enhance a blind individual's quality of life, many of which are transferrable to the workplace.
- [Everyday Sight](#) lists a Top Ten examples of screen reading technology (reciting the content on a screen for the visually impaired), or which half are free of charge.

If you have any particular needs in order to complete your workplace duties, discuss these with your employer. In most cases, a business should make these accommodations for you – including covering the financial cost. If this is not the case, investigate some of the funding sources that we previously discussed.

Useful Links

Please see below for a summary of the many and varied sources that we have cited throughout this guide.

- The Association of Disabled Professionals – www.adp.org.uk
- Blind in Business – www.blindinbusiness.org.uk
- Blind New World – www.blindnewworld.org
- Blind Veterans – www.blindveterans.org.uk
- Citizen's Advice Bureau – www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- The Disability Law Service – www.dls.org.uk
- Equality Act of 2010 – www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance
- Equality and Human Rights Commission – www.equalityhumanrights.com
- Everyday Sight – www.everydaysight.com
- Fight for Sight – www.fightforsight.org.uk

- Guide Dogs – www.guidedogs.org.uk
- Health and Safety Executive – www.hse.gov.uk
- The International Glaucoma Association – www.glaucoma-association.com
- The Macular Society – www.macularsociety.org
- ORBIS – www.orbis.org
- Retina UK – www.retinauk.org.uk
- Royal National Institute of the Blind – www.rnib.org.uk
- SeeAbility – www.seeability.org
- Sightsavers – www.sightsavers.org
- The Thomas Pocklington Trust – www.pocklington-trust.org.uk
- Turn2Us – www.turn2us.org.uk
- AbilityNet – abilitynet.org.uk
- Action on Hearing Loss – actiononhearingloss.org.uk
- Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults – atlalipreading.org.uk
- The British Deaf Association – bda.org.uk
- British Sign Language – british-sign.co.uk
- Deaf Unity – deafunity.org
- Hearing Dogs for Deaf People – hearingdogs.org.uk
- HearingLink – hearinglink.org
- National Association for Deafened People – nadp.org.uk
- Royal Association for Deaf People – royaldeaf.org.uk
- SignHealth – signhealth.org.uk

© 2020 Businesscostsaver.co.uk | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Cookies](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Businesscostsaver.co.uk is a trading name of Clicks and Leads Limited. ICO Registration Number: ZA752619 Company Number: 10722786
Our registered address is: Lytchett House, 13 Freeland Park, Wareham Road, Poole, Dorset, BH16 6FA