

# EDNA

**Employee Disability and Neurodivergent Advice**

**Presented by:** Lisa Richardson & Alice Morris  
EDNA Disability and Accessibility Advisors

NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight  
Health and Wellbeing Programme

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### What is EDNA?

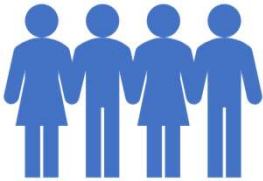
EDNA stands for Employee Disability and Neurodivergent Advice Service

A confidential information and advice service for NHS colleagues in Hampshire & Isle of Wight, who are living with a disability, long term condition and/or are neurodivergent

EDNA offers support and advice for workplace reasonable adjustments, information, signposting, advocacy, provision of manager training and more

The service is provided by a specialist team, who offer one-to-one advice and a safe space to talk, as well as help with areas such as: employment rights and HR advice

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### What is EDNA'S aim?

- Provide a *comprehensive* advice service
- Create a *healthier and comfortable* working environment
- Build a more *inclusive culture* within the workplace
- Empower colleagues with *timely* and *accessible* information


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### MEET THE TEAM







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**Lisa Richardson**  
**EDNA Disability & Accessibility Advisor**  
Lisa believes in a sense of belonging and acceptance and wants to share this journey with you and make it be the best it can be, so that we all feel a sense of achievement and as a whole being, where inclusivity is all.




**Alice Morris**  
**EDNA Disability & Accessibility Advisor**  
Alice believes that a sense of belonging ties diversity, equality, and inclusion together, ensuring that colleagues are respected, valued and understood whilst being their authentic self.








**Jacqueline Holt**  
**EDNA Administrator**  
Jacquie believes for us to put "patients first" we must firstly put our staff first. If we look after our staff we will have less sickness, reduced turnover of staff, therefore creating a more inclusive workforce.


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### AIM for today's session



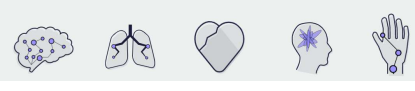
-  To provide you with a better understanding of what a long-term condition is
-  To take a brief look at some common types of long-term conditions
-  To describe what some reasonable adjustments might look like for different types of conditions
-  Provide information on how to access support
-  Provide some facts and invite you to share your overall knowledge gained from our session

Look out for this symbol for Quiz time and be ready to add your answers in the chat field!



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### What is a long-term condition?




"Long-term conditions or chronic diseases are conditions for which there is currently no cure, and which are managed with drugs and other treatment."

(NHS Confederation, 2023)

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|  |   |               |
|--|---|---------------|
| Diabetes   | Lung or respiratory conditions  |               |
| Cancer (including those with and who have survived cancer) | Musculoskeletal conditions (including spinal-cord, arms, legs and joints) |               |
| Multiple sclerosis   |   |               |
| Stroke   | Mental health conditions (including depression, anxiety and bipolar)      | Heart disease |

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### Long term conditions

Let's look at some reasonable adjustments for these types of long-term conditions


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- Epilepsy** use of a anti glare screen for photosensitivity, scheduled breaks from computer work, use of a chart to describe steps to complicated tasks, a flicker free monitor such as a flat screen and use of a cubicle shield
- Diabetes** extra time being given at the beginning of their break to check their blood sugar levels and administer their dose of insulin. If they are a shift worker, consider if this will affect their diet and insulin regime?
- Musculoskeletal** adaptive chair, specialist keyboard and mouse, micro breaks to eliminate remaining sedentary
- Stroke** alternative lighting, task flow chart, task separation, written instructions, timers, planners and or job coach
- Cancer** ergonomic equipment to support with decreased stamina/fatigue, flexible schedule, working remotely, periodic rest breaks, for temperature sensitivity- office desk fan

Common reasonable adjustments



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What condition might be caused by inflammation and muscle tightening around the airways, which makes it harder to breathe. Symptoms can include coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness.

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## ASTHMA



**NORMAL LUNG** vs **ASTHMATIC LUNG**


- Normal Lung:** Muscle relaxed, Normal lining, Normal amount of mucus
- Asthmatic Lung:** Muscle tightens, Swollen lining, Excess mucus

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Some reasonable adjustments for asthma might include...

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- Frequent rest breaks
- Creating a fragrance-free work environment
- Allowing the employee to work from home
- Adjusting air temperature and humidity




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What long-term condition might be caused by the following?

