

# Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) and Workplace Adjustments

## DESNZ Candidate Guidance





## 1. Purpose

1. This candidate guidance is to provide information to applicants about the Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) and the workplace adjustments that DESNZ supports in our recruitment process for disabled candidates, neurodiverse candidates and candidates with long-term health conditions.
2. DESNZ is committed to the Disability Confident Scheme and is proud to be a Disability Confident Leader. We want to help everyone to be clear about DCS and workplace adjustments in DESNZ, who is eligible, benefits and provide some top tips.
3. Workplace adjustment definition: This is a change that must be made to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to:
  - an employee's disability when doing their job
  - a job applicant's disability when applying for a job (this includes application and interview stages)
4. Workplace adjustments can be adapting how something is done to make it more accessible for example, starting work later to help with fatigue, how instructions are provided (clear processes and no jargon), providing more time to process information. It can also be providing equipment such as ergonomic chairs and desks or software such as screen readers and mind maps.

## 2. What is the Disability Confident Scheme (DCS)?

5. Disability Confident (DCS) is a government-initiated scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain people with disabilities, neurodiversity and those with long term health conditions.
6. It supports employers to make the most of the talents people with neurodiversity and those with long term health conditions. can bring to the workplace, giving them the tools to recruit, retain and develop.



7. The Civil Service embraces diversity and promotes equal opportunities. As such, we run a Disability Confident Scheme (DCS) for candidates with disabilities who meet the minimum selection criteria.
8. Disability Confident employers offer an interview to a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum criteria for the job (this is the description of the job as set by the employer).
9. To be considered for an interview under DCS you must have:
  - a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term (over 12 months) adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities; or a long-term health condition; and
  - Demonstrated that you meet all the minimum qualifying criteria set out in the advertisement for the post at the application and testing stages.

## 2.1 Who is eligible?

10. Disabled people – this includes, long-term health conditions, visible disabilities as well as hidden disabilities such as mental health and neurodiversity (for example, Autism, ADHD, ADD, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia).

## 2.2 What are the benefits?

11. The DCS scheme exists to enable disabled people to be the best they can be by removing/reducing barriers which prevent them from succeeding. We can do this by making our recruitment process inclusive and as accessible as possible by using workplace adjustments where reasonably practicable and offering an interview to disabled candidates who meet the minimum requirements.

## 2.3 What are the minimum requirements?

12. Applicants who apply under DCS are guaranteed an interview if the minimum benchmark scores sift are met. It also protects candidates from being sifted out in



instances where the minimum benchmark is raised due to a large number of applications.

13. The selection panel should set a benchmark for each element of the Success Profile or set of selection criteria they are assessing at the start of a selection process. If more than the required number of applicants meets the minimum standard the panel can raise this minimum benchmark for all applicants except for DCS applicants. The panel must still offer DCS applicants an interview, based on the original minimum standard even if this takes the panel over the planned maximum number of interviewees.
14. For example, an initial minimum benchmark score is set as 4 for each behaviour/ criterion (before the campaign is launched or the number of applications for sifting is known) The benchmark score is then later raised from 4 (usually this would be due to a large number of applications, or a strong candidate field), DCS candidates would still only need to score the original benchmark score to be guaranteed an interview.
15. The aim is to encourage disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to apply for jobs by offering them the assurance that, should they meet the minimum criteria, they will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities further at interview stage.
16. At interview all applicants must be marked solely on merit. This is because the DCS only guarantees access to the interview itself.



Charlotte Cooper

Candidate



“It's so important to me, as someone with a hidden disability, that I can request adjustments during a recruitment process. I don't hide my condition, but as it's not physically visible to others, it can feel like it's all my responsibility to vocalise my needs. Being able to use the Disability Confident Scheme helps mitigate that feeling and allows me to bring my whole self to that process. Since learning more about the scheme and adjustments process, I always tick the box for DCS which means I will be interviewed if I meet the minimum requirements. This helps give me confidence that I will be heard and seen. Similarly, I request workplace adjustments for the interview itself, which for me means more time in the interview and an opportunity to take short breaks. Don't be afraid to ask for what you need - it won't bias your application and will more likely help you show your best self!”

## 2.4 How can I apply for a role in DESNZ through DCS?

17. Please use the online application form on Civil Service Jobs and tick the 'Yes' box in the DCS Section found under personal information on the job application form. It is not necessary to state the nature of your disability. This guidance is also appropriate for Expressions of Interest (for internal recruitment).

