



## A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES

People with Crohn's or Colitis can do a wide range of jobs, and many go on to have successful careers. But living with Crohn's or Colitis may have an impact on your working life. This guide can help you understand:

- The support you can get at work
- How to talk to your employer about your condition
- Your rights when looking for a job
- Your rights at work

It is for anyone with Crohn's or Colitis who is working, or thinking about working.

- This guide talks about the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).
- If you live in England, Scotland or Wales you are covered by the Equality Act 2010.
- If you live in Northern Ireland, you are covered by the DDA 1995.

The information in this guide is general information. It was correct when it was published, but it could change. We will keep this information up to date if there are changes. You may need to get professional advice for your situation. See the [other organisations](#) at the end of this resource for suggestions.

## CONTENTS

<b>Key facts about employment .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>When is Crohn's or Colitis a disability? .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Telling people about your Crohn's or Colitis .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>While applying for a job .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>When you have received a job offer .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>In your current job .....</b>	<b>8</b>



<b>Telling colleagues.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Reasonable adjustments.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Access to Work .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Travelling for work .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Time off work .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Sickness absence.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Working with food.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Time off due to medical appointments .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Returning to work after a long absence.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>I'm finding it difficult to continue working.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Financial help .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Your employment rights.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Protection under the Equality Act 2010 or DDA 1995 .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Discrimination.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Your health and safety at work.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>If you feel your employer is not considering your safety .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Dismissal.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>If you think you have been discriminated against.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Have an informal chat.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Raise a formal grievance .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Making a claim to an employment tribunal .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Other organisations.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Help and support for people with a stoma or J-pouch .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Your rights and legal support .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Employment and training support.....</b>	<b>33</b>



<b>Trade unions .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Volunteering .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>The police and armed forces .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Help and support from Crohn's &amp; Colitis UK.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Helpline service.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Crohn's &amp; Colitis UK Forum.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Help with toilet access when out.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>About Crohn's &amp; Colitis UK .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>About our information.....</b>	<b>38</b>

## KEY FACTS ABOUT EMPLOYMENT

- You do not have to tell your employer about your Crohn's or Colitis. But it may help you feel more supported at work.
- The Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) define when someone is considered disabled. These laws protect disabled people from being treated unfairly.
- Crohn's and Colitis are not automatically classed as disabilities under the law. But they may be classed as a disability depending on the effect on your daily life.
- If your employer knows about your Crohn's or Colitis, they can make changes to your workplace to help you do your job. These are called reasonable adjustments.
- There are steps you can take if you think you have been discriminated against because of your Crohn's or Colitis.
- You may find that your condition still makes it difficult to work. Remember that you have options. Keep a positive mindset. Look at what you are good at and enjoy doing.



- You can get more help and advice from the [other organisations](#) listed at the end of this resource. You can also contact your HR department, union, or Citizens Advice. They can help you find the latest employment information.

## WHEN IS CROHN'S OR COLITIS A DISABILITY?

Crohn's and Colitis are not automatically classed as disabilities under the Equality Act 2010 or DDA 1995. But they are conditions which might be classed as a disability depending on the effect they have on your daily life. You may not personally see yourself as being 'disabled' but be considered disabled under the legal definition.

The Equality Act 2010 and DDA 1995 define when someone is considered disabled. Anyone with an ongoing illness may qualify for protection against discrimination.

### What is a disability?

A disability is a long-term condition that makes it more difficult for someone to do certain activities and interact with the world around them. These activities could include walking, driving, cooking or eating, using public transport, writing or carrying things. It may also include when your abilities at work are affected because of Crohn's or Colitis symptoms, such as pain, fatigue or diarrhoea. Long-term means the effect has lasted, or is likely to last, at least a year.

You have the same protection even if your Crohn's or Colitis symptoms change over time. For example, you may have times when you have few or no symptoms. There may be other times when your symptoms are active. The main point is that the overall effect is long-term.

When deciding if someone is disabled under the law, treatment for a health condition is not usually considered. This means that you may still benefit from the protection of the law even if your symptoms are controlled by medicines.



If you have a stoma, you may be classed as disabled if:

- You were previously considered disabled. You are still covered by the law, even if your stoma keeps your condition under control.
- Your condition still makes it more difficult for you to do certain activities and interact with the world around you.

There is no national register of people with a disability. Some local authorities keep registers of disabled people in their area. Registration is voluntary and does not automatically entitle you to any benefits or support.

If you're not sure whether you are considered disabled under the law, you may be able to get advice from:

- Your GP or IBD team
- [\*\*Equality Advisory Support Service \(EASS\)\*\*](#), in England, Scotland and Wales
- [\*\*Equality Commission for Northern Ireland\*\*](#)

If you think you fit the criteria of disability, you could talk to your employer to see how they can support you. See the section on [\*\*reasonable adjustments\*\*](#).

