

Disability examples

These examples are based on the legal definition of disability. Find out more about [what disability means by law \(Equality Act 2010\)](#).

Example 1 – a condition that gets worse over time

Chris has asthma. It's mild and it does not often affect their day-to-day activities. At this point, it's likely that Chris does not have a disability.

Over time, Chris's asthma gets worse. It starts to have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities. If this goes on for 12 months, or it's likely to, then Chris probably has a disability.

Example 2 – having more than one condition

Val has arthritis and sciatica. Each condition on its own is not very severe for Val at the moment. But the impact of the two conditions together significantly affects Val's ability to carry out day-to-day tasks. It's likely that Val has a disability.

Example 3 – cancer

Eli has prostate cancer. The cancer is at an early stage and it is not having any effect on day-to-day activities. Eli is still protected by discrimination law because cancer is automatically classed as a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

Example 4 – when someone has not been diagnosed

Ari has been struggling with day-to-day tasks since a close friend died more than 12 months ago. They are often not able to do things like getting dressed, cooking and talking to people. It's been having a significant effect on their work and they often have days off sick.

Ari has not been diagnosed with a mental health condition like depression but they are showing signs of having poor mental health. Ari could have a disability if it's having a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

This is an example of where an employer might reasonably be expected to know that Ari could have a disability.

The employer should not try to diagnose Ari – only a medical professional can do that. The employer should focus on supporting Ari and encourage them to ask for any adjustments they need.

Get more advice and support

[Find out more about supporting disabled people at work](#)

If you have any questions about disability and work, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).

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