

# Disability fact sheet

## Some information to consider when learning about different disabilities



- The law says that someone is disabled if they ‘have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities’. This means it’s more difficult to do the sorts of things most of us do every day, and that difficulty stays for a long period of time.
- Impairments can affect our bodies or our minds, or both. For example, they might affect someone’s senses (such as hearing or vision), their learning, or the way their body works.
- Some disabilities are invisible – you can’t always tell if someone’s disabled by looking at them.
- One way of looking at disability is that people are disabled by the world around them, rather than their bodies (or minds). For example, someone who can’t walk might use a wheelchair. They’ll be disabled and left out if their friends have a party upstairs in a building where there isn’t a lift. They might also be disabled and left out if all of the tills in a shop are high and they can’t reach. If every building had lifts and ramps, accessible toilets, and lowered switches, it might be that they’d be able to do normal daily activities – they might not feel disabled or left out.
- This way of looking at disability encourages us to think about the barriers that make life harder for disabled people. If we remove these barriers, we create equality and offer disabled people more independence and the chance to join in with everyone. We should treat disabled people with the same respect and care as we do everyone else – and this means caring about the barriers they say they experience, and doing our best to avoid or get rid of the barriers when we can.

### Examples of adjustments and accessibility

Every **wheelchair user** is an individual, so people’s needs will be different. In general, though, some wheelchair users might need:

- places to have ramps or lifts instead of (or as well as) stairs.
- places to have an accessible toilet with equipment that helps them use it.
- the red cord in disabled toilets to be left loose, so they can pull it if they need help.
- people to make things such as light switches or cupboards lower down, so they can reach them while sitting.
- a space (instead of a chair) at places such as the cinema.

Everyone who is **blind or partially sighted** (or has a **visual impairment**) is an individual, so people’s needs will be different. In general, though, some people might need:

- things like boxes of medicine to have braille on, so they know what’s inside.
- television shows, films, or plays to be audio described.
- road crossings to make a noise so they know when it’s safe to cross.
- a bumpy floor near a road crossing to warn them where a road is.
- their computer or phone to read out loud (so they need people to make sure their websites can be read by technology).

Everyone with **dyslexia** is an individual, so people's needs will be different. In general, though, some people with dyslexia might need:

- verbal (spoken) instructions rather than written ones.
- text in a different colour, size, or font.
- their computer or phone to read out loud (so they need people to make sure their websites can be read by technology).
- spell checking software.
- more time to do tasks that involve reading and writing (and/or more frequent breaks).
- ways to show what they know without writing (for example, drawing or talking to someone).