Find out more:

- [\*\*What counts as disability\*\*](#), in England, Scotland and Wales
- [\*\*Definition of Disability\*\*](#), in Northern Ireland

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## TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT YOUR CROHN'S OR COLITIS

You do not have to tell an employer or potential employer that you have Crohn's or Colitis. But if you tell your employer you are disabled, they have a legal responsibility to support you.

### While applying for a job

You may be unsure whether to say that you have Crohn's or Colitis when looking for a job. You do not have to tell a potential employer if you are disabled. If you do, you could mention it:

- In your application form
- In a job interview
- When you are offered a job

If you ask for **reasonable adjustments** at an interview, you do not need to say you have Crohn's or Colitis, or are disabled. However, it may help to say why the adjustments are needed.

The Equality Act 2010 and DDA 1995 are laws that protect against unfair treatment. These laws stop employers asking questions about your health or disability before offering you a job. This includes asking how many sick days you've had. These laws apply to questions on an application form and questions asked in an interview. There are a few exceptions to this. For details of these, see the Government Equalities Office **Quick start guide**.



You may find it helpful to speak to a careers adviser. A careers service can help you with job-hunting and applications. See the careers service for your nation:

- England: [National Careers Service](#)
- Northern Ireland: [Careers](#)
- Scotland: [My World of Work](#)
- Wales: [Careers Wales](#)

## Disability Confident scheme

You may see a 'Disability Confident' symbol on a job advert. This means that an employer has committed to employ, keep and develop disabled staff.

- Find out more about the [Disability Confident scheme](#).
- See a list of employers who have signed up to the [Disability Confident scheme](#).

## When you have received a job offer

If you decide to tell an employer about your Crohn's or Colitis, it may be helpful to write a list of questions. You might want to ask about:

- Storing medicine at work
- Sickness absence
- Taking phone calls from your IBD team
- Going to medical appointments

You might also find it useful to show them our [guide for employers](#). This can help your employer learn more about Crohn's and Colitis and how they can support you at work.

Some job offers may have conditions that you need to meet before you are given the job. These conditions can include references and medical checks. Once you have



a conditional job offer, your employer can ask questions about your health. A conditional job offer can be withdrawn if the conditions are not met. The employer must show that you would not be able to do the job after reasonable adjustments have been made.

You may feel that you would have been able to do the job with reasonable adjustments. If so, you can make a complaint to an employment tribunal. An employment tribunal is a panel of experts. They make decisions on employment disputes. Find out more about employment tribunals in If you think you have been discriminated against.

## In your current job

If you are diagnosed when you are already working, or if your condition gets worse, you may consider telling your employer. It's your decision whether to tell your employer or not.

Some people decide not to tell their employer about their Crohn's or Colitis. However, it can help to have the understanding and support from people around you. Telling your employer can help them better understand your needs. They can help you feel more supported and productive at work.

"I've worked for the same company for 17 years, so they've seen me through every stage of this journey. They have provided counselling sessions, paid time off to focus on my recovery, flexible working hours for hospital or doctor appointments, and have always asked if I need any assistance at the workplace."

**ROXANNA  
LIVING WITH COLITIS**



If you tell your employer about your condition, you can talk to them about making **reasonable adjustments**.

"When I was first diagnosed I was hesitant to talk openly to my employer about it (who really wants to talk about their toilet habits with their boss?). But once I did it was liberating and they made me realise I had nothing to worry about. They just wanted me to succeed, and were understanding of needing to use the bathroom more, needing more breaks between meetings and flexibility when travelling to meetings. My advice is to always talk about it."

**BEN**  
**LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

If you want support when you tell your employer, you could ask someone to be with you. This could be a colleague or friend at work. Many people find that their employers are supportive. Your employer may have questions, especially if they do not know much about Crohn's or Colitis. You might find it useful to show them our **guide for employers**. This can help your employer learn more about Crohn's or Colitis. It includes ways they can support you at work.



"I know I'm very fortunate to have a supportive working environment, however for those who aren't as lucky, Crohn's & Colitis UK and their [\*\*'Are You IN?'\*\*](#) programme can be a huge help! The charity creates a supportive community who you can reach out to for advice and to see similar stories to what you may be going through."

**ROXANNA**  
**LIVING WITH COLITIS**

## Are You IN?

Our [\*\*'Are You IN?'\*\*](#) webpage offers free tools and resources to help organisations better support employees. You may find the [\*\*employee conversation guide\*\*](#) useful in starting conversations with your employer.

## Telling colleagues

Steven shares his experience of telling his employers and colleagues in [\*\*our blog\*\*](#).

You do not have to tell the people you work with about your Crohn's or Colitis. But there can be benefits in letting others know.

