

WACC POLICY

DISABILITIES

Issued by the General Secretary

2021

This policy is to be read and interpreted in conjunction with WACC's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Policy Statement

1. WACC will ensure that any employee with a disability is supported and is treated fairly and equitably.
2. WACC defines a disability as a mental or physical impairment which limits, or is likely to limit, a person's ability to carry out normal work-place activities for an extended period (of the order of one year or more).
3. A disability may include, but is not limited to, the results of: arthritis, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, heart disease, hearing loss, HIV and AIDS, mental illness, neurological disorders, and spinal injuries.
4. The existence of a condition that may cause disability does not necessarily mean that a disability exists, as the affected individual may not have any impairment.
5. A person is also considered to have a disability when he or she has a condition which alone is sufficient to restrict the undertaking of normal work-place activities.

Employee Care

6. WACC values its employees, and will make all reasonable efforts to continue to employ any staff member who develops a disability, including where appropriate:
 - a. making changes in hours of work, job requirements, working conditions and location, and employment position, and
 - b. providing aids to overcome physical impairment.
7. It is intended that a sympathetic environment, in which anyone with a disability may discuss their needs with supervisory staff and co-workers, be maintained.
8. Any member of staff who develops a disability will be treated with compassion and will be supported while adjusting to the limitations which he or she may face.
9. It is recognised that an employee with a disability may require frequent and on-going medical attention, and WACC will be willing to adjust working hours and/or permit time off from work to accommodate this.
10. Where an employee with a disability requires an extended leave of absence, WACC will grant this, in so far as it is able without compromising its ability to operate effectively.

11. Where an employee resumes work following an extended absence due to a disability, WACC will be flexible in facilitating the person's return.
12. WACC regrets that it will be unable to continue the employment of any person where to do so would expose that person, or other people, to an unacceptable level of risk, or where that person is unable to perform essential job functions after all reasonable accommodations have been made.

HIV and AIDS

13. Individuals with HIV and AIDS are protected from discrimination by WACC's Equal Opportunities Policy, and are considered to have a disability if their condition negatively impacts their employment.
14. WACC recognises that the presence in the workplace of a person with HIV and AIDS does not pose a health risk.
15. WACC actively campaigns for the elimination of stigma associated with HIV and AIDS and will not tolerate the stigmatisation of any person on the grounds that they have or may have HIV and AIDS.
16. WACC affirms that it will not limit a person's opportunities for employment or advancement solely on the basis of the person having HIV and AIDS, and will apply 'fitness for the work' as the sole health criterion when selecting candidates.
17. No employee, or potential employee, will be required to undergo an HIV and AIDS test in connection with his or her employment, or be required to provide WACC with information regarding his or her HIV and AIDS status.

Confidentiality

18. No employee is required to advise WACC of the existence of a disability, unless it makes them a risk to themselves or others while at work.
19. When WACC is unaware of the existence of a disability, it will be unable to ensure compliance with the provisions of this policy.
20. When an employee advises WACC of the existence or nature of a disability, he or she may request that this information be kept confidential, and in such cases the information will be shared only to those members of staff who need to know in order to comply with this policy and/or to protect the health and safety of that employee or others.

General

21. Responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of the Disabilities Policy lies with the General Secretary.
22. WACC will take disciplinary action against any member of staff who is found to infringe its Disabilities Policy, which may result in dismissal.

WACC Disabilities

23. An employee advising WACC of a disability and requesting any modification of his or her employment may be required to provide a medical certificate confirming the existence of the disability, indicating the nature of the modifications that may be required, and confirming the employee's ability to continue to work without posing a risk to themselves or to others.

While this policy is directed primarily at defining the relationship between WACC and its staff, the principles outlined will, when appropriate, apply to volunteers engaged to assist in WACC's offices.