## 3. What if I need adjustments?

18. Please use the online application form on Civil Service Jobs and tick the Yes to Assistance Required under personal information to advise of any adjustments to be made to the interview / selection process.

19. It is important you tell us as early as possible if you would like to request workplace adjustments so that the recruitment process runs smoothly for you.

20. You don't have to apply under DCS to specify your workplace adjustments.



## How the DCS and workplace adjustments section looks on Civil Service Jobs:

### Interviews under the Disability Confident Scheme

We want to encourage disabled people to apply for jobs and give them an opportunity to show their skills, talent and abilities at the interview stage. The Civil Service runs a Disability Confident Scheme, [offering an interview \(opens in a new window\)](#) to a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum selection criteria for the job.

To be considered for an interview under this scheme you must have:

- a physical or mental impairment, or a long-term health condition which has a substantial and long term (over 12 months) adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities
- demonstrated in your application and testing stages that you meet the minimum job criteria as set out in the advert or person specification for the post

### Do you feel that you meet the minimum job criteria and would like to apply under the Disability Confident Scheme (DCS)?

Yes

No

### Reasonable adjustments

We want to support you if you need an adjustment in the recruitment process, even if you do not feel you qualify for the Disability Confident Scheme.

We consider visible and non-visible disabilities, neurodiversity or learning differences, chronic medical conditions or mental ill health. Examples include dyslexia, epilepsy, autism, chronic fatigue, diabetes, or schizophrenia.

Some of the adjustments we have offered are:

- application or interview help
- a time of day that works for you
- extra time
- sign language interpretation
- advice about assistive technology



For more information, you can read the government guidance on [reasonable adjustments for disabled workers \(opens in a new window\)](#)

**Will you require a reasonable adjustment during the interview or assessment stages?**

If you answer yes, the recruitment team will get a notification that you need support and will try to arrange it for you.

Yes

No

**Please tell us what reasonable adjustments might help you, or have helped you in the past, at the interview or assessment stages**

*[Free text, no word limit]*

*If tests are required during the selection process.*

**Will you require a reasonable adjustment during the online tests?**

The tests on this vacancy do not have a time limit. You do not need to ask for more time. If you need any other adjustment you can find further information in the [reasonable adjustment guide for online tests \(opens in a new window\)](#).

OR

Some tests required for this job have a time limit. If you need any adjustment, you can find further information in [the reasonable adjustment guide for online tests \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Yes

No

**Please tell us what reasonable adjustments might help you, or have helped you in the past, to be able to complete online tests**

*[Free text, no word limit]*



### 3.1 What workplace adjustments can I request if I have a disability/long-term condition?

21. We welcome and encourage applications from all candidates and are committed to supporting all candidates to take part in the recruitment process. This includes supporting individuals who have a disability neurodiversity and those with long term health conditions. by making workplace adjustments where reasonably practicable to our recruitment process. We consider each request on an individual basis, taking into account the nature of the disability.

22. We will ask you, as part of your online application form on Civil Service Jobs, if you would like to request workplace adjustments. If you feel you require any kind of support and/or would like to discuss this with someone, please indicate 'yes' to requesting workplace adjustments.

23. We make workplace adjustments so that all candidates are given a fair opportunity to undertake the recruitment process. Therefore, disclosing information regarding your disability or access requirements will have no impact on the outcome of your application, regardless of your request or the role you have applied to.

### 3.2 How we can support you

24. There are many types of workplace adjustments that can be made during our recruitment process and the type or combination you choose to request will depend on your individual needs.

25. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but rather some examples and we encourage you to have a conversation with us for any other adjustment needs.

26. Whilst we will do our best to accommodate all adjustment requests, there may be occasions where this isn't possible. For example, if a candidate were to request that they are not assessed on a specific behaviour outlined in the job advert this





would not be possible because the behaviour has been identified as important for the job role and all candidates are assessed against this criterion.

### 3.3 Examples of workplace adjustments

27. This is a list of examples of adjustments that can be requested at application, interview and onboarding. If the adjustment is not on the list that you require or you are unsure what you need to have in place, please contact the recruitment manager and Health Safety and Wellbeing team via email to [healthsafetywellbeing@ics.gov.uk](mailto:healthsafetywellbeing@ics.gov.uk) to discuss your needs.