"A brief conversation to explain your condition and its impact can help create a more understanding and supportive workplace, especially with close colleagues."

**ROXANNA**  
**LIVING WITH COLITIS**



You could show your manager or colleagues the [information on our website](#). This could help them to better understand your condition.

**"I told my team about my condition. I felt happier that they knew why I've had to take sick days."**

**GARI**  
**LIVING WITH COLITIS**

Crohn's and Colitis can be difficult conditions to talk about and are sometimes misunderstood. Our [Talking Toolkit](#) can support you to start the conversation with your colleagues.

## REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

If your employer knows about your Crohn's or Colitis, they may be able to make changes to help you do your job. These are called reasonable adjustments. You can ask for reasonable adjustments to help any disadvantage related to your disability.

Employers have a legal duty to consider making reasonable adjustments for employees with a disability.

An employer must consider making adjustments when:

- They know an employee is disabled
- It is reasonable to expect they know an employee is disabled
- The employee is disadvantaged in work because of their disability
- The employee with a disability is having difficulty with any part of their job
- The employee with a disability has asked for adjustments to be made
- The employee's sickness record or delay in returning to work is linked to their disability
- Adjustments would lessen the employee's disadvantage or difficulties at work



There is no definition of what is reasonable. An adjustment is likely to be reasonable if:

- It is affordable
- It is practical
- It will remove or reduce the disadvantage

This can depend on the type and size of the business.

**"When I had a bad flare-up around 6 years ago, I saw an occupational therapist who recommended a number of workplace adjustments. I went through them with my employer and was amazed at how supportive they were - providing a specialist keyboard and mouse, for example, and even an automatic stapler because the pain in my joints made it very difficult to use a standard one."**

**ALUN**  
**LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

When you talk to your employer, it may be useful to have some suggestions of changes that would help you.

Some general adjustments include:

- Allowing time off for medical appointments or treatment.
- Flexible working arrangements, such as shorter or different hours.
- Moving you to a different place of work.
- Spreading your breaks out more evenly across the day.
- Unlimited toilet breaks.
- A **phased return to work** after absence.
- Not including **time off for Crohn's or Colitis** in absence reviews or trigger points.



If you work in an office:

- Moving your workstation close to a toilet.
- Your own desk instead of hotdesking.
- A car parking space closer to the building.
- Offering another place of work or working from home.
- Providing you with relevant training. For example, if you take on new tasks that are more suited to your needs.
- Providing a fan or heater to keep you comfortable.

If you travel for work:

- Starting work later.
- Avoiding peak travel times.
- Allowing extra or longer breaks.

If you have a stoma:

- Allowing you to return to work gradually after surgery. This could be working fewer hours, or being flexible about when you work your hours.
- Making changes to your workplace, including stoma-friendly toilet facilities.
- Providing specific aids, such as disposal facilities for your bag.
- Use of a disabled toilet where wash hand basins are in the cubicle.

If you are immunosuppressed:

- Working from home.
- Travelling to or from work outside of peak times on public transport.
- Attending large meetings online.



"During previous times when I have had flare-ups and, most recently, after I had surgery, I was offered the opportunity to work reduced and flexible hours. This really helped me with coping with my Crohn's and the pressures of work and daily life."

**CARL**  
**LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

Read [our blog](#) to hear Alicia's experience of asking for support as an actor.

Adjustments such as easy access to toilets or time off for medical appointments can make a big difference. Adjustments can help you at work and boost your wellbeing.

There may be times when symptoms get in the way of work. Our individual [symptoms resources](#) include things you can try to help manage your symptoms.

If you have an occupational health department at your workplace, they can provide support and guidance to you and your employer. Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) has more information about [occupational health assessments](#). Occupational health may need more information from your doctor.

Your employer may not have an occupational health department or policy. In this case, they should work directly with you and your doctor. They must get your permission before contacting your doctor. Acas have more on [getting a doctor's report](#). It includes what health information your employer can ask for.

If adjustments are too expensive, a scheme called [Access to Work](#) may be able to help.



If you have talked about adjustments with your employer and cannot reach an agreement, you could raise a formal written complaint. See the section [\*\*If you think you have been discriminated against\*\*](#).

For more detailed guidance on your rights, you could contact the:

- [\*\*Equality Advisory Support Service \(EASS\)\*\*](#), in England, Scotland and Wales
- [\*\*Equality Commission for Northern Ireland\*\*](#)

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## ACCESS TO WORK

Sometimes, the reasonable adjustments your employer makes will not cover all of your needs. Access to Work can give your employer money to pay for extra support. It could cover the cost of travelling to work in a taxi if you cannot get public transport. Or it could be used to change equipment to make it easier for you to use.

