

VCSE Organisations: Framework for Building Consensus on Health and Work

Supporting disabled people and people with long-term conditions

Statement on health and work

Both paid work and volunteering can give an individual a sense of fulfilment and purpose¹. Being in work, staying in work, and returning to work are all associated with improved mental and physical health – provided that the work is appropriate for the individual. Disabled people and people with long-term conditions should be supported to remain in, or return to, work if that is the right outcome for them and they wish to do so. This support should be delivered in a personalised way that is centred on an individual’s own work goals.

Health and disability-focused organisations in the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector play a crucial role in the wider health and social care system, both as employers and advocates, in supporting disabled people or people with long term conditions to stay in work.

This framework highlights the principles which health and disability-focused organisations in the VCSE already support, and outlines continued action for building consensus around supporting individuals to remain in or return to work.

Health and disability-focused organisations in the VCSE believe that:

- The promotion of good work is a benefit to people;
- Support should be provided to assist disabled people and people with long-term conditions to remain in, or return to, work if that is the right outcome for them and they wish to do so;
- Disabled people and people with long-term conditions should be supported in identifying the working environments, patterns and roles that would be most suitable for them;
- The *social model of disability*² should be used; and
- Social discrimination, harassment, victimisation and negative assumptions about disabled people and people with long-term conditions should be tackled.

Health and disability-focused organisations in the VCSE support continued action to:

As employers:

1. Understand the long term effects of avoidable health-related worklessness.
2. Provide individuals, who are diagnosed with a long-term condition or disability when in work, with the support to access in-work benefits and support, whilst destigmatising the seeking of needed benefits.
3. Understand the role and responsibilities of health and disability-focused organisations within the wider health and social care system, to enable disabled people or people with long-term conditions to remain in work if that is the right outcome for them and they wish to do so.

As advocates (if applicable):

1. Provide individuals, who are diagnosed with a long-term condition or disability when in work, with the support to stay in work if that is the right outcome for them and they wish to do so.

¹ M. Marmot, 2010. *Fair Society Healthy Lives, The Marmot Review*.

² The *Social Model of Disability* states that people have impairments but that the oppression, exclusion and discrimination people with impairments face is not an inevitable consequence of having an impairment, but is caused instead by the way society is run and organised. The *Social Model of Disability* holds that people with impairments are ‘disabled’ by the barriers operating in society that exclude and discriminate against them [<https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/disability-in-london/social-model/the-social-model-of-disability-and-the-cultural-model-of-deafness/>].

2. Provide individuals, who are diagnosed with a long-term condition or disability when in work, with the support to access in-work benefits and support, whilst destigmatising the seeking of needed benefits.
3. Support employers with employees who have been diagnosed with a long-term condition or disability when in work, so that they can better support these employees to stay in work.
4. Understand the role and responsibilities of health and disability-focused organisations within the wider health and social care system, to enable disabled people or people with long-term conditions to remain in or return to work if that is the right outcome for them and they wish to do so.

This initial framework for building consensus was produced in consultation with, and is supported by, the broad VCSE health, public health, and social care sector.



For the project report including supportive case studies and resource list please visit:

www.ukhealthforum.org.uk

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