

## **Disability and Impairment: potential issues and personal needs**

The students who were involved with creating the Preparation for Practice Assessment Tool, who were also disabled, have put together this information sheet to help any student who is disabled to think about and prepare for their placement experience.

### **General**

- Have you had a DSA [Disability Students' Allowance] assessment? If so do you need any support in using any of the equipment provided?
- Will the support you have in the university be equally available to you in the placement setting?
- Does your future workplace need a copy of your disability assessment, or do they need to support your use of equipment in any way?
- Have you visited your allocated placement?

### **Equipment**

Examples of equipment you might use:

- Large keyboard
- Magnifier
- Software (for example 'Dragon Naturally Speaking')
- Left handed tools - are they available?
- Braille

Will you be bringing your own equipment to your placement?

*If yes then:*

- Are there any guidelines or policies relating to your equipment or its use?
- When was your equipment last checked for safety? Is there up to date security in place?

- Are you able to transport your equipment to the work placement, or is there somewhere to store it there?
- Are there any rules, policies or guidelines about the use of equipment? Does your equipment need storing in a locked place? (medicines, injections)
- Does your equipment need to be kept at a certain temperature? (e.g. in a fridge)

*And specifically for assistive software...*

- Is your equipment compatible with the equipment at the work placement?
- If assistive software is available at the work placement, is it the same as yours and is it the same version?
- Will you have your own workstation or will you have multiple stations?
- Will you still be able to access any assistive software wherever you are sat?
- Do you own the relevant software?
- Can you use your own equipment at the work placement?
- Do you need to be in a particular place in the work placement? (e.g. if you use voice activated software do you need to be in a quieter area).
- Do you need to alter the colour of the computer screen or make any other changes to existing equipment?
- Do you require the work placements to purchase the assistive software for you? Are you eligible for access to work
- Will your equipment require PAT testing (portable appliance test)?
- Are there any rules, policies, or guidelines about the use of assistive software?
- Please remember that if you are using your own software on a PC within your placement you will need to arrange with the employer that their IT team install it for you (you will not have the relevant rights to install software).

*If no, then:*

- Does the employer have any equipment you require (e.g. have they a height adjustable desk or digital recorder)?
- Who is responsible for purchasing any equipment?

### **The working day or shift**

Managing a full working day can be stressful, these are some of the ideas we came up with:

- Is it possible to negotiate your hours, if you would have difficulties working a long shift?

- Is it possible to negotiate a later start time if you require this? An alternative might be sharing shifts i.e. try and do a staff rota to suit individuals, or have a request book
- Can you share transport with anyone?
- How often do you need to have short break “time out” i.e. to get fresh air, stretch, de-stress, rest eyes from screen, snack if diabetic, drink water if migraine, apply cream for skin condition? [Maybe everyone should have water, stretch break to function at higher efficiency!!]
- Can you plan this into your working day from start so it is the norm.

## Environment

Here are some thoughts about the environment, and how you might prepare in advance:

- Is the environment accessible for you?
- Are there specific routes around the work placement that you need to be aware of?
- What do you have to do during an emergency evacuation situation?
- Do you need to be seated in a particular area in order to hear (e.g. to be able to lip read)?
- Could you do an assessment of the building on a prior visit to see how you will feel most comfortable accessing buildings, toilets etc
- Some people do not like lifts so may need a security key to access stairs
- Some people may need a large toilet or black bags for waste and need to know where to dispose of clinical waste (colostomy bags, pads)
- Some people may need access to safety equipment ( e.g. sharp bins kept out of reach)

## Risks

Are there any particular risks for you? For example, a risk of epileptic or diabetic coma:

- Decide who needs to know, at your university and in the placement so you and others are safe
- Give details next of kin and/or hospital where treated in case of emergency
- Give info on what to do if you.. have a fit, get migraine, go hypo .. who to contact , and where to get medicine from - i.e. fridge
- Identify if there is a first aider and check for an up to date first aid box contents