You may not be eligible for Access to Work if you receive certain benefits. If you live in England, Scotland or Wales, see [\*\*GOV.UK\*\*](#) for more information.

If you live in Northern Ireland, see NI Direct for information on [\*\*Access to Work\*\*](#) and other [\*\*work schemes for people with a health condition or disability\*\*](#).

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## TRAVELLING FOR WORK

Some people may find it difficult to travel to work or do jobs that include lots of travelling. Your journey to work may take longer, or you may find mornings more difficult with symptoms. Speak to your employer if starting work at a certain time in the morning is stressful for you.

You may find it helpful to get a Can't Wait Card and RADAR key. A RADAR key can open public accessible toilets. You can get a Can't Wait Card and a RADAR key by becoming a [\*\*Crohn's & Colitis UK\*\*](#) member. Or you can get a RADAR key from the



**[Disability Rights UK online store](#)**. You may also be able to buy a RADAR key from your local council.

"I told my employer about my condition when I began my job, as I was struggling with the work environment and the lengthy journey to get there. They kindly agreed to let me work from home when I needed to, which has really helped."

**GILLIAN**  
**LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

See if you can get help with travel costs from [Access to Work](#).

The [Toilet Map](#) is a searchable website of public toilets. It covers most of the UK, including toilets in tube and rail stations. There are also mobile phone apps that can help you find nearby toilets or changing facilities.

If you drive to work, you could ask to park in an accessible parking space. Or in a parking space closer to your workplace. You could also keep a travel toilet in your car.

You may need to stay overnight or travel overseas for work. Check how you will travel with and store your medicines. You may also want to share any dietary requirements in advance.

See our information on [travelling](#) for other things to consider when travelling to or for work.



## TIME OFF WORK

Having Crohn's or Colitis may mean that you need to take time off work. This could be due to sickness if you are having a flare-up, or to attend medical appointments. Each workplace will deal with time off differently.

### Sickness absence

Sickness absence is usually unplanned time off when you do not feel well enough to work. This includes your physical and mental health. Some workplaces will have a sickness absence policy, and you may be entitled to sick leave. This policy usually outlines:

- Who to let know if you are taking sick leave
- How to keep in touch while you are off work
- How much sick pay you are entitled to, and for how long
- How your employer will keep track of and record time off
- If having repeated sickness absence will trigger a review process

Disability leave is when you need to take time off work because of a reason related to your disability. This should be included in your workplace sickness absence policy. If you are considered disabled, you may be able to ask your employer for **reasonable adjustments** for time off work. For example, your employer could record the time you have off work because of your Crohn's or Colitis separately to other sickness absence.

If you are too ill to work, you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). See our information on [money and finding financial support](#) for more on SSP.

### Working with food

If you work with food and have diarrhoea or vomiting, check your workplace policy on time off. You should still be able to work if your diarrhoea or vomiting is not due to



an infection. This includes diarrhoea or vomiting caused by Crohn's Disease, Ulcerative Colitis and Microscopic Colitis.

### Time off due to medical appointments

You may need to attend appointments because of your Crohn's or Colitis. For example, having an infusion at hospital during work hours. There is no legal right for your employer to give you time off for these appointments. They may ask you to make the time up or use your holiday entitlement.

Many workplaces have a medical appointments policy which will cover:

- If you can take time off for appointments
- If you will be paid for this time off
- How much time you can take off

You may be able to ask for a reasonable adjustment for time off for appointments. For example, changing your working hours so you can go to medical appointments.

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## RETURNING TO WORK AFTER A LONG ABSENCE

When you're thinking about going back to work, try to arrange a meeting with your employer. This could be by phone, video call or face-to-face.

You can have a chat to make sure you are ready to return to work. Ask your employer for updates on what has happened while you were off. Your IBD team may have given you some recommendations on how to support your return to work. Let your employer know what these are. Let your employer know anything else that you think could make going back to work easier.

See the Acas website for more information on [returning to work after an absence](#).

If you are off sick for more than seven days, you will need to get a '**fit note**'. You can get this from your GP or other healthcare professional if you are in hospital. They may suggest that you can return to work with extra support or adjustments. For



example, building up slowly to your usual hours and duties. This is called a 'phased' return to work.

An example of a phased return is working a few hours each day and gradually increasing your hours. Or starting with lighter duties and gradually increasing your workload.

Your employer can ask for a doctor's report about your health if they need to:

- Check that you are well enough to do your work
- Prevent health and safety risks
- Prevent disability discrimination

You'll need to give permission for your doctor to give the report to your employer. You can ask to see the report before it is sent to your employer. Your employer must keep this information confidential. They will then be able to make **reasonable adjustments** to help you return to work.

