

# Supporting Disabled Staff

A guide for disabled staff, job applicants and line managers

 **EQUALITY UNIT**

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# Introduction

This guide is for job applicants and current employees at Kingston University who have, or think they may have a physical, cognitive or sensory disability, mental health condition or specific learning difference (SpLD). The guide is also for all managers at the University, regardless of whether or not they currently have disabled staff in their teams.

It aims to:

- demonstrate our commitment to equality for disabled staff and job applicants
- clarify what we mean by 'disability'
- encourage staff and job applicants to disclose disability and so benefit from any support required
- Give examples of the support available for disabled staff and job applicants throughout the staff lifecycle
- detail the range of support services and opportunities within the University and externally
- provide managers with the information they need to combat the disadvantages that disabled people may face in the workplace and in recruitment processes
- make recommendations for an inclusive working culture, by improving the package of measures we offer disabled staff and taking an anticipatory approach.

**This document is a starting point. We are aware, from our discussions, that there are areas where staff would welcome further guidance, such as:**

- **compiling a job description.**
- **information which can be included in a reference**
- **advertising in places that are more likely to attract disabled applicants**
- **guidance on appropriate testing at interviews**

**We will work with colleagues on providing more information on these areas over the coming year.**

**We will review this guide yearly to ensure that it provides up-to-date and relevant advice to enable us to continue reducing the barriers faced by our disabled staff**

# Part 1 Information for everyone

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## 1.1 Our commitment to equality

Kingston University is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of race, sex, disability, age, socio-economic category, sexual orientation, religion or belief. We wish to create a positive, inclusive and diverse working, learning and social environment, free from unfair discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment.

## 1.2 Our view of disability

At Kingston University, we are working towards adopting the social model of disability (see Appendix B). We believe that what really disables a person are not the impairments they have but the physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers that society creates by failing to take into account the requirements and aspirations of that individual.

We recognise that our disabled staff may require some practical adjustments, support or guidance to ensure, as far as possible, equal access to everything the University can offer. We are committed to working to provide you with the adjustments you need to be able to do your job to the best of your abilities.

## 1.3 The meaning of 'Disability'

The Equality Act defines someone as disabled if they have a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For the purposes of the Act these words have the following meanings:

- **substantial** means more than minor or trivial. The person is still considered disabled if the effects of their impairment are alleviated or removed by ongoing medication, treatment or aids
- **long-term** means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months.
- **normal day-to-day activities** include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping. It also includes non-specialist, work-related activities such as using a keyboard

Please note that the Equality Act 2010 has replaced all previous equality related legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005.

This definition is quite broad. For example, it covers people with progressive conditions, cystic fibrosis, depression, diabetes, dyslexia, repetitive strain injury (RSI) or severe facial disfigurement. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis.

If you are unsure whether or not your issue can be defined as a disability, you can contact any of the following for more information or an informal discussion (see Contact Information for details):

- Your Human Resources Adviser (current staff)
- Occupational Health (current staff and job applicants)
- The Equality Unit (current staff and job applicants)
- The Disability and Dyslexia Unit (students)

## 1.4 Our next steps in advancing disability equality

### **Making recommendations for an inclusive working culture**

As a result of the Disabled Staff Consultation in 2010 and the Equality Impact Assessment which resulted from it, a number of recommendations were made to improve what Kingston University can do for disabled staff.

Some of these actions have already been completed, leading to better workplace arrangements and adjustments to facilitate inclusivity. For example, staff are able to request a diagnostic assessment for Specific Learning Differences (eg dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia) by contacting the Equality Unit directly (see section 2.4.2). This guidance document is one of the recommendations that was made and taken forward by the Equality Unit. Other recommendations are currently being taken forward by a staff across the University. For further details of the Equality Impact Assessment, please see Appendix E.

### **Case Study 1**

#### **Chris Tye – when good support and the right equipment enable individual success!**

“I have always had support from the highest level – and so actually, strangely, my career has progressed as my eyesight got worse.”

“You have to know what you need, and you have to tell people.”

“The technologies and equipment have made all the difference to me – plus the small things my colleagues do to help, such as leaving a chair by the door for me in meetings.”

***To read more about Chris’s case read Appendix F.***

# Part 2 Information for job applicants and staff

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## 2.1 Telling us about your disability

### 2.1.1 Disclosing your disability

If you are disabled or if you believe you may be disabled, Kingston University encourages you to disclose this to enable us to put in place measures that will remove barriers for you, should you need them. We are committed to ensuring equality and to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010. If you disclose your disability to us at the earliest opportunity, we can work with you to ensure you enjoy a fair and equal recruitment process and experience of working life. If you choose not to tell us, we may be unable to identify and address your needs. If you face barriers to doing your job to the best of your abilities either now or in the future, we risk losing you as an employee. This doesn't make sense for us as an organisation; we hope that you feel it is in your best interests to disclose.

Disclosing to the University may be to your Line Manager, Human Resources, Occupational Health or any employee spoken to in an official capacity. It does not include completing an Equality Monitoring form or completing the equality section of **Yourself**.

### 2.1.2 Equality monitoring

Both job applicants and current staff members can help the University to monitor equality in the workplace by providing us with information that will remain confidential. For job applicants, this will be the Equality Monitoring Form, and for existing staff, this is the **Yourself** section of the intranet, StaffSpace. We will use this information for monitoring purposes only and this will not be revealed to your line manager or colleagues. This information can tell us if we are doing enough to attract candidates who have protected characteristics and can help determine how resources are allocated.

**It is therefore your responsibility to inform your line manager, HR Adviser or someone else that you have a disability if you want the University to work with you to put in place reasonable adjustments. You can do this verbally or in writing.**

### 2.1.3 Talking to your manager

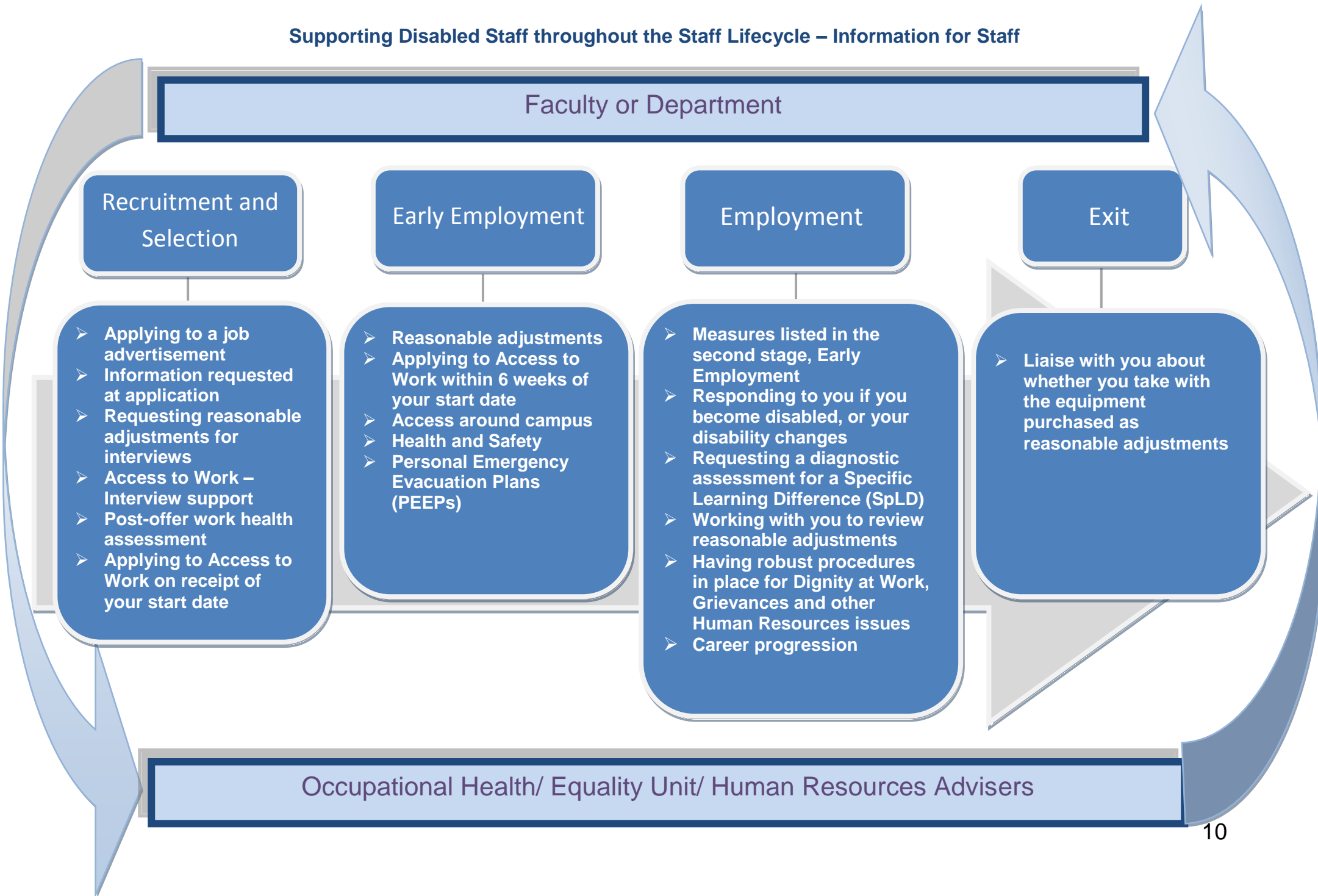
Achieving successful outcomes for everyone will require meaningful conversations between line managers and disabled staff. We encourage you to talk to your line managers at an early stage if, for example:

- you are new to the University
- you have only recently become disabled
- your disability is only now beginning to affect you at work
- you have been diagnosed with a Specific Learning Difference.

Early communication can avoid misunderstandings and can preserve good relationships. Your line manager will be a key person in the delivery of any required reasonable adjustments and if they are made aware of a situation at an early stage, they will have a better opportunity to work with you to put effective measures in place.

In order to explore the different types of support that we can offer you at different stages of your employment at Kingston University, it is helpful to use the following diagram of the Staff Lifecycle.

## Supporting Disabled Staff throughout the Staff Lifecycle – Information for Staff



## 2.2 What can the University do for disabled people at Recruitment and Selection?

During stage one of the Staff Lifecycle, Recruitment and Selection, the University can help with the following:

### 2.2.1 Applying to a job advertisement

New jobs are advertised weekly on the University website and sometimes in the national press. A new online recruitment process has been introduced and is accessible to disabled applicants.

When applying, if you require a job pack in an alternative format, you can contact Human Resources (see Contact Information).

### 2.2.2 Information requested at application

At recruitment stage, you are asked to complete our Equality Monitoring Form (see section 2.1.2). This information tells us if we are doing enough to attract candidates who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and we can take positive action to do so if we are not. It is detached from your application and not available to those involved in the short-listing process.

At application stage, you will not be asked any questions that relate to disability or health issues, unless there is a function so intrinsic to the role that the University has to ask about it (eg heavy lifting). In addition, if it is a requirement of the role that you are disabled, then we can ask you to verify your disability at this stage.

### 2.2.3 Requesting reasonable adjustments for interviews

All candidates attending interviews will benefit from the accessibility measures that are in place for visitors, staff and students. If you have concerns about accessibility, please contact Human Resources to discuss (see Contact Information). For detailed information about access in each building, please visit the Kingston University section on the DisabledGo website ([www.disabledgo.com/en/org/kingston-university](http://www.disabledgo.com/en/org/kingston-university)).

Although applicants are not asked questions about their disability before the selection process is complete and a job offered, invitations to interview letters carry the following statement:

“Kingston University values diversity and promotes equality. We encourage and welcome applications from all sections of society. If you would like any reasonable adjustments or additional arrangements at your interview, please contact the Recruitment team at the earliest opportunity by emailing [jobs@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@kingston.ac.uk).”

### 2.2.4 Access to Work – Interview support

If you require a British Sign Language interpreter or a communicator for your interview contact Access to Work (see Contact Information) who will usually agree to provide funding and then contact the Recruitment team so that it can be arranged. If you have a contact for an interpreter or communicator then advise the Recruitment team who will work with you to make arrangements for the day. Both BSL interpreters and Communicators will be fully funded by Access to Work and paid for in the first instance by the University's Central Fund.

### 2.2.5 Post-offer work health assessment

Following a successful job offer, all candidates are required to complete a work health assessment form which will be returned directly to Occupational Health. Your completed form is not seen by anyone outside Occupational Health. If necessary, Occupational Health will seek your consent to obtain further relevant medical information. If adjustments are recommended, they will seek your consent to inform Human Resources, your line manager and anyone else who may be able to assist in providing those adjustments.

If you require adjustments to your workstation or the way your work is organised and you have a start date, Occupational Health may advise you to contact Access to Work (see section 4.1). Access to Work can carry out an assessment of your workplace and make recommendations based on the latest equipment and adaptations available. **If an application is made within six weeks of your start date then any approved funding required for reasonable adjustments will be met in full by Access to Work.**

### 2.2.6 Applying to Access to Work on receipt of your start date

If you are disabled, think you might be or you know that you have a condition which affects your ability to carry out your job role on a day-to-day basis, then the University will need to work with you to make sure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are put in place. If, when you were at school, college or University arrangements were made to assist your learning or you were in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance, then it may be that similar arrangements will be required for you at work.

**If an application is made no later than 6 weeks after your start date, funding for approved adjustments will be paid in full by Access to Work.**

Once you have a start date, however far away it is, you can begin working with the University to make sure adjustments are in place for you when you start. Access to Work will ask for the name of your Line Manager which HR can provide for you if you do not already know it.

## 2.3 What can the University do for disabled staff during Early Employment?

During the second stage of the Staff Lifecycle, Early Employment, the University can help with the following:

### 2.3.1 Reasonable adjustments

Throughout your time as a member of staff at the University, you will be able to benefit from reasonable adjustments. These might include:

- making changes to the building or premises where you work
- changing the way in which work is done
- providing equipment that will help you do your job.

For a range of examples and more detailed information on reasonable adjustments, please see **Appendix A**.

