

Less Abled Employees

Date of first issue	Jan 2013
Document Reference	CM027
Version	2.0
Revised Date	October 2013

Contents

Section 1 – Introduction

- 1.1 Context
- 1.2 Purpose
- 1.3 Scope

Section 2 – Procedure

- 2.1 Definitions
- 2.2 Accommodating Less Abled Employees
- 2.3 Planning and Management
- 2.4 Implementation of Safe Practices
- 2.5 Considerations
- 2.6 Additional Support

Introduction

1.1 Context

Allcare Pharmacy is proud to be an equal opportunities employer. It is important to recognise when an employee has special needs in relation to health and safety requirements. The company is committed to the provision of a safe working environment for all employees and visitors to our pharmacies.

1.2 Purpose

The aim of this policy is to provide guidance to managers to enable them to adequately cater for the required needs of less-abled employees employed, so that they can carry out their duties with the knowledge and equipment they require to do so safely.

1.3 Scope

This policy is applicable to all managers within the company. The main points of this policy are included in the employee handbook.

Procedure

2.1 Definitions

About one in ten Irish people has some form of disability. That could be a physical disability, vision impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual disability or mental health condition. You may already have employees with disabilities, whether or not those disabilities are apparent or known to you.

Other employees may acquire a disability in the future. About four out of five people with a disability acquire them as an adult.

Some forms of disability are not immediately visible (for example epilepsy or asthma, or mental health conditions such as depression or anxiety). Often employees with a 'hidden disability' choose not to disclose their status because they are concerned that their employer will focus on their disability rather than their ability.

If employees are not comfortable about disclosing a disability, their health and safety needs may not be identified and met. It is good health and safety practice, therefore, to create a supportive, non-judgemental environment, and to communicate that to all employees.

2.2 Accommodating Less Abled Employees in the Workplace

Under the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004, employers are obliged to take appropriate measures to enable people with disabilities to have access to employment, to participate or advance in employment and to undergo training. Such measures may include training resources or adaptations to:

- Workplace premises to make them more accessible for employees with disabilities.
- Work equipment.
- Patterns of working time.
- Distribution of tasks.

Practical examples might include,

- A talking lift with tactile floor buttons.
- Adjustable height desks.
- Hands free telephone sets.
- Later start and finish times.
- Organising the distribution of work tasks in a team so that staff members who are hard of hearing are not expected to take notes.

An employer is not obliged to provide any facility or treatment that employees can reasonably be expected to provide for themselves.

2.3 Planning and Management

Good planning and effective management are the key elements in developing and maintaining a health and safety management system for a safe and healthy work environment. It is important to consider the different needs of all your employees so that health and safety planning and management are fully inclusive of their diverse needs.

It is good practice to ask all employees, during their induction period into a new job and at regular job review meetings, if they have any particular health or safety requirements – whether or not you are aware of any disability.

2.4 Implementation of Safe Practices

Ensure that the safety policies and procedures you have adopted are actually being implemented. For example, that there are no trailing wires or inappropriately stored boxes, which are a trip hazard for any staff member, but particularly for those with restricted vision or reduced mobility. Carry out regular checks, thoroughly investigate any safety lapses and address the causes. Make health and safety everyone's business, and build that into your systems to recognise good performance.

2.5 Considerations

Do

- Consult with individual staff members on their health and safety requirements. If you want to talk to an employee's doctor about his or her needs you will need the workers consent.
- Check with relevant specialist disability organisations on safety requirements, adaptations and supports for employees with disabilities.
- Ensure an inclusive workplace where all employee needs are respected.
- Be alert to and protect staff from bullying and harassment.

Don't

- Presume there is no-one on your staff with a disability. Many disabilities are not readily apparent.
- Ignore a persons disability, as the introduction of controls may be necessary to ensure that persons safety and welfare.

2.6 Additional Support

Additional support for managers and employees is available through the following:

- Business Manager
- Health & Safety Coordinator
- Human Resources Department