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## I'M FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE WORKING

If you are struggling to continue working, it can help to speak to someone. You may prefer to speak to a friend or family member before you speak to your employer. You could also speak to someone else at work, such as a human resources or occupational health adviser. Or your workplace may have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The EAP can offer practical advice for work-related and personal issues, including mental health and wellbeing. You may also want to look at our **mental health and wellbeing information**.

You may find that your condition still makes it too difficult to work. Deciding to leave your job or stop working is a big decision. Speak to family and friends if possible. Consider weighing up different factors, such as your reasons for working and your financial situation.



You could consider:

- Self-employment. The benefits of self-employment could be:
  - Working hours to suit your energy levels
  - Better access to a toilet
  - Greater flexibility around travel

You can get help and advice about self-employment from:

- [MoneyHelper](#)
- [GOV.UK](#)
- [NIDirect](#)
- [Access to Work](#)
- Re-training. You may find that you work more effectively in another kind of job. Several organisations offer training, such as the [Shaw Trust](#), [Ability Net](#), and [Leonard Cheshire](#).
- Ill health retirement or early retirement. You can get information about pensions from [MoneyHelper](#) or [NIDirect](#). It may be helpful to get financial advice, including how taking your pension could affect other benefits you are claiming. For more information on ill health and early retirement, see [money and finding financial support](#).
- Volunteering. If financial income is not essential to you, volunteering can be a rewarding experience and can help you learn new skills. It could provide a challenge while allowing you to give something to others. See our list of [other organisations](#) for volunteering opportunities. Scope also provide information on [volunteering](#).

Crohns and Colitis UK offers [volunteering opportunities](#). For further information, contact our Volunteering Team on 01727 734475 or by emailing [volunteering@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk).

Mac talks about his career change in [our blog](#).



If you are unable to work due to your Crohn's or Colitis, you may be entitled to claim benefits. See the next section on [financial help](#).

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## FINANCIAL HELP

If you have care or mobility needs caused by your Crohn's or Colitis, you may be eligible for:

- [Personal Independence Payment \(PIP\)](#)
- [Adult Disability Payment \(ADP\)](#), in Scotland only

You may be eligible to claim these benefits whether or not you are working. For more information you can read our resource on [disability benefits](#).

If you are too ill to work, your employer should pay Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

If you're unable to return to work because of a health condition, disability or sickness, you may qualify for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). ESA can also provide support to get you back into part-time work if you're able to. See our information on [money and finding financial support](#) for more on SSP and ESA.

Some employers may pay you more than SSP. Check the terms of your employment and your employer's sickness policy.

If your income has dropped or changed, you can use an online benefit calculator to see if you are entitled to claim any benefits. GOV.UK recommends the following benefits calculators:

- [Turn2us](#)
- [Policy in Practice](#)
- [entitledto](#)

See GOV.UK for more details on using [benefits calculators](#).



Find out more about [financial support that may be available to you](#).

## YOUR EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

You are entitled to certain legal rights whether you are an employee, worker, self-employed or an agency worker. The [government website](#) has information about the rights for each job category.

You may also have extra rights in your employment contract, such as being allowed to take time off for appointments. Have a look at your contract and speak to your employer to see what you are entitled to.

You can get more information about employment rights from:

- [Acas](#), for England, Scotland and Wales
- [Labour Relations Agency](#), for Northern Ireland
- Your trade union representative, if you have one

Citizens Advice could also help:

- [England](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Wales](#)

The law will give you greater protection if you qualify as disabled under the Equality Act 2010 or DDA 1995.



## PROTECTION UNDER THE EQUALITY ACT 2010 OR DDA 1995

The Equality Act 2010 and DDA 1995 are in place to protect people against discrimination at work if they have a disability. This includes people who are:

- Working full or part time
- Working on a casual basis
- On zero-hours contracts
- An agency worker
- Trainees
- Apprentices
- Self-employed, in some situations

If you are self-employed and think you have been discriminated against because of your condition, get specialist legal advice.

The Equality Act 2010 and DDA 1995 covers all aspects of employment, including:

- Job interviews
- Job offers
- Pay
- Training
- Promotion
- Dismissal
- Redundancy



## Discrimination

Discrimination can happen in different forms. It is discrimination when:

- You are treated worse than someone who is not disabled, because of your disability. This is known as direct discrimination.
- You are at a disadvantage because of a policy or practice used by your employer. You may be treated the same as someone who is not disabled. This is known as indirect discrimination.
- **Reasonable adjustments** are not made to help you do your job. This is known as failure to make reasonable adjustments.
- You get unwanted or offensive behavior because of your disability. This is known as harassment.
- You are treated unfairly because you have complained about discrimination or bullying. This is known as victimisation.

Find out what to do [\*\*if you think you have been discriminated against\*\*](#).

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## YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Your employer has a legal duty to keep you safe at work. They should have a workplace risk assessment. They do not need a separate risk assessment for someone with a disability. But they do need to make sure the existing risk assessment covers someone with a disability. Your employer should consult with you on health and safety issues.