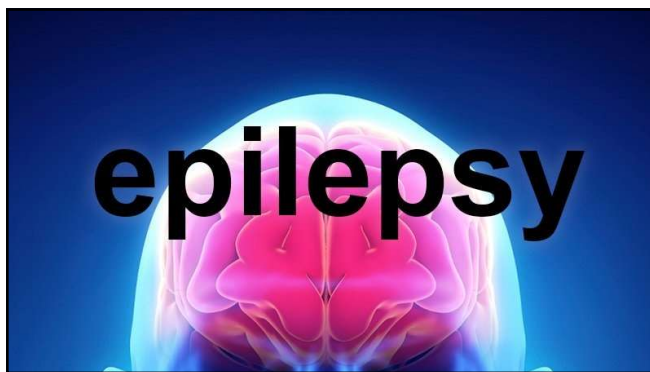
QUIZ

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- Stroke
- Brain infection, such as meningitis
- Severe head injury
- Problems during birth which causes a baby to get less oxygen
- With the cause often undetermined



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**Lets watch a video** with a focus on epilepsy

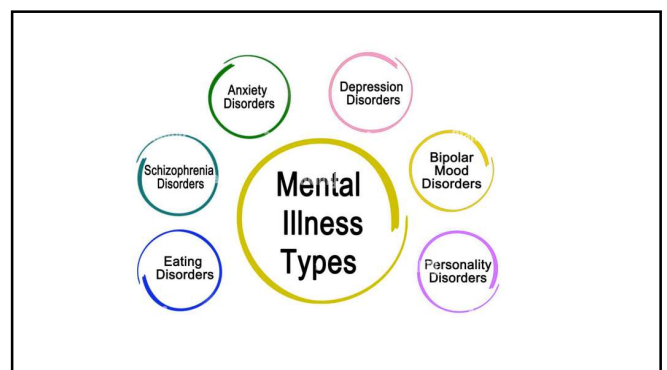
[Examples of reasonable adjustments at work for epilepsy - Bing video](#)

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Let's look at some types of mental illnesses that might be **co-existing**



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### Mental ill health in the workplace

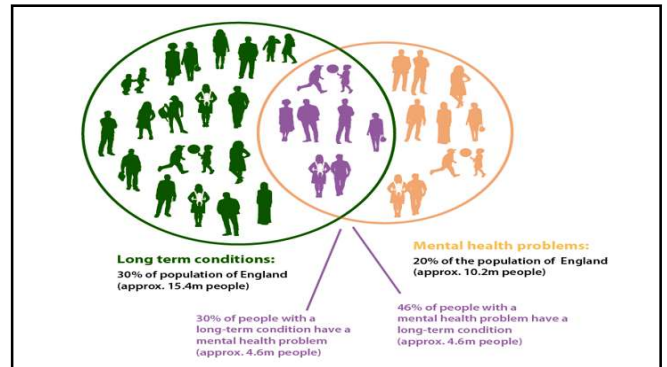
**What are the signs that a team member may be experiencing mental ill health?**

- Sustained changes to physical functioning and/or appearance
- Sustained changes to cognitive processes
- Sustained changes to social interaction
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Frequent absences or reduced work engagement

**What should a manager do if they suspect a team member is experiencing mental ill health?**

- Perform due diligence before approaching the team member
- Encourage communication
- Consider reasonable workplace adjustment

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**Let's learn more**  
by watching a video on supporting disabled staff in the workplace

[Supporting disabled staff in the workplace | NHS Employers](#)

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### Mental health in numbers

1 in 6 adults will have experienced a common mental health disorder in the past week

Severe mental illness (SMI) such as **schizophrenia** or **bipolar disorder** affects about

# half a million

adults in England

(based on GP registers)

Having a long-term physical condition can affect many areas of a persons life, including their relationships, their ability to work, their finances and their mental health.

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### Facts

- In the UK, 1 in 5 people have a disability, 80 per cent of which have a hidden disability
- Supporting staff with long-term health conditions helps them to return to and remain in work. This benefits an organisation in retaining a valuable member of staff and helps with the management of sickness absence and its associated costs
- 83% of disabled people acquire their health condition during working age
- 5 to 7 % of disabled people use a wheelchair
- Epilepsy is one of the most common serious neurological conditions in the world. It affects around 600,000 people in the UK. This means that almost 1 in 100 people in the UK have epilepsy. Around 87 people are diagnosed with epilepsy in the UK every day.

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### Quiz time!

1. What is one of the most common neurological conditions in the world?
2. In the UK, what is the percentage of individuals with a hidden disability?
3. What percentage of people with a mental health problem have a long-term condition?
4. What percentage of disabled people acquire their health condition during working age?
5. What are some of the signs that a team member may be experiencing mental ill health?
6. Problems are often hidden, stigma is still widespread, and many people are not receiving support to access services, is this True or False?

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**Did you guess right?**

1. Epilepsy
2. 80%
3. 46%
4. 83%
5. Changes to physical functioning/appearance, change to cognitive processes, changes in social interaction, inappropriate behaviour or reduced work engagement
6. True

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How do I access support?