### 2.3.2 Applying to Access to Work within 6 weeks of your start date

#### **Access to Work**

Access to Work is a Government scheme which can help you if your disability affects the way you are able to do your job. You and your line manager can get advice and support with extra costs which may arise because of your needs.

**If you are a new member of staff at the University and you make your first Access to Work application within the first six weeks of starting work, it is likely that Access to Work will cover 100 per cent of the approved costs of your adjustments.**

After the first six weeks the cost is shared by the University and Access to work so it makes sense to make your application as soon as you know your start date. Applications must be made by the employee but support with the process can be sought from your HR Adviser or an Occupational Health Nurse.

If you have:

- had reasonable adjustments in a previous job
- previously received Disabled Students Allowance
- any reason to believe that you have a condition that affects the way you do your job

make an application to Access to Work.

**For information on making an application to Access to Work, see Part 4**

### **Internal Funding – Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments**

If the reasonable adjustment required is not covered by Access to Work, the University has a Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments which is managed by the Equality Unit. The fund exists to ensure that there are no barriers to staff which would inhibit them from applying for the support they require in order to excel. Evidence from consultations with disabled staff over the last two years is that applying for funding from individual departmental and faculty budgets can be a significant barrier.

The Central Fund will be used to pay for:

- Special aids, equipment or training required by a disabled employee and approved by Access to Work (See section 4.1))
- Individual staff requests for diagnostic assessments for Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) (See section 2.4.2)

### **2.3.3 Access around campus**

#### **DisabledGo**

DisabledGo ([www.disabledgo.com/en/org/kingston-university](http://www.disabledgo.com/en/org/kingston-university)) is a disability organisation that produces detailed online access guides for a huge range of venues across the UK. The DisabledGo logo is available on many of the University's campus and other web pages. Clicking on it will take you to detailed information about our campus buildings and facilities, such as the number of stairs, or where an accessible toilet can be found.

#### **Access Statement**

The University makes every effort to ensure that it is accessible at all times to staff, students and visitors. As part of this commitment we are developing plans to update our information across our sites to provide comprehensive Access Statements. This work will build on our existing access audits.

### **2.3.4 Health and safety**

In rare situations, you may need to consider if your disability could have any implications for health and safety for either yourself or the people you work with. For example, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are designed for your individual circumstances to make sure that you can be evacuated in an emergency (see section 2.3.5). For the majority of disabled people, this is not an issue but, if we know, we can help you to assess any risks. There may be other health and safety issues that you and your line manager need to consider.

Health and safety issues must never be used by managers, or anyone else, as an excuse to justify discriminatory treatment. If you need more information or advice about health and safety issues, you can contact the Health and Safety Unit (see Contact Information) or your department or faculty Health and Safety representative.

### 2.3.5 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

The University has a process to enable any member of staff who requires one to have a 'Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan' (PEEP). A PEEP is individually tailored to your specific needs and the places you work within the University. It details:

- evacuation routes
- location of refuges
- location of evac-chairs<sup>1</sup>
- contact numbers
- what assistance would be available in the event of an emergency.

These plans are not just for people with mobility issues but also for those with sensory or cognitive impairments. PEEPs have the added bonus of allowing the University to know if it is ensuring the safety of its staff by checking that all work areas meet general access requirements for staff with disabilities.

Normally the University's facilities management company KUSCO (Kingston University Services Company Ltd), establishes these evacuation plans through practical face-to-face consultation. However due to a change of personnel, the interim arrangement will be to contact the University's Health and Safety Manager (see Contact Information), If you need a PEEP you will be taken around the sites you frequent most often to identify your options in the event of an emergency. After your tour, you will receive a brief written summary of what was discussed and your evacuation options. Once firm plans are in place with KUSCO, we will endeavour to update this guide as soon as possible. In any event, the Health and Safety Office will be able to tell you who will arrange your PEEP.

KUSCO is a specialist service and facilities management company. It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Kingston University (KU), and has been providing the University community with a wide range of services and support since 1997. KUSCO works for no other organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> A specialist stair-descending wheelchair operated by friction to make egress possible for disabled or injured people in a safe manner if lifts are unavailable for whatever reason.

## 2.4 What can the University do for disabled staff during their Employment?

During the third stage of the Staff Lifecycle, the University can help with all the measures listed in the previous section, Early Employment, as well as:

### 2.4.1 Responding to you if you become disabled, or your disability changes

If there are changes in the nature or severity of your disability, or if you become disabled, the University can help you. You can use your 121s, supervision meetings and the appraisal system to discuss this with your line manager.

For example, in Simon's case (see Appendix H), he was already employed by Kingston University when he came to the conclusion that he should find out if he has dyslexia. The University was able to fund a diagnostic assessment (see section 4.2.3) organised by the Equality Unit. As a result of this, any ICT equipment or other reasonable adjustments to enable Simon to work more effectively can be funded through Access to Work together with University funding.

If you have a long term condition which affects the way you carry out your job role, you can make an application to Access to Work (see Part 4) to get specialist advice and recommendations for Reasonable Adjustments. Access to Work will need to know details about your line manager

It is up to you whether you discuss your disability with your line manager or your HR Adviser. However, we hope that you feel comfortable doing this so that you can get any additional support you may need.

**Remember, recording your disability on an Equality Monitoring Form or on Yourself (<https://yourself.kingston.ac.uk/yspages/default.asp>) is for monitoring purposes; your line manager will not be informed about your disability and so will not have the relevant knowledge needed to support you.**

If you feel comfortable disclosing your disability to your line manager, they and you will be able to seek advice regarding the best measures to take in order to support you. Managers have a key responsibility for your general well-being and making sure that you have access to the full range of opportunities that go with your job.

If you are uncomfortable talking to your line manager, you can consult your HR Adviser to discuss any concerns. There are many legitimate reasons why you might not want to approach your line manager; you do not have to explain your decision. However, if you need significant changes to your workplace or working conditions, then your manager will need to become involved. Similarly, if you approach your manager first, your HR Adviser may become involved at some point, as they are there to assist you in all aspects of your employment. You can contact your HR Adviser in confidence at any time.

See Appendix C, "Other options for support and guidance" for information on range of support available within the University.

## 2.4.2 Requesting a diagnostic assessment for a Specific Learning Difference (SpLD)

Dyslexia is a hidden disability thought to affect around 10% of the population, 4% severely<sup>2</sup>. It is the most common of the Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs), a family of related conditions. Together these are believed to affect around 15% of people to a lesser or greater extent.

Specific Learning Differences affect the way information is learned and processed. They are neurological (rather than psychological), usually hereditary and occur independently of intelligence.

They include:

- Dyslexia,
- Dyspraxia or Development Co-ordination Disorder,
- Dyscalculia,
- Attention Deficit Disorder.

By adulthood, many people with SpLDs are able to compensate through technology, reliance on others and an array of self-help mechanisms - the operation of which require sustained effort and energy. For a variety of reasons these coping mechanisms may break down particularly in stressful situations. One of those situations can be a change in job role which highlights particular areas of weakness.

If you suspect that you may have an SpLD then you can request a diagnostic assessment by contacting the Equality Unit. (see Contact Information). The assessment, which would be carried out by a specialist teacher, will be paid for by the Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments (see section 4.2). Having a diagnostic assessment will enable you to get a better picture of your strengths and weaknesses and will inform the process of determining the most appropriate reasonable adjustments. Following an assessment you will be able to discuss next steps with the assessor. If you require reasonable adjustments you should then contact Access to Work (see section 4.1).

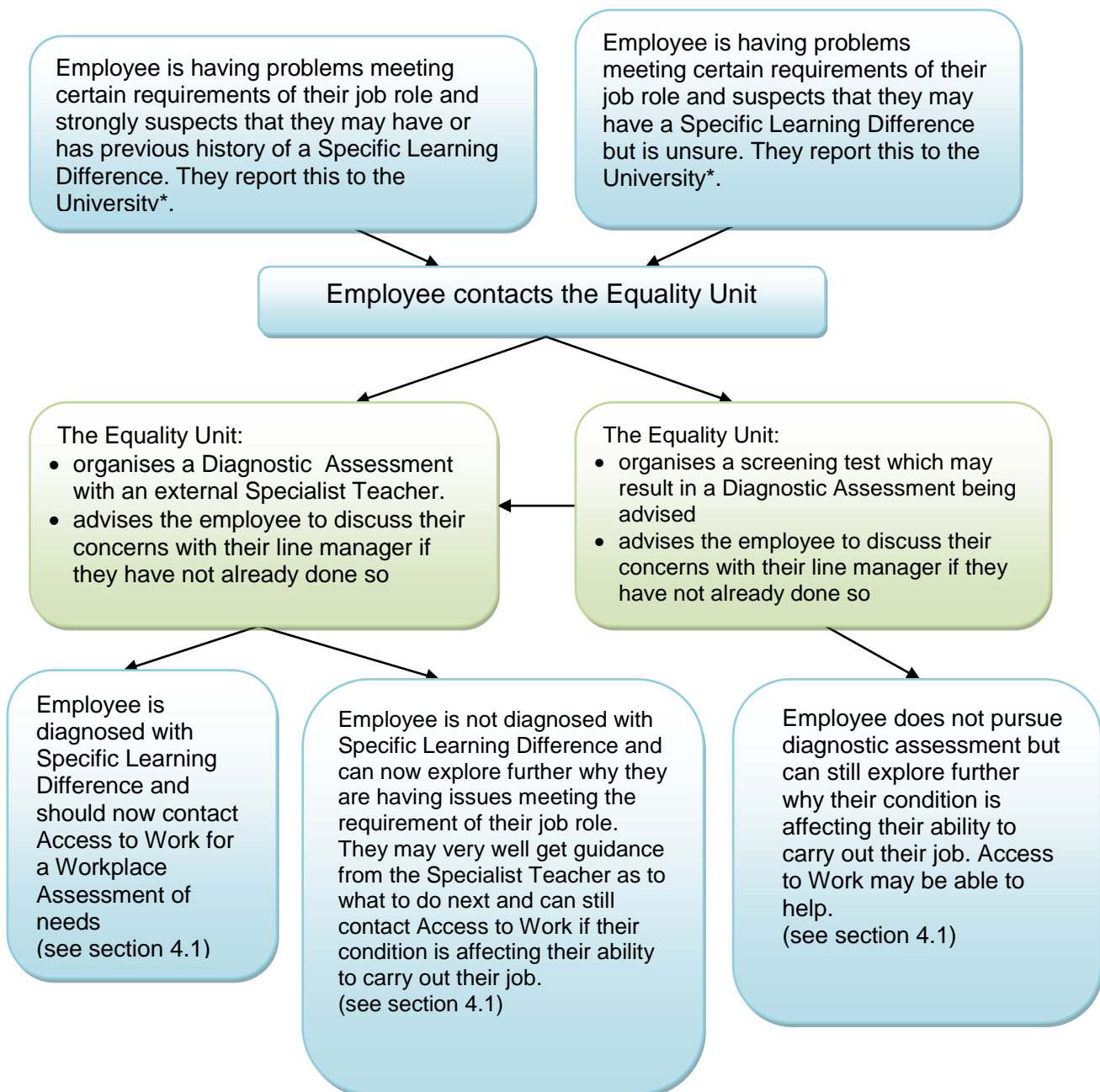
If you are unsure whether to have a diagnostic assessment the Equality Unit can arrange a short screening test which looks for key indicators to help you decide how to proceed.

You will be encouraged to tell your line manager that you are having a screening or assessment because they will be a key person in the provision of reasonable adjustments. The earlier they are aware of what is affecting you at work, the more engaged they will be when you receive your outcome. It also gives them a chance to find out what they may be required to do in circumstances that may be new to them. It is not essential to inform your line manager at this stage if you do not feel comfortable.

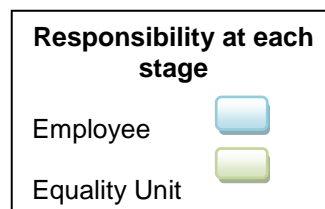
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<sup>2</sup> The British Dyslexia Society ([www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk))

## Flow Chart: Requesting an Assessment for a Specific Learning Difference



\* see section 2.1



### **2.4.3 Working with you to review reasonable adjustments**

If you find that the adjustments in place are no longer adequate, then you should approach your line manager, HR Adviser or Occupational Health to discuss reviewing their effectiveness. If your adjustments were originally put in place following an assessment by Access to Work, it may be time to review them with one of their Advisers whose contact details will be on your Access to Work documentation.

Remember, if changes are required to your adjustments, you will be entitled to funding from both the University and possibly Access to Work (see section 4.1.4). Although the University encourages application to Access to Work within the first six weeks of employment (in order to take advantage of 100% external funding), we also recognise that staff become disabled while in employment and that reasonable adjustments may need to be updated or modified, so internal funding is available at any point. As mentioned previously, the University has a Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments, administered by the Equality Unit (see section 4.2).

### **2.4.4 Having robust procedures in place for dignity at work, grievances and other human resources issues**

Kingston University works hard to make the employee experience one of fulfilment, personal development and opportunity. However, in some cases, a complaint or grievance needs to be made against another member of staff or a student.

If you think you are experiencing inappropriate behaviour because of your disability, there is a Dignity at Work Procedure to help you to access various forms of support, such as the Harassment Contact Scheme or mediation. It will also help identify how you can resolve the issue. The Harassment Contact Scheme, for example, offers the opportunity to meet a trained staff volunteer from a different faculty or department, to discuss, in confidence, any inappropriate behaviour that they have experienced that may amount to bullying or harassment.

If you know that you are experiencing harassment, bullying or discrimination at work, there is also a robust procedure in place for you to lodge a grievance against another member of staff. If the behaviour is coming from a student, the Student Disciplinary Procedure can be used.

All information for staff on capability, dignity at work, grievances, sickness, and disciplinary procedure is located under the People Matters section of StaffSpace (<http://staff.kingston.ac.uk/C19/HR%20Procedure%20Toolkits/default.aspx>).

