

# **SICKLE CELL**

## **Employment Advice for Sicklers**



**INFORMATION, COUNSELLING  
AND CARING FOR THOSE WITH  
SICKLE CELL DISORDERS  
AND THEIR FAMILIES**

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## **1. DECLARING YOUR CONDITION**

This can be one of the toughest questions to answer. Although there is no law which says that you must tell your employer if you're disabled, telling the employer 'up front' about your disability means there is nothing to bring out later- so both of you know where you stand.

However, the final decision is yours, but first consider these points:

- If you're asked directly about whether you have a disability, answer the question in a straightforward way. It may help to explain how your disability would affect your work situation –or to say that it would have no practical effect, if this is so.
- There is no need to go into medical explanations. Set out your abilities and why you are the right person for the job.
- If an accident could be caused at work because of your disability, it would be best to tell your employer that you have a disability – otherwise you could be held legally responsible.
- If you do not declare your disability initially and your employer later finds out, it could make them concerned about trusting you in your job.
- If you don't mention your disability until after you are appointed and are later dismissed for reasons relating to your disability, you may lose some of your legal rights relating to unfair dismissal.

## 2. BENEFITS

### DISABILITY WORKING ALLOWANCE.

Disability Working Allowance is a weekly tax- free Social Service benefit to help some people with an illness or disability that are in work. It is designed to top up your earnings every week.

If you are starting work for the first time or are returning to work after an illness, Disability Working Allowance could help you gain new skills and experience or help build up your strength and stamina.

If you qualify for Disability Working Allowance and have £8,000 or less in savings, you and anyone you claim for will also get:

- Free NHS Prescriptions.
- Free NHS dental treatment.
- Free NHS Eyesight test and vouchers towards the cost of your glasses.
- Free NHS wigs and fabric supports.
- Help with travel costs to and from hospital for NHS treatment.

### **3. FACT ON PLACING, ASSESSMENT & COUNSELLING TEAMS.**

P.A.C.T. offers a comprehensive and local service to help you back into work, however long you have been unemployed.

P.A.C.T.s offer provide a professional advice and support service to help you assess your abilities, and plan your next steps to work and find a suitable job.

P.A.C.T. services are:

**Local:** P.A.C.Ts are being set up all over the country to form a national network;

**Comprehensive:** P.A.C.Ts brings together the work of the Disablement Resettlement Advisory Service and the Employment Rehabilitation Service.

## **5. ACCESS TO WORK.**

Access to work could help you tackle some of the practical obstacles you may meet in getting a job, if you have a disability and have been unemployed for four weeks. It applies to any job, part time or full time, permanent or temporary.

You don't have to be registered as disabled to be eligible to use Access to Work, but your disability or health problems should be one which affects the kind of work you can do and be likely to last for 12 months or longer.

You can use Access to Work to pay for a whole range of services, for example:

- A part-time reader or assistant at work if you are blind or have a visual impairment.
- A support worker if you need practical help either at work or getting to work.
- Equipment or alterations to existing equipment to suit your particular needs.
- Alterations to premises or a working environment.

## **5. EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES.**

### **5.1 Business Start-Up Scheme.**

The Business Start-Up Scheme helps unemployed people who want to work for themselves. It offers a weekly allowance during your early months in business, on top of what you earn yourself. You also get access to free business counseling, advice and training.

## 5.2 Blind Home workers Scheme.

Some local authorities run a Home workers Scheme with the help of the Employment Service. They are open to people with severe disabilities who want to run a business, usually from their own home.

### **Improving your Knowledge:**

To take action to ensure that key employees develop the awareness of disability needed to make your commitments to work.

### **Checking progress and planning ahead:**

Each year, to review these commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let all your employees know about the progress and future plans.

## **6. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT.**

The Disability Discrimination Act brings in new laws and measures aimed at ending the discrimination which many disabled people face. The Act gives disabled people new rights in the areas of:

## **6.1 Employment.**

It will be against the law for an employer to treat a disabled person less favorable than someone else because of their disability, unless there is a good reason. This also applies to all employment matters including recruitment, training provision, promotion and dismissal.

## **6.2 Exemptions.**

The employment part of the act does not apply to employers who employ fewer than 20 people. However, they will be encouraged to follow good practice guidelines.

## **6.3 Complaints**

Disabled people who feel that an employer had discriminated against them will be able to complain to an Industrial Tribunal. They can ask – ACAS (The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) to help them. This means that the complaint can be settled without an Industrial Tribunal Hearing.

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