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Disability: Know your rights at work

Mal blogs about how knowing about your rights at work - and asking your rep for help - can help to empower you at work and improve your working life.

I've been a personal case rep for many years. People ask me for help when they think their rights within the workplace are being ignored, but you need to have some idea of what your rights are before you know what you are missing out on.

As an employee you have "rights" - these are things that you can expect in the workplace regarding you and your employment. These rights have been created by the government by legislation and vary from person to person depending on their circumstances and protected characteristics.

Depending on where you get your information from you may have a pretty good idea of what your rights are - you should make sure you know them so that you can defend them. [PCS Digital](#) has a huge knowledge base of information including law at work, equality, your rights to reasonable adjustments and much more.

It is important to note that none of your rights are set in stone. Governments can and often do change legislation and it can be hard to keep track of the rights that apply to you. Your employer will have an HR department, but you should remember the HR department is there to protect your employer, not you. However your union rep can be relied upon to find and provide the correct information and guidance for you. As a union member, one of your rights is the right to consult a union rep.

When you talk to your union rep regarding a problem at work relating to your disability, they may ask you questions you find quite personal.

- What is the nature of your disability?

- Are you responsible for caring for someone?
- Do you have a workplace passport?
- Do you have any reasonable adjustments?

We need to ask those questions because the answers inform us about what legislation applies to you as your rights may vary from the people you work with.

If you are an employee with a disability, you have rights granted to you by the Equality Act 2010. You have the right not to be discriminated against either directly or indirectly because of your disability. Put simply this means you should not be treated worse than a non-disabled person in the same circumstance.

Employment rights around a disability are quite complicated and will vary from person to person. If your union rep doesn't know the answers straight away they will be able to find the answers from the network of thousands of union reps within PCS, or from our full time officials or legal department.

You can get further information from [PCS Digital](#). If you know anyone who is having problems at work encourage them to join the union – having a rep on your side really does help.