### 2.4.5 Career progression

We know that improving the support we offer to disabled staff during their employment with us will benefit our organisation. We want to see more disabled staff progress up the career ladder within the University, and we are committed to making this happen. We want to ensure that you have a rewarding, challenging and enjoyable experience of working at Kingston and are given the opportunity to bring new skills, ideas, and experiences to help us to innovate.

We also know that disabled people can sometimes make decisions based on what has previously been possible, which does not always reflect their true potential. Using the social model of disability will allow us to understand this. We urge you, as a disabled staff member, to think through the possibilities for you and your career, and tell us how we can best work with you to realise your ambitions and make them happen.

#### **Case study 2**

##### **Simon – it would have been easier if he'd known earlier**

“I couldn't help feeling that somehow it's a sign of weakness but I found Naz at the Equality Unit very helpful when I phoned up to go forward for dyslexia testing.”

“I want to make things better for myself by getting diagnosed and get some advice on work strategies.”

“I am worried about costing my department a lot of money but my manager found out there's going to be a centralised fund.”

***To read more about Simon's case read Appendix H***

## 2.5 What can the University do for disabled people at Exit?

At the fourth and final stage of the Staff Life Cycle, the University can:

### 2.5.1 Liaise with you about whether or not you take equipment purchased as reasonable adjustments

When equipment is purchased for you using Access to Work funding (either in total or as a shared cost), we may agree to allow someone who is leaving the University to take that equipment to a new job.

You should discuss this with you line manager when making plans to leave the institution so that you can reach an agreement about any equipment which has been purchased or adapted for your needs.

Generic equipment is likely to be held by the University for the benefit of other disabled staff.

## Part 3 Information for line managers

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### 3.1 Introduction

Achieving successful outcomes for everyone will require meaningful conversations between line managers and disabled staff. We encourage all disabled staff and those with Specific Learning Differences to talk to their line managers at an early stage whether they are new to the University or have only recently become disabled. Early communication can avoid misunderstandings and can preserve good relationships. Line managers are key person in the delivery of any required reasonable adjustments and if made aware of a situation at an early stage, will have a better opportunity to work with disabled staff to put effective measures in place.

Equality and diversity matter. ~~They matter~~ because doing the right thing for everyone is a value intrinsic to the University. As a higher education institution, we strive to ensure that:

***“ability is able to access opportunity regardless of circumstance”<sup>3</sup>***

Promoting equality and diversity makes good business sense; if our organisation meets the needs of a diverse range of people, we become more efficient, leading to better outcomes for everyone. If a supportive working environment is generated, our workforce is more productive. If we have a broader range of skills and talents to draw from, our organisation develops. By integrating equality into everything we do, we will broaden the pool of talent that we can recruit from, our decision-making and policy development will be better informed, and we will see better policy outcomes.

Disabled people have a huge amount to offer Kingston University as staff members. Overcoming any barriers they face in employment represents a great opportunity for us as an organisation to benefit from their skills and knowledge. As a line manager at Kingston University you have a responsibility to ensure that disabled staff are treated fairly and have the same opportunities as their non-disabled colleagues.

**We recognise that line managers also need support to make decisions and that it is not easy to decide what action to take. To address this, the Equality Unit will be working closely with colleagues in HR to open up discussion in appropriate training forums and faculty and department meetings to enable line managers to work through concerns and know where they can obtain appropriate advice. Line managers need confidence to know that they have taken appropriate steps to put reasonable adjustments in place and where to find the support they also need.**

Making changes for one person in a team that have implications for other members of the team is not always easy and can leave some team members feeling disgruntled. As a manager, it may fall to you to make adjustments to someone’s work

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<sup>3</sup> Brink, C., 2008, “Standards Will Drop” – and Other Fears about the Equality Agenda in Higher Education: [www.ncl.ac.uk/documents/standards.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/documents/standards.pdf)

pattern or job tasks because a member of your team has a disability or learning difficulty. It is about treating people appropriately, not necessarily the same.

By taking the social model of disability as our basis (see Appendix B), we as an organisation are recognising that taking active steps to overcome the physical and attitudinal barriers that disabled people face will remove disadvantage.

This approach puts the onus on the University as an institution to make changes that make us more accessible. The University already works hard to ensure that we have accessible buildings and facilities. We have an institutional legal duty to anticipate the needs of disabled students, staff and visitors. There is an ongoing plan to continuously improve all aspects of accessibility in the University.

However, people's attitudes are often just as challenging a barrier to equality. Some people have a perception that disabled people are not as able, or will take more sick leave. As a line manager, you should seek to change such attitudes and perception through:

- setting good examples
- taking active steps
- anticipating, not excusing
- challenging poor practice, behaviour or terminology
- encouraging your team to attend 'Equality Skills for Success' training (<http://staff.kingston.ac.uk/C17/Equality%20Skills%20for%20Success/default.aspx>).

**“Most barriers to work identified related to the need for support or understanding from a manager or colleagues (for example flexible working hours, flexibility to take time off sick, need to manage stress or take breaks). Only one in 20 of those asked said that they required support to do the job.”**

Office for Disability Issues, *Experiences and Expectations of Disabled People*, July 2008

### 3.1.1 Recognising disability

Do not assume that no one in your team has a disability. There are many kinds of disability; some are widely understood and visible and others are not. The legal definition allows for a broad range of impairments (see section 1.3).

Having a disability does not necessarily mean that someone's work will be affected. Many of us who work or study at the University may have a disability according to the definition in the Equality Act 2010 but without realising it. Please note that the Equality Act 2010 has replaced all previous equality-related legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005.

**“One in eight UK employees has a disability – that is equal to 3.4 million people in employment, or 12.5 per cent of the workforce”**

Labour Force Survey, Spring 2005

**“2% of the UK working age populations becomes disabled every year.”**

Health and Safety Executive

### 3.1.2 Taking an anticipatory approach

**“I don't have any disabled staff, so I don't need to attend that training / finance that bit of equipment / know that policy.”**

This statement is often made by managers who believe they do not have any disabled staff. It leads to barriers that prevent disabled staff from applying for, being recruited for, or being able to work effectively for an organisation.

If 12.5 per cent of the workforce has a disability, it is worth considering why it is that you have no disabled staff.

Could it be that:

- some staff have hidden disabilities that they don't know about?
- they know about their disabilities but are afraid to disclose these to you?
- the workplace is not suitable for disabled people?
- the working culture discourages disabled people from applying for jobs?

By anticipating that you may have disabled staff on your team, you can put measures in place that will enable more disabled people to make successful contributions to your team and to Kingston University.

We encourage you to take an anticipatory approach to creating an inclusive working culture for disabled staff.

### 3.1.3 Disability Terminology

The language of disability is subject to debate and change. People are often concerned that they will say the wrong thing.

As a line manager, if you are not sure about the language to use about someone's disability, the best thing to do is ask them what they prefer. The most important thing is to be respectful. More damage will be done by rude and patronising behaviour than by the actual language used.

Some terms have been obsolete for a while now. The list below highlights a few terms that are best left in the past. This is not a definitive or exhaustive list; it is intended only to encourage us to think about how we address each other.

Old terminology	Preferred terminology
The disabled	Disabled person
Able-bodied / normal	Non-disabled person
Handicapped	Disabled person
Wheelchair bound	Wheelchair user
The blind	Visually impaired / blind person
The deaf	Hearing impaired / deaf person
Crippled by / victim of / suffers from	Person who has / person with
Special Needs person	Person with Specific Learning Differences

## 3.2 Supporting disabled staff throughout the Staff Lifecycle

Disabled staff can be supported with a variety of measures, policies and practices throughout their time at Kingston.

We urge you, as a line manager, to be disability-ready. You should read both Part 1 and Part 2 of this guide (*Information for everyone* and *Information for job applicants and staff* respectively). This will not only familiarise you with the range of support we can offer staff, but will also enable you to take an anticipatory approach. Part 2 will give you a thorough understanding of what Kingston University has committed to doing for disabled staff, and help you to know what you should be ready, able and willing to do.

If line managers at the University are able to make appropriate and effective reasonable adjustments, then disabled staff feel valued, are able to maximise their potential, and will be more likely to stay. Some of the disabled staff working at this University will not have been disabled when they began work here. It is not just about recruiting new talent – it is about retaining existing talent.

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In order to explore the different types of support that we can offer disabled staff at different stages of their employment at Kingston University, it is helpful to use the following diagram of the Staff Lifecycle:

# Supporting Disabled Staff throughout the Staff Lifecycle – Information for Managers

Faculty or Department

Recruitment and Selection

- Advertising
- Information required at application
- The Two Ticks symbol
- Interviews – making reasonable adjustments
- Selecting the best person for the job
- Post-offer Work Health Assessment
- Managing other staff

Early Employment

- Making reasonable adjustments
- Funding for reasonable adjustments
- Taking action to make things work properly
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

Employment

- Review reasonable adjustments regularly
- Career progression opportunities
- Managing disability related absence
- Development and Training

Exit

- Equipment
- Redundancy
- Dismissal
- Providing references

Occupational Health/ Equality Unit/ Human Resources Advisers

## 3.3 What can I, as a line manager, do to help disabled people at Recruitment and Selection?

### 3.3.1 Advertising

When advertising new posts ensure that essential criteria are necessary to do the job and that the language used does not exclude people or potentially discriminate. Eg. 'Keyboard skills' can be replaced with 'ability to use a word processing software'. Someone using voice activated software can now demonstrate their ability on equal terms with someone using a keyboard.

### 3.3.2 Information required at application

The Equality Act 2010 has made it unlawful for an employer to request information about a candidate's disability or health issues at application stage, unless this information is a necessary requirement for fitness to practice.

We can ask for this information on our Equality Monitoring Form, but this information must be detached from, and not considered as part of, the application. Equality information is collected only to help us know if we are doing enough to recruit people who would otherwise face barriers to employment, and to change our practices where necessary.

### 3.3.3 The Two Tick symbol

We are working towards achieving the Two Ticks symbol to demonstrate our commitment to disabled staff. Once achieved will be committing to offering interviews to ALL disabled job applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a role. This is not just a formality; it is a genuine commitment to giving disabled candidates the opportunity to demonstrate whether they are the best person for the job by meeting them face-to-face. By ensuring that more disabled people get through to the interview stage, we can expand the pool of talent from which we recruit, and thus increase the number of disabled people we employ.

### 3.3.4 Interviews – making reasonable adjustments

Invitation to interview letters carry the following statement:

“Kingston University values diversity and promotes equality. We encourage and welcome applications from all sections of society. If you would like any reasonable adjustments or additional arrangements at your interview, please contact the Recruitment team at the earliest opportunity by emailing [jobs@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@kingston.ac.uk).”

The candidate will be the person best placed to let us know what adjustments they will need. However, if the person has never been to Kingston before, look at their request and see if there is anything we could possibly anticipate that they may need.

You may want to look at or refer applicants to our [DisabledGo](#)

[www.disabledgo.com/en/org/kingston-university](http://www.disabledgo.com/en/org/kingston-university)) links which shows the accessibility of different sites and can be found on the campus information pages of our website.

Take an anticipatory approach in planning interviews; assume that there will be disabled candidates. Take practical measures, such as ensuring that:

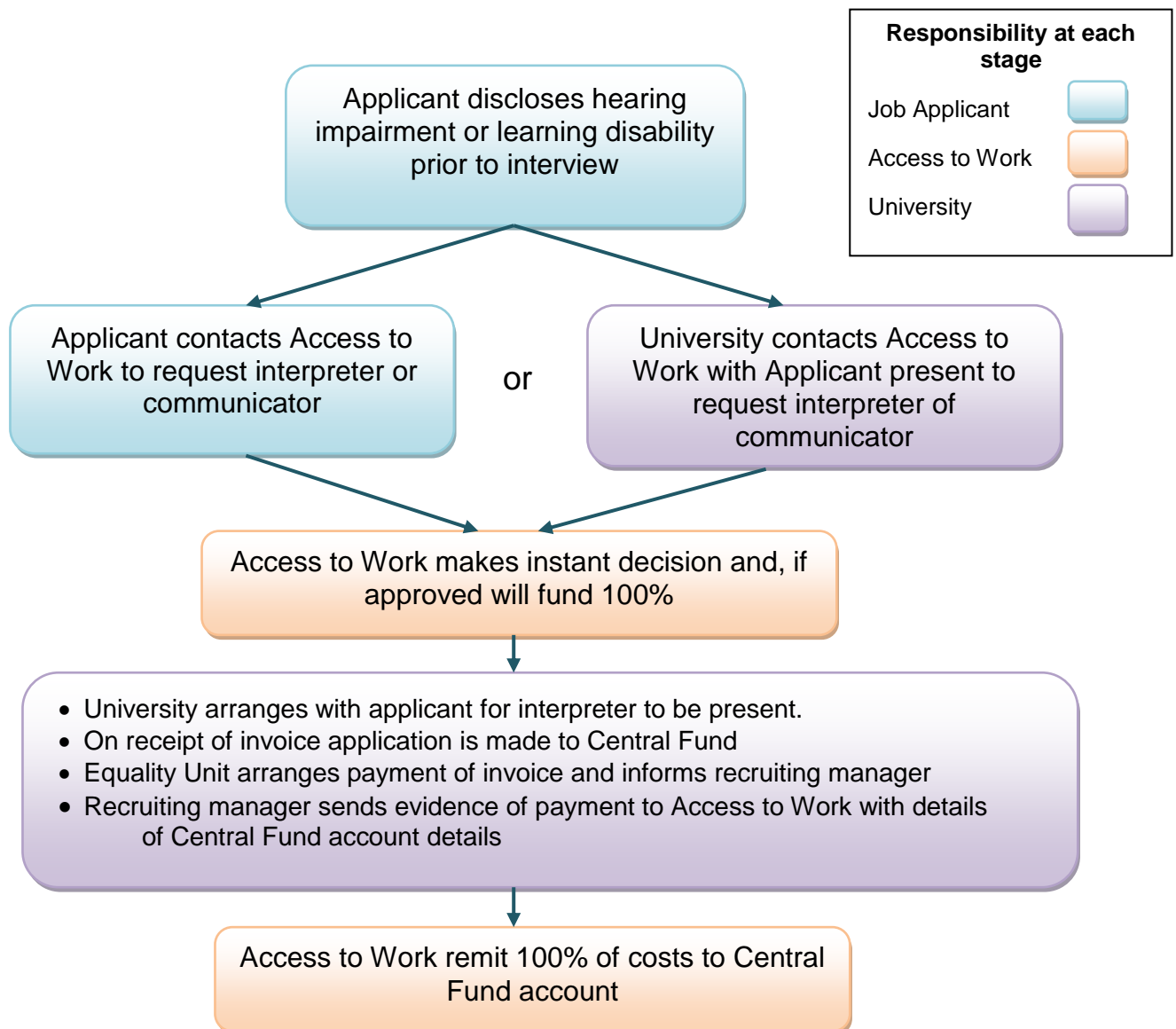
- the location is accessible for those with mobility issues. This might not just include flat access, it could be proximity to an entrance and disabled parking or proximity to a wide access toilet.
- rooms are booked for longer than needed to allow people with dyslexia extra time to complete written assignments, or
- any presentations are accessible for people who are visually impaired
- candidates are given the opportunity to send in any electronic presentations before the day of the interview so that everything is already loaded when they arrive.
- if a British Sign Language interpreter is present, speak to the candidate not the interpreter. Always look at the candidate and address questions to them in the same way you would if the interpreter was not there. The same advice is applicable to a communicator accompanying an interviewee with a learning disability

Ensure that the candidate has all the information they need to get to the interview. Anticipate potential problems. For example, for someone with mobility issues, there is no point holding the interview on the ground floor of River House but directing them to park in Penrhyn Road. Make sure that a car parking space is made available near to the site of the interview and tell the candidate where it is.