Employers may not understand Crohn's or Colitis. Our [\*\*guide for employers\*\*](#) includes how to support an employee with Crohn's or Colitis. You may want to share this with your employer.

If you are taking an immunosuppressant, you may be more at risk of complications associated with a weakened immune system. This includes infections. You can still fight off infections, but not quite as well as other people.



Our information on [precautions if you are taking an immunosuppressant](#) covers some of these risks. It includes practical ways to lower your risk.

## If you feel your employer is not considering your safety

If you feel your employer is not taking reasonable steps to help protect you, you can:

- Contact your employee representative, if you have one.
- Contact your trade union, if you have one. If you're not a member of a trade union, you can find advice on joining one on [GOV.UK](#).
- Report this to the enforcing authority for your workplace:
  - England, Scotland and Wales: [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#)
  - Northern Ireland: [Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland \(HSENI\)](#)

## DISMISSAL

Dismissal is when your employer ends your contract. This means you no longer work for them. It is sometimes called being sacked, fired or let go.

There may be times when your employer has made reasonable adjustments, but you are having a lot of absences or you are struggling to return to work. Dismissal should be a last resort. It should come after your employer has tried other ways to support you and help you get back to work. Your employer might carry out a capability or performance procedure. This will include:

- Talking with you about your disability, how it affects you, and your ability to do your job.
- Getting evidence about your ability and any support or adjustments that have been put in place.



Your employer might consider dismissal if:

- You are unable to do your job after support and reasonable adjustments have been put in place.
- There is not another more suitable role they could offer you.
- There is not another way to do the work that you do.

Your workplace may have this procedure written in a capability or performance policy. Your employer should follow this before deciding on dismissal. Read more about capability procedures at [Acas](#).

If you feel like you have been treated unfairly, see [\*\*If you think you have been discriminated against\*\*](#).

Citizens Advice could also help:

- [England](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Wales](#)

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## **IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST**

You may feel that you are not being treated fairly at work because of your Crohn's or Colitis. There are steps you can take to help resolve the problem.

If you are not sure where to start, have a look at:

- [\*\*How to raise a problem at work\*\*](#) on the Acas website
- [\*\*Resolving problems\*\*](#) (Northern Ireland)



Having problems at work may affect your mental wellbeing. It's important to find the right support. We have information on supporting your [mental health and wellbeing](#). Your workplace may also have an employee assistance programme (EAP) you can contact.

## Have an informal chat

It's usually a good idea to talk informally to your employer or manager about your concerns as a first step.

If you do not feel comfortable talking to your manager, try speaking to someone from:

- Human Resources (HR). The HR department manages things such as recruitment, pay, annual leave, sick pay and policies.
- Occupational Health (OH). OH teams help to keep employees well at work, both physically and mentally.
- If your workplace does not have a HR or OH team, they may have health and wellbeing advisors or a mental health first aider that you could talk to.

Things can often be resolved by talking them through. It can be helpful to keep notes of conversations or meetings, just in case you need to take the matter further.

## Raise a formal grievance

If the situation does not improve, you could make a formal complaint. You can do this through your employer's grievance procedure. You should raise the issue as soon as you can. You can download a [grievance letter template](#) from Acas.

Your employer then has to arrange a meeting with you to discuss the problem. You have a legal right to bring a colleague or trade union representative if you ask your employer beforehand. Depending on the employer's policy, a family member or friend may be able to come with you.



- Acas has a [helpful guide to raising a formal grievance](#)
- NIDirect also has information on [how to resolve a problem at work](#)

If you are not happy with the result of this meeting, you can make an appeal to your employer. If you appeal, your employer will look at your case again to see if the decision should be changed. See the Acas information on [how to appeal](#). After your appeal, your employer should invite you to a hearing. A hearing is a meeting where your employer looks at all the evidence and makes a final decision. See the Acas information on [preparing for a hearing](#).

## Making a claim to an employment tribunal

If the problem is still not resolved after raising a formal grievance, you may be able to make a claim to an employment tribunal. An employment tribunal is a panel of three experts who make decisions on employment disputes. An employment tribunal claim can take a lot of time and energy for everyone involved. It's usually seen as a last resort if you cannot resolve your problem any other way.

An employment tribunal can only deal with certain types of claims. This includes issues with pay, unfair dismissal and discrimination. The first step is to notify:

- [Acas](#) if you are in England, Scotland or Wales
- [Labour Relations Agency](#) if you are in Northern Ireland

You must notify Acas or the Labour Relations Agency within three months of when the dismissal or discrimination took place. The time limit will usually start from the date the problem at work happened. See Acas for more information on [tribunal time limits](#).