28. If the hiring manager has queries on the adjustment requests and the recruitment process, they should contact our Recruitment Support team by email to [recruitmentsupport@ics.gov.uk](mailto:recruitmentsupport@ics.gov.uk) for advice.

#### 3.3.1 Application stage

- You can ask for extra time to complete your online application as part of your workplace adjustment requirement by emailing the recruiting manager.

#### 3.3.2 Interview stage

- Additional time for timed tests.
- A short extension in advance of other candidates to prepare a presentation.
- Extra time for an interview - This can be used to provide the candidate with more time to answer a question. Candidates can tell the panel how they would like to use their extra time, for example, "I will pause, reflect, and take notes for a few moments before responding to a question." The time should be agreed in advance.
- Escorting around the building, including to the interview room.
- Requesting information in your preferred format e.g., braille or bigger font.
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- BSL (British Sign Language) support – the hiring manager should seek guidance and information from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team.



- Interviews are now virtual by default. You can request for the interview to take place in person rather than virtually using Microsoft teams.
- For the interview room to be wheelchair accessible.
- For the interview to be at a particular time (within reason and on a case-by-case basis e.g., panel members must be available).
- To request the interview behaviour questions up to 72 hours in advance and allowing candidates to refer to pre-prepared notes. This can be helpful for some who are neurodiverse, due to how information is processed and anxiety.
- A short pre-meeting between the interview panel and candidate on a date prior to the interview to reduce anxiety about interacting with new people.
- A breakdown of more complex questions into their component parts so that they can be answered sequentially by the candidate.
- A photo of the building and room where the interview will take place.
- Request a verbal test rather than a written one
- If you are sensitive to light, you can request a room with lower levels of light (this may not always be possible because of the way the office highlighting is set up – an alternative could be having the interview over Teams).
- Questions to be placed into the MS Teams chat (to note this may not be accessible with all software e.g., some screen reader).
- To be in a room with low noise levels
- Avoid metaphors, acronyms, jargon, and sarcasm – these may be taken literally, or can take mental energy to decipher the meaning for some staff who are neurodiverse.
- Another adjustment which can help candidates with a stammer, neurodiversity or a condition which causes fatigue and pain asking for the questions to be added to the teams chat can be beneficial. It can support memory, recall and help with anxiety.



“I am a manager with a managed stammer, who has interviewed someone who did not disclose they had a stammer prior to the interview. Had I been aware I could have put in place workplace adjustments ahead of the interview to put them at ease and be their best. As I understand stammering, I was able to be flexible during the interview and add some adjustments. Another line manager without my experience may have just assumed the person was nervous or not known how to respond without the prior awareness, and workplace adjustments.”

Paul Barrett

Line Manager

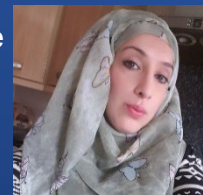


“During the recruitment process, I ask for the following workplace adjustments:

1. I ask to have the behaviour questions before interview due to:
  - My physical condition Charcot Maria Tooth condition CMT - difficulty writing the question asked - muscle weakness.
  - My dyslexia – needing to see the question being asked to help me stay on point and answer the question. Seeing the questions in advance provides me with a fairer platform when applying to roles.
2. I inform the panel of my dyslexia as there may be certain words I cannot say (this could otherwise be taken as nerves) and the panel can divert me back to the behaviour if I go off point.
3. I also ask for extra time in answering the behaviours and follow-up questions to ensure I can perform to my best. I am normally offered an hour slot which provides me with adequate time and reduces pressure.”

Sabeeya Khan

Candidate





### 3.3.3 Posting/Onboarding stage

29. Below are some examples of the adjustments that **can be implemented** in DESNZ, where reasonably practicable. **Please note that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list.**

30. Check out Civil Service HR [workplace adjustments video](#).

#### Hard workplace adjustments:

- Ergonomic equipment: This includes a standing table, chair, mouse, keyboard, laptop stand, screen stand, footstall and a keyboard and mouse pad.
- Assistive Technology software for Neurodivergence (Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Autism, ADHD, Dyscalculia) or for Mobility, Low Vision or Blindness.
- Bigger screen.
- Coloured overlays.
- Noise cancelling headphones.
- British Sign Language (BSL) support.
- Coaching – for example, to coach techniques for confidence, memory, writing and speaking.