Also consider whether what candidates are asked to do at interview is fair and whether the method of assessment gives all candidates a real chance to demonstrate the skills needed for the job. Often, small measures make all the difference to how confident a candidate feels when being interviewed.

If a candidate requests a reasonable adjustment so that they can participate in the interview process, it is your responsibility to ensure that it is in place. Please refer to Appendix A for more information on reasonable adjustments.

## Flow Chart: Providing an interpreter or communicator for an interview



### 3.3.5 Selecting the best person for the job

While a job applicant should always be chosen on merit, it is also important to remember that it is unlawful to turn down a candidate because they are disabled. This will only apply when you have prior knowledge or a candidate's disability

You should recognise the fact that disabled applicants have often faced challenges in developing their career and their CV. Judging someone's merit sometimes requires closer inspection of the journey they have made, not just the end product.

It is important to note that the government revoked proposed changes to legislation that would have allowed employers to take positive action to choose a disabled person over a non-disabled person when faced with two candidates of equal merit. However, as an employer, you are encouraged to consider all disabled applicants

### 3.3.6 Post-offer work health assessment

Once you have offered the post to a candidate, they will be sent a work health assessment form. This asks about any disability they may have, and any reasonable adjustments that they may require once they start working for us. The form is returned to Occupational Health and will be treated in confidence. An Occupational Health Adviser may contact the employee for further information. If adjustments are required Occupational Health will seek the employee's consent to inform Human Resources or you as the line manager.

If the candidate alerts you to the fact that they have a disability before they take up a post, then you should talk to Occupational Health about arranging an assessment of their workstation to be carried out as soon as possible. This can be done before the work start date if it means that reasonable adjustment can be put in place for the first day. Occupational Health may advise the new employee to contact Access to Work.

**A new employee can contact Access to Work (see Part 4) as soon as they receive an offer letter with a start date. An employee can apply for Access to Work funding within the first six weeks of starting work and secure up to 100 per cent of the funding required for reasonable adjustments. However, this will only happen if the staff member knows about Access to Work, which many do not – sensitive encouragement is required, and can only take place if the person has declared a disability or potential disability.**

Adjustments can only be made if the University is aware of a disability. However, the University has a duty to make a reasonable effort to find out whether a disability exists, especially where there may be any indications to that effect. Due to the sensitivity of issues related to disability, any discussion should take place in a confidential space and be handled with care.

### 3.3.7 Managing other staff

Do not make the rest of the team aware that the new employee is disabled. Any disclosure to you is confidential, even if you think it may be obvious because the disability can be seen. Disabled employees enjoy the same rights as any other member of staff and their personal traits should not be communicated or discussed inappropriately.

If, as a manager, you think it would be beneficial for your team to be aware of an employee's disability, perhaps because it would enable them to understand why work arrangements are different, or it would inform colleagues of adjustments that they could make which would be helpful, then discuss this with your new employee. You should stress the benefits for the whole team. Your new employee can talk to Access to Work who fund team support sessions for certain disabilities.

## 3.4 What can I, as a line manager, do for disabled people during Early Employment?

### 3.4.1 Making reasonable adjustments

See **Appendix A** for definition and examples of reasonable adjustments.

Make sure that reasonable adjustments are put in place as early as possible to help the staff member feel welcomed, comfortable and able to do their job effectively. Delays to making reasonable adjustments when an employee starts work can quickly create a negative impression of the University.

You should discuss with the staff member the adjustments that they feel are necessary. You can also seek guidance from Access to Work, Occupational Health, HR, Job Centre Plus (see Contact Information) and other external organisations. Do not feel that you have to make this decision alone. Advice is available both for you and the employee.

Sometimes, particularly if the employee has worked in a similar environment before, they may know exactly what they require to remove any barriers and enable them to carry out their new job role. You can use this information to check the likely expenditure on adaptive equipment, software or training.

If adjustments are required then you should advise the employee to make an application to Access to Work. **Applications made within six weeks of an employee starting work will receive 100 per cent funding.** Applications made after the first six weeks will attract a cost share arrangement. Early application should be encouraged.

### 3.4.2 Funding for reasonable adjustments

See **Part 4, Funding for reasonable adjustments**, for detailed information on Access to Work and applying to the Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments

#### **External funding**

In the first instance the employee should make an application to **Access to Work**, (see section 4.1) where possible, **within the first six weeks** of their start date.

Only the employee can apply, but you should offer support as required. If you believe a person is disabled but afraid to disclose, it is a good idea to approach the subject early on, in a sensitive manner and in a confidential space. This will ensure that the employee (and thus the University) benefits from this funding source, in addition to preventing long-term issues emerging if the employee is unwilling to declare.

**If the conditions are satisfied and the adjustments are approved, Access to Work will fund 100 per cent of necessary adjustments applied for within the first six weeks of new employment.**

#### **Internal funding – Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments**

If the approved reasonable adjustment is not funded by Access to Work, the

University has a Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments which is managed by the Equality Unit. The fund exists to ensure that there are no barriers to staff which would inhibit them from applying for the support they require in order to excel. Evidence from consultations with disabled staff over the last two years is that applying for funding from individual departmental and faculty budgets can be a significant barrier.

The Central Fund will be used to pay for:

- Special aids, equipment or training required by a disabled employee and approved by Access to Work (See section 4.1))
- Individual staff requests for diagnostic assessments for Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) (See section 2.4.2)

The University's aim in establishing a Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments is to create a system where all departmental considerations of financial cost in relation to disabled employees is eliminated, in order to level the playing field for recruitment, work effectiveness and promotion.

NB: The centralised fund will be piloted for the first time in 2011/12 and it is finite. You may, in some cases, be asked to contribute from your department or faculty's budget, depending on demand. If demand exceeds expectation in the first year, the University will strive to ensure that this is recognised in future years.

### **Funding for recommended adjustments not approved by Access to Work**

Access to Work may not agree to pay for equipment or training which has been recommended by the specialist assessor and will send the employee a letter explaining their decision. This is usually because the recommended equipment or training is deemed to be normal workstation equipment, not because it is not required. The letter will confirm this. The equipment or training should still be provided but will be funded by local budgets usually used for the purchase of workstation equipment or training.

Access to Work provides a list (see the Equality Unit website) of equipment which is regarded as normal workstation provision. This list is not exhaustive and is updated, but it will serve as guidance.

### **3.4.3 Taking action to make things work properly**

At Kingston University, there are a number of policies, procedures and forms of guidance available to you as a line manager. There are also issues that you need to consider that will particularly affect disabled staff, such as access to and around the workplace, provision of equipment, or cultures of overtime that indirectly discriminate against people with impairments. As a manager, it is your responsibility to take action to prevent any differential impact on the people you line manage. As a large institution, we know that processes can sometimes be lengthy or bureaucratic – but it is your role to ensure that no one is disadvantaged when processes are not working quickly or effectively enough. See case study 4, (Appendix I) for more insight into why this matters

It should also be stressed that acquiring equipment or software as part of a reasonable adjustment package is not where our support ends. Access to Work will normally arrange training sessions as part of their assessment but in some instances training may need to be sought from other sources – perhaps inside the University. When an employee is learning to adapt their working practices to use new equipment or software, workloads should be considered. It will take time to learn a different way of working and extra pressure or quick deadlines should be avoided. There is no point in finding strategies to remove barriers if we establish new ones by not allowing time to adapt.

#### **3.4.4 Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)**

Disabled staff with mobility issues or hearing or sight impairments should be encouraged to get a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). This involves a face-to-face tour of the sites most frequently used to identify evacuation options in an emergency. Please encourage staff who would benefit from a PEEP to contact Health and Safety (see Contact Information) See Section 2.3.5 for more details.

#### **Case study 3**

##### **Amrik – it’s simple to fix, so fix it!**

“I don’t need anything special – just for what exists to work properly and, when it isn’t working, to be fixed quickly.”

“I feel petty raising these problems all the time – but they make a big difference to me.”

“These problems make me have to focus every day on how I am different to others, which I don’t want to have to do.”

***To read more about Amrik’s case, please see Appendix H***

## 3.5 What can I, as a line manager, do for disabled staff during Employment?

### 3.5.1 Review reasonable adjustments regularly

You should use 121s, supervision meetings and the appraisal system to ensure that you make reasonable adjustments and that existing reasonable adjustments are still effective. Although an appraisal may be a good place to check that current adjustments are still effective and appropriate, do not wait until an appraisal is due to hold discussions, particularly if an issue arises.

Check that current equipment is up to date by discussing with the individual staff member as well as colleagues in Occupational Health.

Find out if there are there any changes to the person's disability or condition that might mean carrying out a fresh assessment.

Access to Work will require a review of adjustments at least every three years but it may be necessary to do this more frequently. Make it known that, if a staff member's needs change, they can approach you to discuss this. Always meet in a private location where you are unlikely to be disturbed.

### 3.5.2 Career progression opportunities

Always make sure that any disabled staff member is considered when opportunities arise for:

- a job at a higher grade;
- a temporary 'acting up' position; or
- a secondment.

You should use the appraisal system to ensure that disabled staff are given opportunities to develop experience that will enable them to apply for more senior grades.

### 3.5.3 Managing disability related absence

You must distinguish between general sickness absence and disability-related absence and ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place.<sup>4</sup> These two different types of absence should be monitored separately in order to prevent a disabled member of staff being indirectly discriminated against.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix C of the Sickness Procedure, <http://staff.kingston.ac.uk/C0/Sickness/default.aspx>

### **3.5.4 Development and training**

As a line manager, it is your responsibility to encourage ALL staff to develop their skills and experience to make sure their career can progress. Development and Training offer a variety of courses to make sure that staff can develop and we should, as an institution, make sure that more disabled people are aiming high. For example, we want to see more disabled staff undertake leadership and management training, to facilitate an increased number of disabled staff going into senior and executive roles.

Be aware that disabled staff can make negative assumptions about the choices they have. This often reflects how society has tended to treat disabled people, not their actual abilities. We know that disabled people have more potential than perhaps they themselves realise, so it is up to you to encourage them to develop.

## 3.6 What can I, as a line manager, do for disabled staff at Exit?

### 3.6.1 Equipment

When equipment is purchased for you using Access to Work funding (either in total or as a shared cost), we may agree to allow someone who is leaving the University to take that equipment to a new job.

You should discuss this with the employee when they are making plans to leave the institution so that you can reach an agreement about any equipment which has been purchased or adapted for their needs.

Generic equipment is likely to be held by the University for the benefit of other disabled staff.

### 3.6.3 Redundancy

A disabled employee should not be disadvantaged in a redundancy selection process. The selection criteria must not refer or be related to disability. For example, they should not include disability-related absences, an inability to work flexible hours, or the fact that an individual requires reasonable adjustments.

Redeployment opportunities should be offered to disabled staff in the same way as they are to non-disabled staff. If a disabled member of staff is redeployed to another area within the University, then a new assessment of their need for reasonable adjustments should be undertaken. It would not be reasonable to expect someone who requires adaptive equipment or software to move to a workstation without the appropriate equipment in place and a possible extension of any trial period.

### 3.6.4 Dismissal

Dismissing a disabled employee for a reason unrelated to their disability is lawful.

Dismissing a disabled employee because they are disabled is unlawful.

Dismissing a disabled employee because of poor performance, when reasonable adjustments have not been put in place which could have improved performance, is unlawful.

Dismissing a disabled employee because they are not able to perform their job to the required standard, when reasonable adjustments have been put in place, is discrimination but can be justified in certain circumstances. In this instance redeployment should be considered as an option before taking a decision to dismiss.

You must seek advice from Human Resources, Occupational Health, doctors and legal experts before dismissing a disabled member of staff.

**Exit on the grounds of ill-health** should only be considered when all reasonable adjustments and redeployment options that would enable the employee to stay at work have been exhausted.

### **3.6.5 Providing references**

Under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, employers may no longer ask questions about a candidate's health until a conditional job offer has been made.

**It is unlawful for references to contain information about a past employee's health, sickness or disability related absence unless you receive confirmation, from the past employee, that a job offer has been made.**

## Part 4 Funding for reasonable adjustments

Part 4 contains information for managers and employees but is addressed to the employee.

### 4.1 External funding – Access to Work

Access to Work is a government scheme run by Jobcentre Plus. Access to Work can help you if your health or disability affects the way you do your job. It provides you and your employer with advice and support with extra costs which may arise because of your needs.

#### 4.1.1 What support can Access to Work offer?

Access to Work can pay for:

- a BSL interpreter or communicator at interview,
- special aids, equipment or training,
- a support worker,
- travel to, from or in work.