For advice about making a claim to an employment tribunal, see

- [Acas](#)
- [Citizens Advice](#)
- [Labour Relations Agency](#) for Northern Ireland



You'll need to give the employment tribunal evidence that discrimination has happened. Then, your employer will need to show that discrimination has not happened.

If you need support with making a discrimination claim you could contact:

- [\*\*Equality Advisory and Support Service \(EASS\)\*\*](#) for England, Scotland or Wales
- [\*\*Equality Commission for Northern Ireland \(ECNI\)\*\*](#)

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## OTHER ORGANISATIONS

### Help and support for people with a stoma or J-pouch

Colostomy UK

A charity supporting and empowering people living with a stoma

Telephone: 0800 328 4257

[www.colostomyuk.org](http://www.colostomyuk.org)

IA - Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association

A national support group for people living with an ileostomy or internal pouch, their families, friends and carers.

Telephone: 0800 018 4724

[www.iasupport.org](http://www.iasupport.org)

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## Your rights and legal support

Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

Free, impartial, confidential advice about any kind of dispute or query about issues at work.

Helpline: 0300 123 1100

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Labour Relations Agency

Improving employment relations in Northern Ireland.

Telephone: 03300 552 220

[www.lra.org.uk](http://www.lra.org.uk)

Advicenow

Help people in England and Wales deal with life's legal problems.

[www.advicenow.org.uk/get-help/employment](http://www.advicenow.org.uk/get-help/employment)

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice delivers practical advice to give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward.

England: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Northern Ireland: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/northern-ireland/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/northern-ireland/)

Scotland: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/)

Wales: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales)



## Civil Legal Advice (CLA)

Offers free legal information if you qualify for Legal Aid and live in England and Wales.

Helpline: 0345 345 4345

[\*\*www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice\*\*](http://www.gov.uk/civil-legal-advice)

## Scottish Legal Aid Board

Help to pay legal costs in Scotland.

[\*\*www.slab.org.uk\*\*](http://www.slab.org.uk)

## Legal Services Agency Northern Ireland (LSANI)

Help to pay legal costs in Northern Ireland.

Telephone: 028 9040 8888

[\*\*www.justice-ni.gov.uk\*\*](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk)

## Disability Law Service (DLS)

The DLS offers free advice and representation for disabled people, their families, and carers on specific law areas, including disability discrimination, employment, and welfare benefits.

Telephone: 020 7791 9800

[\*\*www.dls.org.uk\*\*](http://www.dls.org.uk)

## Disability Rights UK

Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) led by, run by, and working for disabled people.

Telephone: 0330 995 0400

[\*\*www.disabilityrightsuk.org\*\*](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)



Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

Offers information, advice and support on discrimination in the workplace to people in England, Scotland and Wales.

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)

Provides free advice and information about the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 to people in England, Scotland and Wales.

Telephone: 0808 800 0082

[www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com)

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Provide advice and assistance for people in Northern Ireland who feel they have been discriminated against.

Telephone: 028 90 500 600

[www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

GOV.UK

UK government website covering a range of issues including all aspects of employment and disability.

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

NIldirect

Northern Ireland government services website.

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)



## Law Centres Network

Help people find not-for-profit legal practices that provide free legal advice and representation.

[www.lawcentres.org.uk](http://www.lawcentres.org.uk)

## Turn2us

Helping people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and support services.

[turn2us.org.uk](http://turn2us.org.uk)

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## Employment and training support

### AbilityNet

A charity helping disabled adults and children use computers and the internet by adapting and adjusting their technology.

Telephone: 0800 269 545

[www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)

### Jobcentre Plus

A government agency that helps people get into work, and gives people the help and support they are entitled to if they cannot work. To find your local office, see:

[www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus](http://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus)

### Jobs and benefits offices in Northern Ireland

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-and-benefits-offices>



## National Careers Service

Information, advice and guidance on skills, learning and work.

England: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Northern Ireland: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/careers>

Scotland: <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/>

Wales: <https://careerswales.gov.wales/>

## MoneyHelper

Information on money and pension choices.

<https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en>

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## Trade unions

Every employee has the right to join a trade union. For further information, contact the Trades Union Congress (TUC):

England and Wales

Telephone: 020 7636 4030

[www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)

Scotland

Telephone: 0141 337 8100

[www.stuc.org.uk](http://www.stuc.org.uk)

Northern Ireland

Telephone: 028 9024 7940

[www.ictuni.org](http://www.ictuni.org)

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## Volunteering

### NCVO

Support volunteering across England.

Telephone: 020 7713 6161

[www.ncvo.org.uk](http://www.ncvo.org.uk)

### Volunteer Now

Support volunteering across Northern Ireland.

Telephone: 028 9023 2020

[www.volunteernow.co.uk](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk)

### Volunteer Development Scotland

Support volunteering across Scotland.