#### Soft workplace adjustments:

- Health plans (e.g., for epilepsy and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)).
- Flexible working hours agreed with your line manager.
- Activate transcription on Teams and record meetings (this can help with note taking and digesting information).
- Accessible car parking space – note this will only be possible where parking is available because not all office sites have parking facilities.
- Work with your line manager to ensure the two days you come into the office is for collaborative working, learning and big meetings. This will enable staff with a neurodivergence for example, to be able to use homeworking days for focused work.



- Provide training and meeting material in advance. This will help to digest the information and to answer questions with more ease (this should be in the preferred format for example braille or large size font or via email).
- Memory: allow time to come back with an answer and information needed.
- Provide written instructions for tasks via email (be clear and direct in phrasing the work).
- Avoid metaphors, jargon, and sarcasm – these may be taken literally, or can take mental energy to decipher the meaning for some staff who are neurodiverse.
- To agree with the employer for someone you work with to read your work to you.
- To use a certain font and size to make it easier to read.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but just some examples of the adjustments that we support in DESNZ, where reasonably practicable.

## 4. Application stage top tips

31. **Email the recruiting manager** to find out more information about the role, what it entails and what they are looking for. This can help you to create a stronger application.

32. **Read Civil Service Success Profiles.** This will help you with your application and interview. Success profiles are used in the Civil Service to assess candidates against a range of elements using a variety of selection methods. This includes Ability, Experience, Technical, Strengths and Behaviours. Not all these elements will be accessed.

- The role you are applying for will depend on which elements of the success profile will be used. The job description on Civil Service jobs will inform you what will be accessed during application and interview stage. Use the following link to find out more about [success profiles](#).



33. **Read over the civil service behaviours** in the following link - [behaviours](#).

- What are behaviours:
  - Behaviours are used as part of the written application processes. This enables the recruitment managers to gain an understanding of the action and activities you have done or would do that result in effectively doing the job role.
  - You will not be asked about each behaviour.
  - For each job grade there is a description of what is expected for that behaviour. This will help you to answer the behaviour when applying for the role. I would advise you to demonstrate clearly what you do meet.
  - When answering a behaviour **use the STAR format**. Use the following link to find out how to use the [STAR format](#). Here you focus on one example of where you meet the behaviour using the following format:
    - ✓ situation - the situation you had to deal with
    - ✓ task - the task you were given to do
    - ✓ action - the action you took
    - ✓ result - what happened because of your action and what you learned from the experience

34. **Ask friends, family, or colleagues to read over your application** before you send it off. They will be able to provide you with some useful feedback.

## 5. Workplace adjustments for successful candidates in DESNZ

35. If you have a disability, (this includes visible and hidden disabilities, neurodivergence, long term health condition and mental health) you can request a workplace adjustment when you receive a job offer to work at DESNZ.

36. To request a workplace adjustment, you can speak to your new line manager, our HR Resourcing team and our Health, Safety & Wellbeing team. Having an honest conversation with your line manager about your disability is beneficial. It helps



your line manager to understand your preferred way of working and the tools and support that you need to have in place as early as possible.

37. We have put together a list of examples of the type of workplace adjustments you can request. Please note this is not an extensive list and therefore if the workplace adjustment you require is not on here you can still ask your new line manager and DESNZ HR if it can be put in place.

38. The DESNZ Health, Safety and Wellbeing team is also a great support because if you are unsure of what kind of workplace adjustment would be suitable, they can provide you with advice or refer you for an assessment. For further information please email [healthsafetywellbeing@ics.gov.uk](mailto:healthsafetywellbeing@ics.gov.uk)

### 5.1 A hard adjustment

39. These are tools which are available to help support a disabled person in the workplace.

### 5.2 A soft adjustment

40. These can be changes to the workplace to make things easier e.g. an accessible carparking space to make it easier to get to the office.

41. The way things are done at work e.g. if you have fatigue in the morning your line manager can agree for your working hours to start later when this happens. Another example is to provide written instructions for a task via email or to use a certain size font to help make it easier to read.

42. Someone to help you e.g., if someone has an eyesight condition, you can agree with your line manager for someone you work with to read your email/document.



Isabel Allgeyer  
Line Manager

“When it comes to workplace adjustments, open and honest conversations are really important. There are of course the more obvious things like fixed desks and specific equipment that should always be picked up as part of any onboarding process. However, the less easy but often more important things are what else can be done to provide support on an ongoing basis - which will mean changing and adapting. In my experience it works best if there is a constant flow of information between the line manager and the employee about how they are feeling, any ups and downs, and what might help. What can be done could be as simple as more home working in any given week, or some flexibility with hours, or something completely different. Don't feel constrained by what you think is possible, if there is something else that would be helpful, talk about it!”