#### 4.1.2 Who is eligible to apply for Access to Work?

Access to Work can provide support if you:

- are about to attend a job interview
- have been offered a job and have a start date
- already work for the University

and your disability or health condition stops you from being able to participate fully in your interview or carry out your job role. Your disability or health condition may not have a big effect on what you do each day, but may have a long-term effect on how well you can do your job.

#### 4.1.3 How to apply to Access to Work

If you feel that the type of work you do is affected by a disability or health condition that is likely to last for 12 months or more, contact your regional Access to Work contact centre to check whether you can get help. You will not be penalised for seeking Access to Work support, indeed you may find that having the correct support in place makes your working experience at the University, more fulfilling.

Contact this centre if you live in:

- South East England
- London
- East of England

Jobcentre Plus

Access to Work Operational Support Unit

Nine Elms Lane

London SW95 9BH  
Telephone: 020 8426 3110  
Textphone: 020 8426 3133  
Fax: 020 8426 3134  
Email: atwosu.london@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

## **The application process**

1. You can apply over the telephone which will take about 20 minutes. You can ask to have the form sent to you which you can complete and return. If you apply over the phone, a completed copy of the form will be sent so you can check the answers. This should be signed and returned immediately
2. Your Access to Work adviser will contact you. The adviser will speak to you and possibly your line-manager to reach a decision about the best support for you. A decision can sometimes be reached over the telephone.
3. If specialist advice is needed, your Access to Work adviser will arrange for an assessor to visit you where you work. The assessor will complete a report, which will include recommendations for appropriate support.
4. The assessor will send the report to your Access to Work adviser, who will use the information to decide the right level of support for you.
5. Once your adviser has decided on the package of support they feel is appropriate, they will seek formal approval of their recommendations from Jobcentre Plus.
6. You and your line manager will then receive letters informing you of the approved level of support and the Access to Work funding available.
7. On receipt of these letters, your manager should complete an online form located on the Equality Unit Website<sup>5</sup> (see section 4.2.2). This will trigger the application process to the University's Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments and support your line manager to:
  - arrange the agreed support
  - buy the necessary equipment
  - claim repayment of the approved costs from Access to Work.

Example copies of the letters and documents you and your manager may receive from Access to Work can be found on the Equality Unit StaffSpace page under 'Supporting Disabled Staff'.

The Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments will be used to pay for any approved adjustments. Access to Work's contribution can be claimed after the adjustments are received.

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<sup>5</sup> The 'line manager's form to support Access to Work application' can be found on the Equality Unit StaffSpace page under 'Supporting disabled staff'

#### 4.1.4 How much does Access to Work pay for?

The amount Access to Work contributes will vary depending on how long you have been employed and what support you need.

**Access to Work can pay up to 100 per cent of the approved costs if you are working for the University and have been in your job for less than six weeks**

Whatever your employment status, Access to Work will also pay up to 100 per cent of the approved costs of help with:

- support workers
- fares to work
- communicator support at interview eg BSL interpreter

Access to Work pays a proportion of the costs of support if all of the following apply to you:

- you've been working for the University for six weeks or more
- you need special equipment

The precise level of cost sharing is determined by the size of the organisation. As a large employer with over 250 employees, the University pays the first £1,000 and 20 per cent of costs over that, up to £10,000. In the rare circumstance that the cost of adjustments is over £10,000, Access to work will pay 100 per cent of all costs. After between one and three years, Access to Work will review your circumstances and the support you are receiving. You can also review your support with your line manager through 121s and supervision meetings or at your appraisal.

#### 4.1.5 Paying for approved reasonable adjustments

Payments for approved reasonable adjustments will initially be paid by the University from the Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments. Any funding agreed by Access to Work will be claimed once the adjustments are in place.

#### 4.1.6 Funding for recommended adjustments not approved by Access to Work

Access to Work may not agree to pay for equipment or training which has been recommended by the specialist assessor and will send you a letter explaining their decision. This is usually because the recommended equipment or training is deemed to be normal workstation equipment, not because it is not required. The letter will confirm this. The equipment or training should still be provided but will be funded by local budgets usually used for the purchase of workstation equipment or training.

You should make your line manager aware of any equipment in this letter as it is still necessary in order to fulfil the University's obligation to provide you with reasonable adjustments

Access to Work provides a list (see the Equality Unit website) of equipment which is regarded as normal workstation provision. This list is not exhaustive and is updated, but it will serve as guidance.

### 4.1.7 Appealing against an Access to Work Decision

If you do not agree with an Access to Work decision about the amount of support you are entitled to, you can appeal against their decision. The appeal process is outlined below.

Access to Work is not a statutory benefit and so there is no right of appeal against decisions but there is a process in place which is outlined below. Details about who to contact at each stage can be provided by Access to Work.

1. If you are unhappy with the decision about your application for support you should make a written request for a review. Write to your Access to Work Adviser stating that you would like a review of the decision. The review will be carried out by an officer at the next level up from the original approving officer.
2. If you are unhappy with that decision you can contact the Regional Access to Work Manager in writing, asking for the decision to be reviewed. You will receive a response within 7 days.
3. If you are still not satisfied you can write to the National Access to Work Delivery Manager who will respond with a decision within 7 days.
4. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome you can write to the Customer Services Director responsible for Access to Work. You will receive a response within 7 days.
5. The only recourse after this is to write to the Independent Case Examiner (ICE) an impartial body, which considers complaints about the Access to Work Service.

#### **Case Study 4**

##### **Stefania – identifying strengths and rising to the challenge**

“Although I don’t want to hide it, I don’t want to have to confront it all the time either. It’s sensitive for me.”

‘When I first asked for help, it went silent.’

“It’s strange that in order to get the ICT packages I needed for dyslexia, I had to become a student at another university.”

***To read more about Chris’s case, please see Appendix I***

## 4.2 Internal Funding – Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments

### 4.2.1 What does the Central Fund pay for?

The University's Central Fund can be used to pay for:

- Special aids, equipment or training approved by Access to Work (depending on the circumstances this may be fully or partially reclaimed (see section 4.2.2)
- Individual staff requests for diagnostic assessments for Specific Learning Differences (SpLD) (see section 4.2.3)

### 4.2.2 Applying to the Central Fund to support an Access to Work application

Access to Work will only fund 100% of approved reasonable adjustment provision in the circumstances set out in section 4.1.4. In any case, the University will be required to pay for all reasonable adjustments and then claim all or a portion of the costs. In order to claim the costs, invoices and the appropriate forms will need to be submitted to Access to Work within six months of delivery of the last item or training session.

When approved adjustments are agreed by Access to Work and the relevant letters received by you and your line manager, your line manager should complete the 'Line manager's form to support Access to Work application' which can be found on the Equality Unit site under 'Supporting Disabled Staff'. Even where Access to Work have agreed to pay in full, the University will need to pay and claim the money back once the adjustments are in place.

In order to facilitate the smooth administration of the Central Fund and ensure that reasonable adjustments are acquired quickly and efficiently, the Equality Unit will actively participate in the process. By centralising this process, the University will become better informed about the number of disabled staff we employ who require reasonable adjustments as well as the true cost of putting them in place. This improved knowledge will help us:

- to plan for the needs of our disabled staff in the future,
- to look for cost saving efficiencies in the purchasing of equipment through HEI suppliers
- set the budget for the Central Fund for subsequent years.

### **Applying to the Central Fund** (see Flow Charts at the end this section)

Once you have applied to Access to Work and by following the steps in section 4.1.3, and received letters about your support, the next step is to apply to the Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments. Please follow the process below with your line manager.

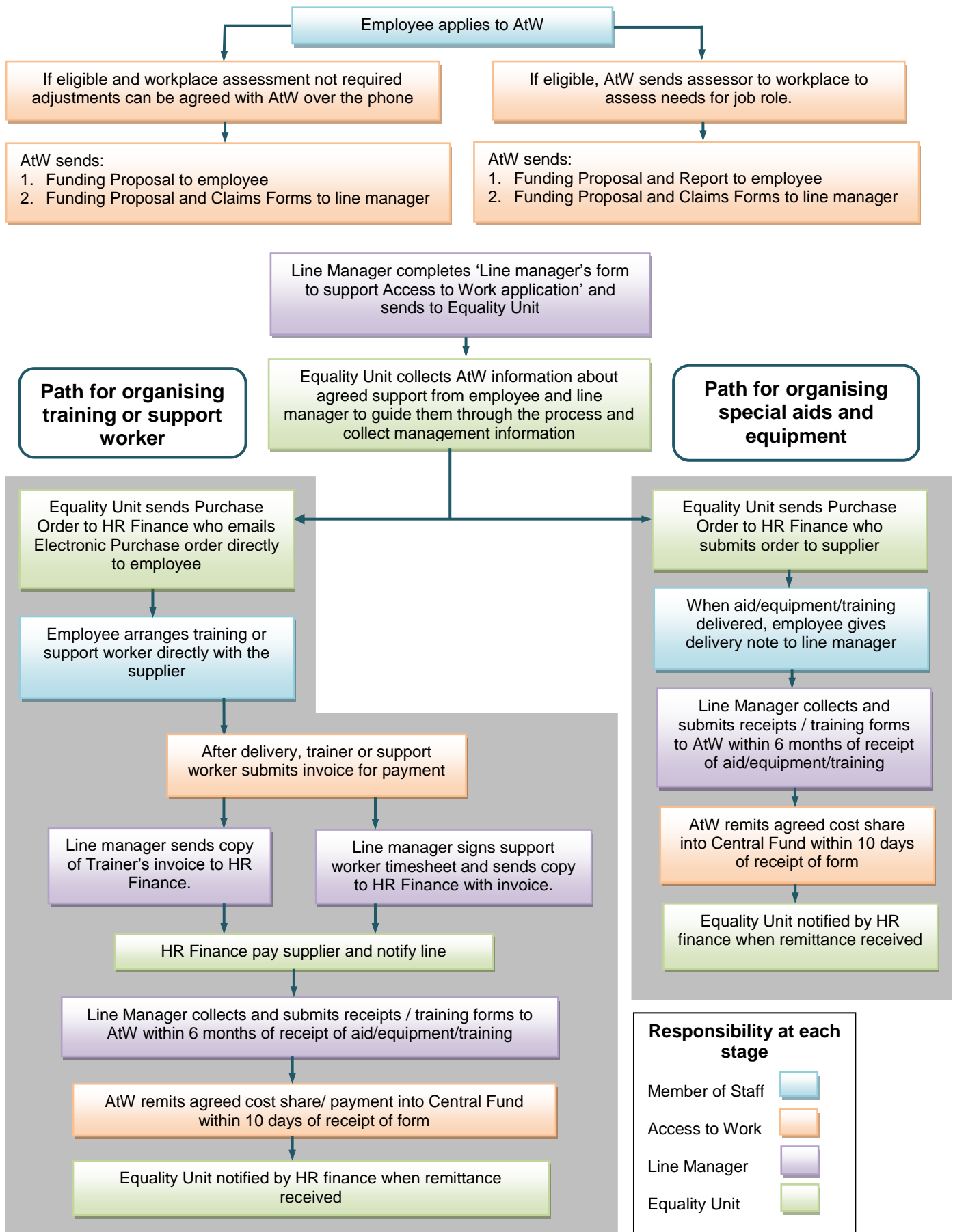
1. Your line manager should complete the 'Line manager's form to support Access to Work application' which can be found on the Equality Unit's StaffSpace page under 'Supporting disabled staff' and send it to the Equality Unit within seven working days of receipt of Access to Work approval of cost letters.
2. The Equality Unit will contact you to request further information about your approved and non-approved support.
3. Once all the information has been collected, the Equality Unit will prepare purchase orders for approved support
  - a. Equipment will be ordered directly and delivered to you
  - b. Training and support purchase orders will be sent to the provider and you will be notified so you can contact the provider to arrange your own appointments
4. When goods are received or training delivered you should let your line manager and the Equality Unit ([equality@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:equality@kingston.ac.uk)) know.
5. Collect delivery notes and/or invoices for goods and training received.
6. Once your equipment, training or support work has been delivered, your manager should complete either an Access to Work one-off cost claim form or a support worker claim form, as appropriate, and send it to Access to Work together with receipts and/or invoices within six months of delivery of equipment and/or training. The address will be on the form or available from your Access to Work Adviser.
7. Access to Work will pay their contribution straight to the Central Fund

Throughout the process the Equality Unit will keep in touch with your Line Manager to check that your equipment and training is being put in place. We will ask for an update on purchases which have been made since the last update to keep the spreadsheet up to date.