Telephone: 01786 479593

[www.volunteerscotland.net](http://www.volunteerscotland.net)

### SCVO

Membership organisation for Scotland's charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises.

Telephone: 0800 169 0022

[www.scvo.org.uk](http://www.scvo.org.uk)

### Third Sector Support Wales

Aims to raise the profile of volunteering and improve volunteers' experience in Wales.

Telephone: 0800 2888 329

[www.thirdsectorsupport.wales](http://www.thirdsectorsupport.wales)

Find volunteering opportunities: [www.volunteering-wales.net](http://www.volunteering-wales.net)



## The police and armed forces

Some jobs have very specific entry requirements to make sure you are physically able to do the job. Having Crohn's or Colitis might stop you from having certain roles in the armed forces, delay you from joining, or prevent you joining. Your application is assessed on an individual basis.

Army entry requirements

<https://jobs.army.mod.uk/how-to-join/can-i-apply/medical/>

Royal Navy entry requirements

<https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/joining-process/eligibility>

Royal Air Force entry requirements

Eligibility requirements are now listed individually on each role page. Find the role you are interested in: <https://recruitment.raf.mod.uk/roles-in-the-raf>

Police medical requirements

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-recruitment-standards-medical-standards-for-police-recruitment>

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## HELP AND SUPPORT FROM CROHN'S & COLITIS UK

We're here for you. Our information covers a wide range of topics. From treatment options to symptoms, relationship concerns to employment issues, our information can help you manage your condition. We'll help you find answers, access support and take control.

All information is available on our [website](#).

### Helpline service

Our helpline team provides up-to-date, evidence-based information. You can find out more on our [helpline web page](#). Our team can support you to live well with Crohn's or Colitis.



Our Helpline team can help by:

- Providing information about Crohn's and Colitis
- Listening and talking through your situation
- Helping you to find support from others in the Crohn's and Colitis community
- Providing details of other specialist organisations

You can call the Helpline on 0300 222 5700. You can also use our [LiveChat](#) service.

Read our [information on when the Helpline is open](#) for more details..

You can email [helpline@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:helpline@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk) at any time. The Helpline will aim to respond to your email within three working days..

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Our helpline also offers a language interpretation service, which allows us to speak to callers in their preferred language.

## Crohn's & Colitis UK Forum

This closed-group Facebook community is for anyone affected by Crohn's or Colitis. You can share your experiences and receive support from others. Find out more about the [Crohn's & Colitis UK Forum](#).

## Help with toilet access when out

There are many benefits to becoming a member of Crohn's & Colitis UK. One of these is a free RADAR key to unlock accessible toilets. Another is a Can't Wait Card. This card shows that you have a medical condition. It will help when you are out and need urgent access to the toilet. See [our membership webpage](#) for more information. Or you can call the Membership Team on **01727 734465**.



## ABOUT CROHN'S & COLITIS UK

We're Crohn's & Colitis UK and we're changing what it means to live with these lifelong, incurable gut conditions. Around one in 120 people in the UK have Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis, navigating life with an unpredictable condition that could flare up at any time. And the impact can be devastating: plans turned upside down; work and education on hold; relationships and wellbeing under strain; dreams for the future paused.

No one should face that alone. That's where we come in.

We provide trusted information, support cutting-edge research and lead bold campaigns designed to get people talking about Crohn's and Colitis like never before. We're transforming understanding, building the recognition these conditions deserve and uniting our community to drive real change.

We're fighting for a tomorrow where everyone living with Crohn's or Colitis has everything they need to live well, and for a future where we don't have to live with it at all.

Crohn's? Colitis? We'll face it together.

This year, 25,000 people will be told they have Crohn's or Colitis. Once diagnosed, the obstacles continue. Today, there is no cure. People simply don't understand these conditions. So, we have listened. It's time for change & we're leading the way.

Our information is available thanks to the generosity of our supporters and members. Find out how you can join the fight against Crohn's and Colitis by calling 01727 734465. Or you can visit [our website](#).



## About our information

We follow strict processes to make sure our information is based on up-to-date evidence and is easy to understand. We produce it with patients, medical advisers and other professionals. It is not intended to replace advice from your own healthcare professional.

You can find out more on [our website](#).

We hope that you've found this information helpful. Please email us at [evidence@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](mailto:evidence@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk) if:

- You have any comments or suggestions for improvements
- You would like more information about the evidence we use
- You would like details of any conflicts of interest

You can also write to us at Crohn's & Colitis UK, 1 Bishops Square, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9NE. Or you can contact us through the Helpline on 0300 222 5700.

We do not endorse any products mentioned in our information.

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**A guide for employees, edition 8**

**Last review: January 2026**

**Next review: January 2029**