Zoe Walker  
Candidate

“During the onboarding process I had an open conversation with my new line manager. Here I told them about my disability, how I like to work, what support and workplace adjustments would be helpful. We then spoke with HR where an assessment was arranged to ensure I would have everything I needed. While this being put in place, the IT equipment I needed such as read write gold and mind mapping software was installed. My line manager also implemented soft workplace adjustments such as time to do physiotherapy, time to go for a walk if I have brain fog, having verbal and written instructions for tasks. All this helps me to bring my full self to work and helps me to be the best I can be.”





## 5.3 Occupational Health assessment

43. Before you start your job role in DESNZ, you will be asked to complete an Occupational Health Assessment form. This will help us to understand your disability and the support you will need. After the form has been completed you will be asked to come for a face-to-face assessment or to arrange a virtual assessment. This will enable the Occupational Health Team to ask additional questions to ensure you will have the support you need, and they can help make recommendations. After the assessment has taken place, you will be sent the report. If agreed the line manager will also be sent the report. The report can be used to request the adjustment where reasonably practicable you require for your role.

### 5.3.1 The Workplace Adjustment Passport

44. The Workplace Adjustment Passport captures all agreed workplace adjustment requirements of Civil Service employees, whether physical or non-physical. This minimises the need to re-negotiate workplace adjustments every time you move post, move between departments, or get a new line manager. It belongs to you. Your line manager should also have a copy. This should be regularly reviewed.

45. The passport is referred to in the Civil Service Workplace Adjustment Service as part of the implementation of adjustments.

46. It is advisable to keep supporting documents such as assessments as proof of agreement for your Workplace Adjustment. This is in case this information is requested.

47. When you start a new role, it is advisable to email the Workplace Adjustment Passport to our HR Health, Safety & Wellbeing team and to your new line manager (if you are comfortable doing so).



Sarah Mann

Line Manager

“An Occupational Health Assessment can be a great tool for line managers to identify and ensure the appropriate support is put in place for colleagues when working. As a line manager, you will receive a report which gives an objective, expert opinion from a medical professional with details on current fitness for work and importantly suggestions for how to make it easier for colleagues to carry out their duties at work, e.g. workplace adjustments. Both the line manager and the individual input into this process and, in my experience, it can be a good springboard to start discussing health impacts and wellbeing conversations”

Ian Young

Candidate



“I was diagnosed with dyspraxia. It became clear that the problems caused by my dyspraxia were in turn increasing my anxiety. After an Access to Work assessment, I was offered some adjustments, notably some assistive software. I also have regular discussions with my manager about how work activities can be affected by dyspraxia, and how these problems could be addressed. I have short periods away from my desk to relieve stress or anxiety. Learning about dyspraxia helped me understand how I processed information, and therefore the assistance I received in prioritisation became even more important.”



### 5.3.2 Desk assessment

48. Following completion of the e-learning DSE Hybrid assessment, an appointment will be made with an individual to assess further and if a complex case referred for another assessment with Occupational Health or other provider.

### 5.3.3 Workplace assessment

49. For more complex cases a workplace needs assessment identifies suitable recommendations to minimise the challenges experienced by individuals.

50. It provides a full assessment of their working environment and may include adjustments like equipment, ergonomics, or assistive technology, as well as strategies that can be implemented immediately, where reasonably practicable.

51. A report is written based on the information given and following the appointment provided. The recommendations should be shared with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team.

## 6. Who should I contact if I have any questions about the Disability Confidence Scheme or adjustments?

52. For DCS queries, please email our DESNZ Recruitment team via email to: [recruitmentsupport@ics.gov.uk](mailto:recruitmentsupport@ics.gov.uk) with your question and one of our team members will get back to you within a couple of working days.

53. For recruitment adjustment queries please email [recruitmentsupport@ics.gov.uk](mailto:recruitmentsupport@ics.gov.uk)

54. For workplace adjustment queries please email [healthsafetywellbeing@ics.gov.uk](mailto:healthsafetywellbeing@ics.gov.uk) and one of our team members will get back to you within a couple of working days.

**We wish you all the best with your application.**