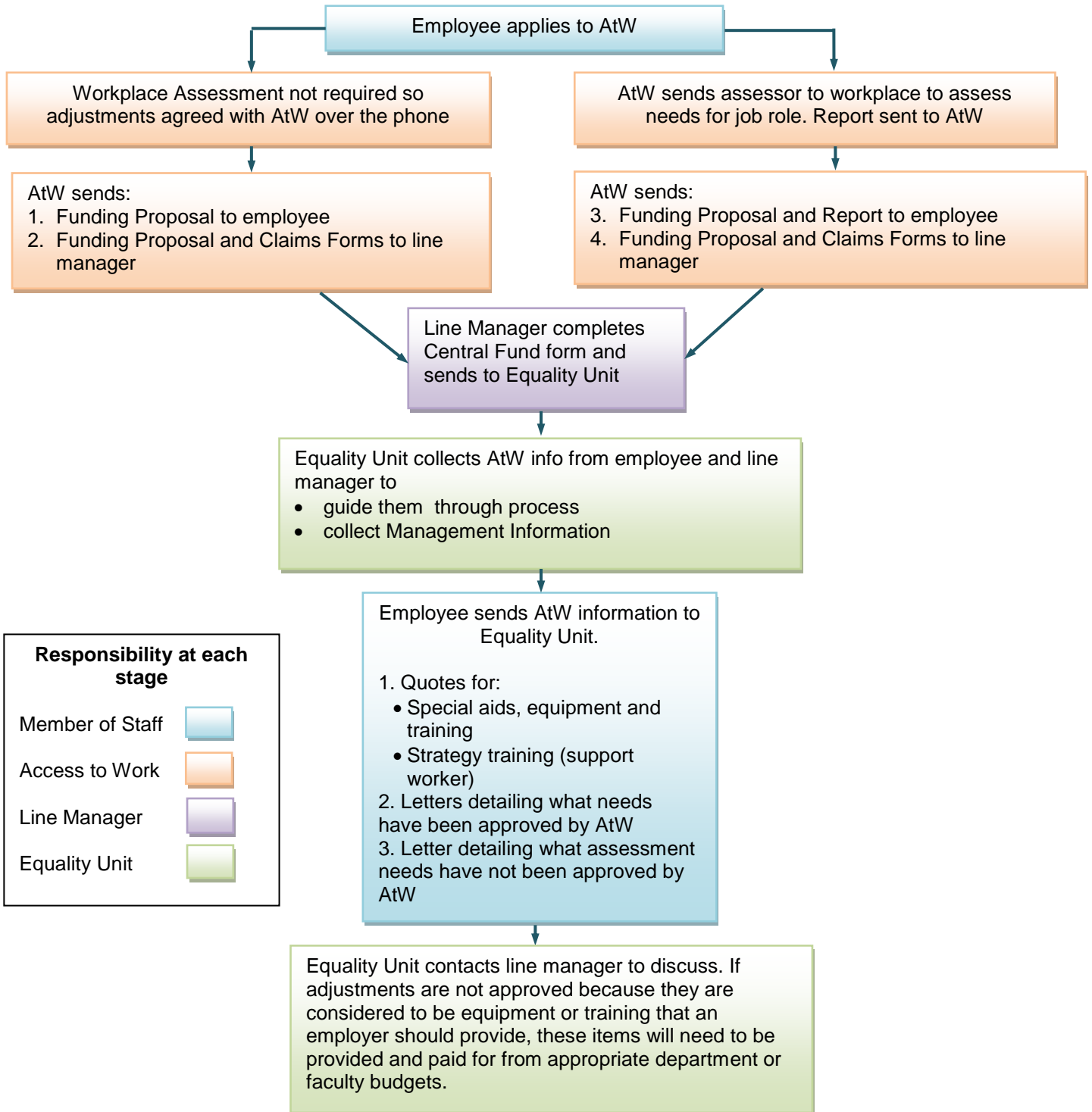
### **Closing the case**

Once the money has been returned to the Central Fund, the database entry will be closed.

## Flow Chart: Application to Access to Work (AtW) – special aids, equipment, training and support worker



## Flow Chart: Application to Access to Work (AtW) - support not approved



**Responsibility at each stage**

Member of Staff	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ADD8E6; border: 1px solid black;"></span>
Access to Work	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFDAB9; border: 1px solid black;"></span>
Line Manager	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #D8BFD8; border: 1px solid black;"></span>
Equality Unit	<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #D4EDD4; border: 1px solid black;"></span>

### **4.2.3 Applying to the Central Fund for a diagnostic assessment for a Specific Learning Difference**

If you think that you may have a Specific Learning Difference (SpLD) such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD or Dyscalculia, which is impacting on the way you do your job, you can contact the Equality Unit and request a Diagnostic Assessment with a Specialist Teacher. The cost of this assessment will be met by the Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments (see section 2.4.2)

If you are unsure about whether what you are experiencing that is impacting on your work, is due to a SpLD, you can ask to have a pre-assessment screening, which is a shorter. A screening would give you the opportunity to have a discussion with someone – such as Dyslexia Adviser, to identify some key indicators as to whether you have got a specific learning difference or not.

If you wish to have a screening or assessment, contact the Equality Administrator (see Contact Information)

You are encouraged to tell your line manager that you are having a screening or assessment because they will be a key person in the provision of reasonable adjustments. The earlier they are aware of what is affecting you at work, the more engaged they will be when you receive your outcome. It also gives them a chance to find out what they may be required to do in circumstances that may be new to them. It is not essential to inform your line manager at this stage if you do not feel comfortable.

# Appendix A – Reasonable adjustments

## What is an adjustment

'Adjustment' is the legal term for any adaptation made in the workplace to ensure equal access for a disabled person. The most common types of adjustment include:

- equipment (eg assistive computer software or an adjustable height desk)
- adjustments to workplaces or the physical environment (eg ensuring enough space between desks to accommodate a wheelchair or that equipment is at an accessible height)
- adjustments to an employee's duties, working routine or conditions of service, or the provision of disability leave
- transcription of written materials into accessible formats (eg Braille or large print)
- the services of a support worker (eg a personal assistant or sign-language interpreter).

## What is reasonable?

'Reasonable' is difficult to define, but all adjustments must be aimed at addressing the particular barriers faced. We should consider:

- how effective it will be in helping the person to do their job
- whether it is practical to make the adjustment
- how much disruption, if any, will be caused to the University or other people
- how much, if anything, the adjustment will cost and how much money the University has available
- whether we can get help with making the adjustment and towards its cost from a scheme such as Access to Work.

Adjustments often cost nothing; all that is needed is a change in working practice. For adjustments that do involve a cost, the government Access to Work scheme may be able to help.

The most important thing to remember is that treating everyone the same does not mean that you are treating everyone fairly. The Equality Act 2010 requires people to be treated differently according to their needs by making reasonable adjustments for them. Disabled staff have a right to be fully involved in any discussions about suggested adjustments. If the University decides that a requested adjustment cannot be justified as reasonable, a written explanation will be given to the employee.

We encourage staff and job applicants to apply to Access to Work (see section 4.1) as they work with specialist assessors who can do a detailed analysis of a workstation and job role. If they approve adjustments, there is also the opportunity to receive external funding to cover some of the cost.

**To find out more about Kingston University  
funds reasonable adjustments, see Part 4.**

## Examples of reasonable adjustments in employment

- A job applicant with a hearing impairment requests funding for a British Sign Language interpreter through Access to Work. The University works with the applicant to arrange the interpreter. We pay the interpreter directly and then claim the money from Access to Work
- Shelves and door handles in an office are lowered so that an employee who uses a wheelchair can reach them. All staff are told to ensure that boxes, bags and bins are not left in walkways where they might get in the way of the wheelchair user. This also has positive health and safety implications.
- A faculty employs a secretary who has arthritis in her hands which means she has difficulty typing. Voice-activated software is installed on her computer, which means she can produce accurate word-processed letters and contracts quickly without having to type. This has an impact on other staff in the room, but the line manager has discussed this with them before introducing it, and has issued earplugs for any team members who wants them.
- The University's catering provider employs a kitchen porter with a learning disability. The manager makes sure that he gets information about health and safety and food hygiene in Easy Read (simple language with pictures). In addition, the manager makes sure that everything is explained to him in person to ensure he understands it. The Easy Read information and explanations also help other workers who do not speak English as a first language or have low literacy levels.
- An academic school paid a small amount towards the cost of hearing aids for a member of their staff, and Access to Work paid the remainder. This enabled the staff member to gain confidence in her manager and to continue effectively in their role.<sup>6</sup>
- An Access to Work grant complemented University funding to retrain a staff member who had undergone an operation to replace a shoulder. This enabled the employee to return to work in an adjusted role within the same team.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Equality Challenge Unit 2010, "Managing Reasonable Adjustments in Higher Education"

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

## Appendix B – Models of disability

**The medical model of disability** says that a person is disabled by their condition or disability. It maintains that the condition needs to be fixed or helped so that the person can adapt to society, which is considered to represent what is 'normal'. The disabled person is seen as having the problem.

**The social model of disability** locates the problem with society and its norms. It places the responsibility on society to remove barriers that are disabling. For instance, if a building has flat or ramped access, adequate lifts and wide enough corridors and rooms, a wheelchair user is not at a disadvantage when accessing rooms compared with someone not in a wheelchair. Incidentally, many of these improvements to the world around us also benefit others, such as people with pushchairs and trolleys and those with other mobility impairments.

As everyone's disability will affect them differently – for example, what one visually impaired employee requires may not be the same as another – it may be necessary to assess what changes to the work environment or work patterns an individual may need to avoid their being at a disadvantage to non-disabled colleagues. These individual amendments are known as 'reasonable adjustments' (see above) and are a legal requirement.

## **Appendix C – Other options for support and guidance**

Although it is the responsibility of everyone in the University to support disabled people, the following departments have specific roles in the process, or may be able to provide you with particular forms of advice or support.

### **Human Resources Department**

Every faculty and department has a dedicated HR Adviser, who you can contact at any time during your employment to discuss concerns. Please see the Human Resources Organisational Structure diagram on StaffSpace to identify the named Adviser for your faculty or department. The HR Adviser will be able to liaise with your line manager if you require any reasonable adjustments to be made and feel unable to discuss this with your line manager.

You should also contact your HR Adviser should you wish to lodge a grievance or complaint.

### **Recruitment**

If you are a job applicant, you can contact a Recruitment Officer to discuss any requirements or concerns you may have in relation to your disability during the recruitment process, or to request reasonable adjustments for an interview. Please see 'Contact information'.

### **Equality Unit**

The Equality Unit provides strategic-level guidance to departments and faculties to make sure they eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation of people with protected characteristics<sup>8</sup>; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups.

The Equality Unit regularly consults individual staff and students on their experiences of equality at Kingston University, and welcomes individuals with protected characteristics to come forward and share their experiences.

The Equality Unit is the main point of contact for the Central Fund for Reasonable Adjustments and to request diagnostic assessments for Specific Learning Differences (eg Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADD and Dyscalculia) for staff (see section 2.4.2).

### **Occupational Health Service**

The primary responsibility of the University's Occupational Health Service is to promote the health, safety and well-being of University employees. Services include:

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<sup>8</sup> Protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, include: Race, Religion and Belief, Sexual Orientation, Age, Disability, Sex, Transgender, Marriage and Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity.

- confidential advice and guidance to employees and managers; and
- workplace assessments, including advice on temporary or permanent adjustments.

The Occupational Health Service can provide valuable information to help in any discussion about adjustments with your manager, with Human Resources, or with Access to Work. The most common procedure is for your manager to refer you to the Occupational Health Service, normally via your HR Adviser. However, you may be able to self-refer. Please contact Occupational Health if you want to discuss this option (see 'Contact information').

### **Care First – 0800 174319**

All University and KUSCO staff and their family members living at the same address (other than casual, fee-paid or staff bureau members) have access to the services of a confidential telephone based Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) free of charge, accessed at any time by dialling the number above. This service is under a contract that will run until at least December 2011.

The Employee Assistance Programme is a free telephone help-line available at **all** times that gives the caller access to either:

- The services of a qualified counsellor who may be able to assist with any difficulties at work, relationship etc.
- The counsellor can also provide support to managers who may need help with situations they have to deal with.
- An information service, similar to a Citizens' Advice Bureau that can advise staff on situations such as debt, bereavement, childcare and other services.
- This service can also be accessed by minicom and Typetalk.
- It also provides a management support service: if you're in charge of an area and need to deal with a sensitive issue, such as a disciplinary or performance management issue, the EAP will talk through how you might approach these issues, provide advice and suggest what sort of questions you should prepare for.

### **Counselling**

Occupational Health can refer staff to a counsellor in strictest confidence. Staff can be referred for a wide range of personal, emotional or psychological issues; the service is not restricted to helping only with work-related issues.

### **Other University services**

If you have any disability-related access requirements in relation to using other University services, such as the Library, Sports Centre or Staff Centre, you are welcome to contact the relevant service to discuss your requirements.

## **Car parking for disabled staff**

In some circumstances, disabled staff members are eligible for a University parking permit. Please see the University's Car Parking Policy on StaffSpace.

## **Transport for disabled staff**

Accessible buses run between the four main sites of the University (Penrhyn Road, Knights Park, Kingston Hill, and Roehampton Vale). Buses are free of charge to staff and students. If you require alternative transport, the University's travel policy will apply. Please see StaffSpace, for more details. If you have a severe mobility issue Access to Work may be able to help with travel costs to, from or in work. (see Part 4)

## **External organisations**

If you are a member of a trade union, you can contact a union representative at any time to discuss disability-related issues concerning your employment. The four recognised unions at the University are UNISON, UCU, RCM and RCN. If you do not know your workplace representative, you can contact the union's main office and they will put you in touch with them. If necessary, external organisations with specialist knowledge, such as the RNIB, RNID or other local disability groups, can also be consulted.

You may also be able to get advice from a Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) working through Jobcentre Plus. DEAs can provide specialist support to people who are recently disabled, or those whose disability or health condition has deteriorated, and who need employment advice. Please see the Jobcentre Plus website.

## Appendix D – IT adaptive technology, equipment and services to assist disabled staff

The software below is available on all Kingston University computers in staff offices.

### OneNote

**Who is it for?**

Suitable for all, but especially anyone with dyslexia.

**What does it do?**

OneNote makes it easier to understand information. Sometimes, however, understanding and taking notes at the same time can be difficult. OneNote allows for audio recordings that can be placed directly into OneNote. For some of us, listening to a speech without writing allows us to process the information better. If you need to take notes on the information again, you can listen to the recording, or even search the audio recording for specific spoken words or phrases.

### Inspiration v8

**Who is it for?**

Inspiration is recommended for people with ADD/ADHD, autism, Asperger's, dyslexia, aphasia, and visual or auditory processing disorders.

**What does it do?**

This is mind-mapping software. With Inspiration® you can use symbols and images to represent ideas, create graphic organisers to break work down into manageable sections, and brainstorm, sort and organise ideas. These visual thinking and learning strategies have been shown to increase academic performance for people with and without learning disabilities in content-area classes, including languages, arts, social studies, sciences and study skills.

### TextHelp Read and Write Gold v9

**Who is it for?**

It is extremely useful for people with dyslexia and can help people with visual impairments.

**What does it do?**

Read and Write is a program that helps with reading and writing through several features such as reading the text aloud, and identifying homonyms. It can be used with any Windows program (eg Microsoft Word, Excel), with email or the internet.

