



Government  
Equalities Office

## **Definition of disability under the Act**

To qualify for disability protection under the Act a person must meet the Act's definition of a disabled person. The Act does not, in general, specify a list of conditions that are protected. Instead, the general definition of disability for the purposes of the Act is "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". The Act defines long-term in this context as having lasted, or being likely to last for at least 12 months, or likely to last for the rest of the life of the person. Substantial is defined as more than minor or trivial.

Some people are deemed to be disabled for the purposes of the Act. For example, people with cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis are protected effectively from the point of diagnosis.

Further information on the definition of disability under the Act is contained in the statutory Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability, which can be found on the GEO website: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance/disability-definition>