

26 June 2023

Weekly Blog

By: Robyn Smith



Hi-ho its off to work we go....
on breaking down barriers for
disabled staff

Another new week is upon us meaning another look into the world of me and some (hopefully) insightful nuggets of information.

Well, I am not sure about you but for me time is absolutely flying. Now this could be because I am currently nearly 24 weeks pregnant and feel like I have generally lost the concept of time. It feels like its all blurred into one with the main common denominator being that it is simply just.... Going...veryyy... fast.

I won't bore you too much about this but if you have been pregnant or are currently pregnant or just have pregnant friends, I am sure you will very much know already that there is just a LOT to buy. At the weekend I finally sat down with the hubby and made a list of everything we think we are going to need for babygirl and all I can say is just WOW. For such a tiny human she needs a bloomin lot of things. Now I did enjoy doing this list- for anyone who knows me I love a list, being organised and just generally being ahead of the game- so I feel a bit more on it now. BUT... and yes there is a but...the list also filled me with this huge overwhelming realisation of TIME... and the fact I feel like we are very much running out of it before she arrives. I then had a slight spiral into – we haven't travelled enough, we haven't got anything ready, we need to have more dates before she comes... you can imagine the rest haha. My hubby managed to pull me out of my mini breakdown, and I got back into our little bubble of excitement.

I am sure many of you out there have your moments like this, not even just pregnancy related- but just because of life in general. It's completely natural...we are all only human after all. So, you have your moment if you need one and then just remember to pick yourself up and dust yourself off and go kick some ass.

Well, that's enough of me babbling on. How about I tell you something useful now?

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I am going to delve slightly into the world of disability and how disabled employees are currently feeling in the workplace with regards to adjustments. The reason I am going to touch upon this is because the results of the Great Big Workplace Adjustments Survey 2023 are now out. This survey was developed by Business Disability Forum and was a project they ran from October 2022 until June 2023. They designed the survey to try and get some key questions out there about disabled employees in the workplace and how adjustments were being dealt with.

The Survey received almost 1,900 responses from disabled employees and managers and the general consensus was that disabled employees wait too long for reasonable adjustments to be made.

So, what were the general findings?

1. 78% of the responses received said that initiation on taking action regarding adjustments has been employee led
2. 56% of the responses received said they faced disability-related barriers even after adjustments had been made.

For the above, the survey suggested the following for employers:

- To have a 'single entry point' for all health, adjustments and wellbeing support so that support is found quicker and decisions made more effectively.
- For conversations and adjustment reviews to take place every time a change happens, not just annually.

3. Disability passports (a document that provides a framework within which the employee and line manager can discuss the employee's health and what changes can be made at work to assist them)) were not found to have improved the experience of disability inclusion or getting adjustments. Having a disability passport led to an increase in conversations about disabilities for just 11% of the people that responded.

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The report encourages employers to do the following regarding the above:

- Ensure conversations, even where difficult, emotional or uncomfortable, still happen and that passports are used to facilitate, not replace, conversations.
- Employers should ensure passports are kept in a safe, secure way, and more guidance and training should be provided to managers on how to use them. To reduce stigma, employers should consider using passports for all employees, not just those who are disabled.

4. Occupational Health was not found to be working alongside employer's workplace adjustments processes- only 22% of disabled employees and 25% of managers said OH had helped disabilities or conditions being managed at work.

The report encouraged employers to do the following regarding the above:

- Include questions that require providers to adhere to the employer's diversity and disability inclusion policies and guidance.
- Managers should also be supported to know how to make an effective referral and what to do with an occupational health report.

(Spoiler alert – Precept are great at these!)

5. Bullying and harassment in the workplace due to their disability or condition was reported by 38% of the responses received and 40% said they had felt patronised or put down by others because of their disability or condition.

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The report encouraged employers to do the following regarding the above:

- Undertake a bullying and harassment review of their organisation. The survey should include querying whether employees think the treatment they have received was because of their protected characteristic so that interventions can be appropriately targeted.
- Employers are also encouraged to be confident that their policies have an appropriate threshold for what constitutes bullying and harassment.

So, what does the above show us- that as employers, you really need to pull your fingers out and be more on top of this (if you aren't already! Obviously Precept clients are all at the top of their game). The above recommendations give you a really helpful steer on the kind of steps you can be doing so, if you are not doing them already, then be sure to get on these so that you can get ahead of the game. The key things to take away from the above are the following:

1. Be sure to take initiative and don't just wait for the employee to come to you
2. Communicate, communicate, communicate
3. Have regular reviews and meetings in place
4. Ensure your policies and procedures are up to scratch
5. Ensure relevant training is obtained so your employees feel better informed – Precept are also great at this too!

If you have any queries on anything above or just want to run something by us then you know where we are.