The software packages listed below are available in the student adaptive technology

room in the Penrhyn Road Learning Resource Centre . For more information about these and other adaptive technology packages or to try one out, contact Niran Aslam (details in Contacts page 66). If you think these packages might assist you at work you should talk to your line manager or your Human Resources Adviser

### **ZoomText**

**Who is it for?**

ZoomText is designed for people with visual impairments.

**What does it do?**

The **Magnifier/Screen Reader** version allows you to see and hear everything on the computer screen. It can be used with any Windows program (eg Microsoft Word, Excel) with email or the internet, or Read and Write, and Inspiration.

### **Jaws**

**Who is it for?**

People with visual impairments.

**What does it do?**

Jaws is a screen reader. Information on the screen is read aloud to you.

It works with most Windows applications, including word processors, spreadsheets, e-mail, Blackboard and the internet.

It supports Internet Explorer with special features, including links lists, frames lists, forms mode, reading HTML tables and graphic labels, and more.

### **Supernova v10**

**Who is it for?**

People with visual impairments

**What does it do?**

Supernova offers magnification, speech and Braille support, giving people with visual impairments the freedom to access Windows in the way that suits them best.

Supernova consists of Lunar magnifier and Hal screen reader.

### **Dragon NaturallySpeaking Professional**

**Who is it for?**

It is suitable for people who are unable to type, eg due to Repetitive Strain Injury or other physical impairments.

**What does it do?**

Dragon NaturallySpeaking lets you talk to your computer instead of typing. As you speak, your words appear on-screen just as if you had typed them. You can 'talk' (dictate) into many programs such as Microsoft applications and email. You can work on the internet too. You can search the internet, access information, and navigate pages by speaking the URLs and links.

**Kurzweil 1000 v11****Who is it for?**

People with visual impairments.

**What does it do?**

It provides users who are visually impaired with access to printed and electronic materials. Scanned print documents and digital files (such as eBooks or email) are converted from text to speech and read aloud.

**Equipment available from Occupational Health for staff to try out**

- Ergonomic mouse
- Adaptive keyboard
- Monitor arm
- Laptop stand
- Screen-enlarging software
- Wrist support
- Wrist slope
- Headset

This equipment can be loaned to staff. If the equipment is helpful, a request for permanent provision of specific equipment needs to be made through the line manager or your HR Adviser.

## **Assessment for a Specific Learning Difference<sup>9</sup>**

- Dyslexia tests for staff

## **On site accessibility**

- Electric doors
- Lifts
- Ramps
- Disabled parking

## **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)**

- These individually tailored plans, defining an exit route are normally facilitated by KUSCO for staff with mobility issues or sensory or cognitive impairments. For an interim period they are being organised by Health and Safety. Please see 'Contact information'

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<sup>9</sup> See section 2.4.2

# Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment Report – Disabled Staff Consultation

This guide to supporting disabled staff was one of the key recommendations from the consultation carried out with disabled staff by the Equality Unit in 2010. A number of the measures and institutional mechanisms available to support disabled staff that are detailed in this guidance have been put in place as a result of the consultation process.

Title
<i>(Scope of equality impact assessment eg Admissions process / disability &amp; dyslexia provision / Student Complaints procedure)</i>
Support structure for disabled staff within the University

Purpose of area being assessed
To ensure the needs of disabled employees, protected under the Disability and Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005, are considered at all stages of the employment Life cycle (from advertisement through to leaving) and that reasonable adjustments are put in place, where necessary, in a timely fashion.

Policies / strategies included in area of assessment (if different from above)
Various as this relates to support across the Life Cycle of staff employment so all policies and strategies which affect staff should be included.

Responsible member(s) of Executive Board / Senior Management Group
HR Director

Faculties and Departments involved in the assessment
Various

Data / Evidence used												
<i>Qualitative and Quantitative data reviewed in the equality impact assessment.</i>												
Please indicate which equality areas are covered in the data												
<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; margin-right: 20px;"> <tr><td>Age</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Disability</td><td>X</td></tr> <tr><td>Ethnicity</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="display: inline-table;"> <tr><td>Gender</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Religion or Belief</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Sexual Orientation</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Age		Disability	X	Ethnicity		Gender		Religion or Belief		Sexual Orientation	
Age												
Disability	X											
Ethnicity												
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Religion or Belief												
Sexual Orientation												
PSe staff data HESA data												

## Involvement and Consultation

- *Outline of how staff and students were involved in the development of the assessment area or will be involved in the resulting actions*
- *Details of consultation undertaken to develop actions*
  - The Staff Disability Network
  - Issues brought to the Equality Unit by disabled staff or staff with dyslexia
  - Discussions with the Disability and Dyslexia Support Service
  - Meeting with Kingston Centre for Independent Living
  - Discussions with Occupational Health
  - Review of practices in other Higher Education Institutions
  - Review of Equality Challenge Unit publications

## Summary of Findings

*(Result of investigation of evidence, involvement and consultation including examples of existing good practice and how proposed actions will be disseminated)*

1. **Findings reported in Annual Report 2006/2007.** In 2006/7 2 per cent of Academic & Research salaried staff and 3 per cent of General & Professional salaried staff disclosed disabilities. This is a similar picture to higher education institutions in London and the South East and the national picture presented in the HEFCE staffing report.  
However it should be noted that:
  - Since 2004–5, Kingston has seen an annual decrease in the proportion of staff disclosing a disability while the proportion of staff with dyslexia has increased.
  - Disability-related recruitment and selection data has not been captured fully to date.
  - Disabled people represent 19 per cent of the working population (Labour Force Survey, June 2006)
2. **IT Provision / Accessibility / Support.** There is no one on the University staff who can be identified as a contact for supporting disabled staff with their IT needs. There is a member of staff who works with students and has been very co-operative but, as the need to refer to this person has become more frequent and the issues have grown in complexity, it has become apparent that there is a lack of provision. There is no existing audit of software available to staff which outlines accessibility options available to users of available packages – such as Hitachi Starboard, and no one identified with the relevant knowledge to assist.
3. **Disability and Dyslexia Provision.** There is no existing information portal in place to guide a member of staff or their line manager to support within the University if they want to disclose a disability or require an assessment for a specific learning difference. There is an operational Occupational Health Unit within the University and a strategic Equality Unit as well as HR Advisers. Employees requesting support do not know which person to go to and there has been little formal co-operation between these units to facilitate the sharing of information to the benefit of the disabled employee.
4. **Separate recording of absence related to disability.** The University does

not record sickness absence and absence related to disability separately. Best practice would seem to indicate that this is preferable and can reduce the risk of discrimination on the grounds of disability.

5. **Training.** All staff should receive training in the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act and how it affects them as an employee or manager at the University.
6. **Communication or reported disability.** There is no formal system in place to facilitate the sharing of information between department/faculties, with the permission of the disabled member of staff, in order to facilitate putting reasonable adjustments in place.
7. **HR Policies and Procedures.** Policies and procedures need to be assessed to ascertain whether they effectively meet the needs of our disabled staff and take account of the duty to make reasonable adjustments
8. **Provision Statement.** As no central information is available to assist staff and managers, it is recommended that a Provision Statement be drafted, collating where assistance can be found or supported within the University, including making an application to Access to Work.
9. **Improve Disclosure.** The sector has produced recent advice on improving disclosure rates of disabled staff and collecting and using that information. It is recommended that the University uses this information to improve its own disclosure
10. **Two Ticks Symbol.** Signing up to this government-backed scheme shows a commitment to improving the prospects of disabled people. It requires a commitment to provide relevant training to staff as one of its core principles. Nearly 40 universities are already signed up. It is recommended that the University sign up.
11. **Equality Contact in each faculty/department.** To promote good practice and act as a local contact and information source, it is recommended that each department and faculty has a named person who would also sit on the Equality Advisory Group.
12. **Establish central budget for adjustments and assessments.** The use of localised budget to support reasonable adjustments and fund assessment for learning differences could deter staff from coming forward as they could be aware of the implications of their own needs on their budget. Central budgets, for this purpose, are being considered in HEIs and have been implemented in some places already. Sector advice is due out this March.

Review Date:	
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<b>Actions / Recommendation</b>				
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Responsible Dep / Fac</b>	<b>Executive Lead</b>	<b>Target date</b>
<b>IT Provision / Accessibility / Support</b>	Identify where need is not being met and how it could be provided. Submit proposal.	HR/IS/ADC	HR Director	September 2010
<b>Disability and Dyslexia Provision</b>	Continue recent work in Equality Unit to put a system in place to deal with assessment requests and support with applications for Access to Work funding.	HR	HR Director	September 2010
<b>Separate reporting of absence related to disability</b>	Collate evidence to support the need and submit proposal.	HR	HR Director	September 2010
<b>Disability in Employment Training</b>	Work with relevant departments, faculties and providers to design and deliver appropriate training to staff as staff member, manager or service/education provider.	HR	HR Director	September 2010
<b>Communication of reported disability</b>	Continue joint project work with Client Partner, HR Adviser and Occ Health to improve information sharing across departments to facilitate the provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled staff.	HR	HR Director	September 2010
<b>HR Policies and Procedures</b>	Assessment of our policies and procedures to ascertain whether they effectively meet the needs of our disabled staff and take account of the duty to make reasonable adjustments.	HR	HR Director	July 2012
<b>Provision Statement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop overarching provision document / statement</li> <li>2. Develop specialist guidelines for each stage of the Staff Life Cycle for managers</li> <li>3. Develop specialist guidelines for each stage of the Staff Life Cycle for employees</li> </ol>	HR	HR Director	September 2010
<b>Improve disclosure –</b>	Work with guidance from Equality Challenge. Unit to	HR	HR Director	July 2011

<b>Actions / Recommendation</b>				
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Responsible Dep / Fac</b>	<b>Executive Lead</b>	<b>Target date</b>
	improve disclosure.			
<b>Two Ticks Symbol</b>	Ascertain implications on training and recruitment and draw up proposal for implementation.	HR	HR Director	July 2011
<b>Equality Contacts in each faculty/department</b>	Draw up working proposal for implementation.	HR	HR Director	July 2011
<b>Central budget for Disability support</b>	Conduct sector research and submit proposal.	HR	HR Director	September 2012
<b>Date:</b>				

## Appendix F – Case study 1

### Chris Tye – when good support and the right equipment enable individual success!

Chris has worn glasses since childhood and it was during a routine trip to the optician that the disease – retinitis pigmentosa – was confirmed. Initially this degenerative condition had little impact on his life. He learned to drive and in 1975 he began training as a nurse at the London Hospital, Whitechapel, after working as a ward orderly in his teens to earn some extra pocket money. He completed a four-year programme in general adult and psychiatric nursing and found his vocation in accident and emergency nursing.

But gradually symptoms such as night blindness began to appear. Chris found himself bumping into people in the dark in the cinema and had to get his wife Kim to escort him home after nightfall. His work in an Accident and Emergency department was not affected by his inability to see in the dark – it is a workplace with high visibility – but he knew he could not continue indefinitely with a clinical career. “With a young family to support I was constantly worried that my disability could cost me my job and my livelihood,” he said. When the offer of a teaching job came up in the 1990s, he took it.

As the years went by, Chris’s sight steadily deteriorated. His tunnel vision became more pronounced but even then he told very few people about his condition, nor did he seek outside help. “I didn’t talk about it in the early days, it was a hidden disability. I should have registered as partially sighted before I finally did, but I found it very hard to go public.” He eventually registered as partially sighted in 2001, the year he finished his doctorate. He feels that, in a strange way, being partially sighted was actually harder than having no vision – particularly when trying to explain it to others. “Being disabled is not easy. You have to be comfortable and confident enough to articulate it – which you tend not to be at the beginning. An individual will go through stages of despair and anger, and it takes a long time to get to the point where you feel happy explaining it to others.”

Using a white cane made Chris feel uncomfortable and clumsy but, after registering as blind in 2006, he applied for a guide dog and in April 2009 Walter, a black Labrador, arrived. “He’s made a big difference to my independence and mobility. It’s easier to use public transport and I can go out in the dark – I’ve not done that on my own for 30 or 40 years.”

Walter, a lively three-year-old, is more than a working dog; he is a constant companion to Chris, an adored family pet and one of the best loved members of staff at Kingston University and St George’s, University of London. “He’s a great character, people find it a lot easier to discuss disability through the dog rather than through a white cane.”

After joining Kingston and St George's 15 years ago as a senior lecturer in Accident and Emergency nursing, Chris worked his way up to become head of the School of Nursing (a role he shares with another colleague) and Associate Dean for postgraduate programmes. He is now in charge of 95 staff at the Faculty of Health and Social Care Sciences. He points out that, interestingly, his career has progressed further as his eyesight deteriorated. At 56, Chris has come to accept his blindness. "It's been a long journey and it's not always been easy – my bruised shins are testament to that – but I've now got to a place which I can accept. I've stopped saying 'if only' and learned to see things through other people's eyes."

Chris has had support from the Dean and all staff in his faculty and has always felt that he was competing on a level playing field. His Dean put him in touch with other high-level professionals in the public sector with visual impairments, which allowed him to network with them.

However, he has had to push for some of the changes that have been made. "You have to know what you need, and you have to tell people." RNIB have provided Chris with guidance about the new technologies available to people with visual impairments, which he then suggested to the University. Small measures that his colleagues take make all the difference, such as leaving a chair free near the door if he is late for a meeting, to allow him to slip in quietly, or talking through papers that are tabled at a meeting rather than expecting attendees to read them on the spot. Many of these measures have become normal within his workplace because Chris has advocated for them.

Chris's advice to other disabled staff is to take up funding from Access to Work, a government fund that helps employees to have reasonable adjustments made to enable them to work. Chris felt worried about asking for expensive equipment, such as the scanning machine he used to manipulate documents to be readable when he was partially sighted. However the equipment that he uses has been vital to allow his career to progress. His needs are reviewed every two to three years and Access to Work funding has complemented funding from the University to allow him to not just continue in work but to excel.

He tries to explain how hard it was to come to terms with his disability – stubbornness, pride, a reluctance to move from the role of health care professional to a person with a disability may all have played a part – but he is clear that it was a struggle. "That interim period was very difficult and stressful but now it's more black and white – I can't hide it." He seems relieved to have reached his current ease of mind, and is relieved that his sons Jonathan, 22, and Edward, 16, do not carry the gene for retinitis pigmentosa.

Chris's current role in management, teaching and research is a world away from his earlier career in nursing and he bemoans the fact that so few men enter the profession. The inclusion of mental health nursing in his training ensured that he was not the only man on the course, but he has still spent his professional life outnumbered by female colleagues. At a time when men are increasingly attracted to other caring professions such as social work and physiotherapy, Chris is at a loss to explain why there are still so few male nurses. "The right men are just as caring as the right women; it's a shame there aren't more male nurses," he said. "More should be done to attract men to the profession, particularly targeting schools, so boys could hear about the role before stereotypes set in."

**We wish to acknowledge our thanks to Jenny Percival and the Communications team for their contribution to this case study, and of course, our thanks go to Chris Tye.**

## Appendix G – Case study 2

### Simon – it would have been easier if he'd known earlier!

Simon has been a senior lecturer for eighteen months. After some time in a very structured work environment, he did a degree. He came top of a year of 120 and has since completed a Masters.

Simon has an assessment for dyslexia due next week, and is anxious about the results. Even though he is sure he must have some type of learning difficulty, he is worried what will happen if he is not diagnosed as dyslexic and so costs his department money for no reason. He is pretty sure he must have dyslexia; he hates reading books, and finds writing reports extremely worrying and difficult. He often has to read a page many times to understand it, preferring to skim the information instead, and finds he is increasingly encountering difficulties with the middle parts of words. He is better at reading stories and essays but finds dry legal materials very difficult – which made him decide not to pursue a career in law, despite being advised to do so by teachers and legal colleagues.

Simon had a conversation with a friend who urged him to go forward for dyslexia testing in 2001. It has taken him ten years to get to this stage. He is only putting himself forward due to the many roles and duties that he has both in and out of work, as he has realised that he needs to “work smarter, not harder.” Simon has always worked very hard but now wants to be able to take his career forward with more strategies and assistive technologies to help him manage his workload better, particularly for writing reports. Simon also recognises the symptoms of dyslexia in many of his students, and encourages them to go forward for testing in order to get help and support, so it seems ironic to him that he hasn't done so himself. Finally, another staff member with severe dyslexia had discussed coping strategies at a recent meeting; this inspired Simon to seek more support.

He thinks he has shied away from being tested for dyslexia due to his background, where any kind of “weakness” was not tolerated and “you had to have a stiff upper lip”. He also clearly remembers that his brother was thought to be dyslexic while at primary school. He was never diagnosed and the school implied that he was stupid. Although attitudes have changed since then, Simon thinks that this implied link between dyslexia and stupidity has prevented him from taking the step to be tested.

When Simon joined the University he did not have a known disability and did not know about Access to Work. However, when told about it, he considered that applying within the first six weeks of being in a new job to get 100 per cent funding is unrealistic as it will take people a while to realise what they could potentially benefit from, or that they may have a disability. As a result, he does not have any reasonable adjustments but knows that assistive technologies and advice on strategies for working would be helpful.

When he decided to go forward for dyslexia testing in January and discussed this with his mentor and his line manager, both supported his decision. His line manager was also positive about Simon's decision as it was considered that it would raise

awareness within the faculty about disabilities and dyslexia, and that more people should be coming forward for support.

Simon phoned Naz at the Equality Unit, who talked him through the process for dyslexia testing. He found her very friendly and the system accessible. He had been worried about phoning as, due to his past experiences, “admitting weakness” is a problem. Also, his workplace has a slightly older population for whom the concept of dyslexia is relatively new.

Simon has just finished a Masters degree and his PgCert teaching qualification at Kingston. He does not want to do a PhD but may try to achieve one by submitting research papers. He found writing the final report for his PgCert absolutely nerve-racking and is apprehensive about tackling a PhD, which has been suggested to him as the next step. He also would like to pursue qualifications relevant to his teaching duties and his discipline.

In terms of completing his professional qualifications, he is worried about disclosing his potential dyslexia to the final panel interview. Although he knows that not being treated equally could be a breach of the law, he is concerned that a panel may just report that he was not suitable and he would not be able to counteract that. He is worried that, in assessing two candidates of similar merits, a panel will decide against choosing him if he has a disability.

Simon is sure that he has equality in his employment. However, he needs to find out how to work in a better way so that he is not constantly pushing himself to achieve things. He works intensively but it takes longer than it should and he tends to rely on completing work under stress. He wants to stop feeling as if he is always climbing straight up a hill and to work out a way to zigzag up it more methodically. Going forward for dyslexia testing is a big step, but one which he hopes will dramatically improve his working life.

## Appendix H – Case study 3

### Amrik – it's simple to fix, so fix it!

Amrik, who is 33, previously worked for a private-sector company, which he left when he was made redundant due to his department being closed. He has worked in Kingston University since 2008 as an Administrative Assistant.

Amrik has had a heart condition since he was born, which means he cannot walk long distances without getting very out of breath and he struggles using stairs or with any kind of strong physical exertion. His work is not affected but sometimes getting to his place of work can be difficult, such as when the lift is out of order or he cannot park near his office. However, Amrik looks young for his age and his disability is hidden – for example, he is able to walk – so he does not conform to people's common perceptions about physical disability. He is often subject to comments from members of the public, questioning why he has a disabled badge for his car or is using a disabled car parking space.

Amrik did not have any problems with the recruitment process; it was all relatively straight forward. He found out about the vacancy through the University's website and applied online. He used to teach overseas and it was the opportunity to work with overseas students that attracted him to the role.

Amrik does not need any reasonable adjustments, but he did make it clear from the beginning that he needed access to a working lift (he works on the fourth floor of a building) and a parking space close to his building, as he cannot walk far. Over the last year, the lift has broken down frequently and the disabled parking spaces have been full, or occupied by the vehicles of non-disabled drivers, on many occasions. His frequent battles to get the lift fixed have been fought by him alone, and he has given up expecting any kind of checks to be made by the University on who is using the disabled parking spaces.

It is frustrating that all he needs is for the existing equipment and parking system to work properly – when they do not, it impacts dramatically on his ability to get to work. It takes far too long to fix the lifts and the disabled parking area is not well policed, with vans using it for loading or people without disabled badges using it. Amrik can feel petty having to keep stressing the same points and making the same complaints as these are apparently minor issues, but they make a huge difference to him.

Amrik was not made aware of Access to Work but does not require any reasonable adjustments. He hates the impact these problems have on his work, as it “makes me have to focus every day on how I am different to others, which I don't want to have to do.”

His colleagues are aware of his issues as he believes in being open about his disability so that life is made easier for him and for them. The attitude of the vast majority of his colleagues is very good and the people he works with on a daily basis are supportive, but the added burden on them when Amrik cannot get to work worries him and adds to the stress he already feels about the situation.

However, he has unfortunately had a number of negative experiences with other staff, in the form of comments about whether or not he should be parking in disabled bays and whether he really needed to use the lift. Amrik feels very supported by his immediate line manager but finds comments from wider management such as “the lift breaking down is inconvenient for everyone” unsympathetic.

His manager will text him in the mornings to let him know that the lift is broken down before Amrik arrives, but even his manager cannot offer much more help than that. The lift was broken for a long period one summer holiday and he did not feel supported in his efforts to get it fixed; there was an attitude that it was not urgent as students are not around at this time. Amrik goes to work every morning worried about how he will get to the office, and what he will do if the standard equipment in place is not working, and the stress is getting to him.

Amrik feels that his opinion of Kingston has sadly been coloured by his experiences of not being supported as a disabled staff member and he does not feel he will stay here for long. However, he does not think that, in the long term, his career progression will be hampered by his disability. It is a series of simple things going wrong and not being fixed that have accumulated to make him feel unvalued and unsupported. This may lead to the University losing a hard-working and committed staff member.

# Appendix I – Case study 4

## Stefania – identifying strengths and rising to the challenge

Stefania has been working at Kingston University in an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) role for four years and, before that, was a course team leader in a further education college in Europe. She has a teaching background and was always been interested in ICT as it allowed her to overcome some of the barriers to learning that she experienced because of her dyslexia.

She was diagnosed with dyslexia when she was about nine years old, attended a school for children with social and learning difficulties and was told that her career prospects were likely to be a shop assistant at best. Not satisfied with that, she worked hard, overcame the odds and progressed to further education and university. She never considered teaching because of her inability to write without making mistakes on a blackboard but, in time, she became a teacher and line manager.

Stefania came to the UK five years ago and applied for a less high-level job in the UK, to allow her more time for her young family. She found out about her current job through the web. She was not ready for a teaching job in further education in the UK as, although she had taken extra English courses, she regarded her English at the time as unpolished, making ICT her most transferable skill.

Stefania found the recruitment process to be straightforward but struggled with the layout of the application forms. She attended a daunting interview with a five-person panel. She does not see herself as disabled so was reluctant to tick the box on the equalities monitoring form – she is not “a wheelchair user”, and does not have a “physical impairment”. But she did put on her recruitment form that she has dyslexia as she was worried that she might have a legal obligation to do so. She got the job.

After about three months someone in the University contacted her, possibly in relation to the declaration she had made on the recruitment form, and asked if she needed any help; she replied “no”. She later mentioned her dyslexia for the first time to her manager who asked her what she may need – but she “just couldn’t think of anything”. She made enquiries about support in May 2008 but nothing happened. “It went silent” she says. She got the impression that there was no protocol in place.

Stefania never really sought help for her dyslexia until her manager encouraged her to do a Masters degree. She now has ICT packages in place, provided by another institution when she became a student with them in 2009. A lack of established protocols at the time, unfortunately meant that nothing was provided for her in the workplace and few people were aware at that time, about the possibility of reasonable adjustments being funded through Access to Work. The ICT packages allow her to work more effectively though do not actually save her any time. They cater for people with visual impairments in addition to dyslexia.

Stefania’s manager has been very supportive and has made informal arrangements to proofread her work that is submitted for external publication. However, this requires careful planning as proofreading has to be arranged well in advance to

allow for the time it takes.

The strategies for overcoming dyslexia are complex. As a result, Stefania has become extremely disciplined which, she stresses, is a good skill to have. She now discusses her dyslexia with her manager and colleagues. “Although I don’t want to hide it I don’t want to have to confront it all the time either. It’s sensitive for me,” she says. Her colleagues are more aware of the strategies she has to use to produce her work on time.

Taking on a Masters degree was a huge progression in Stefania’s career; it complements her job and she is pioneering ICT related developments for the University. She feels very lucky to have had this opportunity, which she would not have had elsewhere.

Stefania is quite reliant on her manager and they have a good relationship – if not, she would never have discussed her dyslexia – which goes to show how individuals make a huge difference. It is not easy to trust people to support her and if the University establishes clear processes for support then she and others will not be reliant on the goodwill of others.

# Contact information

## Access to Work – Jobcentre Plus

Access to Work Operational Support Unit (OSU)

Jobcentre Plus

Harrow Jobcentre

Nine Elms Lane

London SW95 9BH

T: 020 8426 3110

Textphone: 020 8426 3133

F: 020 8426 3134

E: [atwosu.london@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:atwosu.london@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

## Care First

T: 0800 174319

(24-hours a day, 365 days of the year)

## DisabledGo Access Information at Kingston University:

[www.disabledgo.com/en/org/kingston-university](http://www.disabledgo.com/en/org/kingston-university)

(see 2.3.3, DisabledGo)

## Equality Unit

Kingston University

53 Portland Road

Kingston upon Thames

KT1 2SH

T: 020 8417 4087

Typetalk: 18001 020 8417 4087

F: 020 8417 4159

E: [equality@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:equality@kingston.ac.uk)

[www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/factsandfigures/diversityandequality](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/factsandfigures/diversityandequality)

***To discuss the reasonable adjustments, the Central Fund or assessments for Specific Learning Differences (eg dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADD or dyscalculia) for staff, please speak to Naz Mojid, Equality Administrator.***

## Health and Safety Unit (including Occupational Health)

Tower Block (Room 806)

Penrhyn Road campus

T: 020 8417 7378

F: 020 8417 7380

E: [safety@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:safety@kingston.ac.uk)

24-hour emergency: 020 8417 6666

Mobile security: 07831 136082

## **Human Resources department**

Kingston University  
53–57 High Street  
Kingston upon Thames  
KT1 1LQ  
T: 020 8417 9000  
F: 020 8417 3162  
E: [hr@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:hr@kingston.ac.uk)

## **Information Services: To find out more about ICT packages contact:**

**Niran Aslam, Senior E-Services Developer**

E: [n.aslam@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:n.aslam@kingston.ac.uk)  
T: 020 8547 2000  
Ext: 62037

## **Jobcentre Plus - Kingston**

3 Brook Street  
Kingston upon Thames  
Surrey  
KT1 2EY  
T: 0845 604 3719  
Textphone: 0845 608 8551

## **Occupational Health Services**

Same address as Health and Safety Unit

T: 020 8417 7378

E: [occ-health@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:occ-health@kingston.ac.uk)

<http://staff.kingston.ac.uk/C6/C14/Occupational%20Health/default.aspx>

## **Recruitment Section**

Same address as Human Resources

T: 020 8417 3153

E: [jobs@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:jobs@kingston.ac.uk)

Textphone users: to access the Typetalk service, dial 18001 followed by the recruitment telephone number

New jobs are advertised at: [www.kingston.ac.uk/prospects](http://www.kingston.ac.uk/prospects)

# Acknowledgements

This guide provides an overview of the support available to disabled staff, managers and job applicants at Kingston University. Any information provided about aspects of the law is only a summary of the legal position; anyone requiring information about how the law applies in a particular situation should seek specialist or legal advice. Information in this guide is correct at the time of going to print.

If you require this guide in an alternative format (for example Braille, large print or e-text) please email [equality@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:equality@kingston.ac.uk)

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# Feedback

The Equality Unit welcomes feedback on this guide. Whatever capacity you have picked it up or come across it, if you have any comment that you think would be helpful to us when we are reviewing the contents, please contact us – details are in Contact Information.