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**Access to Work**  
Making work possible

**Access to Work:** get support for 'reasonable adjustments' if you have a disability or health condition

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**Let's watch a short video** to learn more about Access to Work  
[Your Guide to Access to Work - Bing video](#)

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| Month  | Day          | Time          | Focus                              |
|--------|--------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| MARCH  | Tuesday 28th | 1.30 - 2.30pm | Focus: ADHD                        |
| APRIL  | Tuesday 25th | 1.30 - 2.30pm | Focus: Being a Supportive Manager  |
| MAY    | Tuesday 30th | 1.30 - 2.30pm | Focus: Reasonable Adjustments      |
| JUNE   | Tuesday 27th | 1.30 - 2.30pm | Focus: Anxiety                     |
| JULY   | Tuesday 24th | 1.30 - 2.30pm | Focus: Long Term Health Conditions |
| AUGUST | Tuesday 29th | 1.30 - 2.30pm | Focus: Musculoskeletal Conditions  |

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- ✓ Wants to help change the workplace culture and reduce turnover!
- ✓ We aim to support our employees so that their talents can shine!

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Thank you for your time!


Any questions?



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Appendix

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**Lisa Richardson**  
Disability & Accessibility Advisor

Lisa has 14 years' experience working within the NHS. With the first two years working within the community looking after patients with complex needs and end of life care. She has worked in a clinical background working on the wards both in Surgery and Specialist Medicine working as an Associate Nurse Practitioner. She provided a service to patients and supported colleagues who were living with a disability, long term condition and/or who were neurodivergent.


Lisa studied at Solent University in 'Class 2015' where she was diagnosed with Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia, this didn't stop her, she sourced support for reasonable adjustments towards her studies and came out of university with a distinction.

For the past seven years Lisa has worked for the Occupational Health Department within UHS as an Accessibility and Disability Officer where she provided advocacy, advice and support for reasonable adjustments in the workplace for employees who lived with a disability, long term condition and/or neurodivergence.

**Lisa believes in a sense of belonging and acceptance and wants to share this journey with you and make it be the best it can be, so that we all feel a sense of achievement and as a whole being, where inclusivity is all.**

Lisa was nominated a hospital hero for her determination, commitment and her remarkable success in creating a valuable service for her colleagues within the UHS. She is proud of her achievements in making it evolve to what it is today and has clear passion for her colleagues and a real sense of drive to take the EDNA service forward across many other organisations within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight region.

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**Alice Morris**  
Disability & Accessibility Advisor

Alice has worked within the NHS for four years; within the first two years Alice worked for the Children & Families Service as a Speech & Language Therapy Assistant where she worked within various settings; organising and delivering therapy activities. Alice has supported individuals who have a disability and those who are on the autistic spectrum.

For the past two years Alice has been working as part of the Operational Management Team in Solent NHS Trust's Vaccination and Health Inequalities Service. Alice was involved in the development and coordination of vaccination centres across Hampshire & IOW and within a variety of community settings.

Prior to Alice's time working for the NHS, she has enjoyed working in a range of different roles supporting people with social and physical learning disabilities. This led Alice to pursue a degree in Special Educational Needs & Disabilities which has given her a broader understanding of how to better support individuals with a disability, long-term condition and/or are neurodivergent.

Alice believes that a sense of belonging ties diversity, equality, and inclusion together. Ensuring that colleagues are respected, valued, and understood whilst being their authentic self.


*"Alice is excited and passionate about the service and looks forward to offering support and advice to NHS colleagues and helping them flourish in the workplace."*

Alice was diagnosed with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia & Dyscalculia during her time at university in 2015. She sourced support for reasonable adjustments towards her studies and has continued to use these in everyday life.

Alice talks openly about her disability as it is an important part of who she is.

*"Good friends will stop seeing condition or impairment as a barrier but just an aspect of your life. It won't be the only thing they know about you."*

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**Jacqueline Holt**  
EDNA Administrator

Jacque has many years experience of working in Childcare. Jacquie has 5 children, 1 who became deaf following meningitis at 16 weeks, 1 who had severe asthma and eczema and then at 16 her eldest son unfortunately took his own life. This has led to Jacquie having multiple health issues, including depression and anxiety, following his death.

Jacque had a very simple accident whilst away on a Scout camp, which left Jacquie with chronic pain and has undergone many spinal operations. She is now registered disabled and has mobility issues.

Jacque vowed never to let any of her disabilities stop her and worked hard to stay in work and learnt to walk again. Her goals are to stay at work even if its 1 day a week, and has the support and assistance of her main carer (her husband) and her therapy Maine Coon Cat.

Since her accident Jacquie has achieved several NQ3 qualifications and says her proudest moment was when she achieved her HNC in business management - through distance learning whilst also holding down a full-time job and her busy family life.

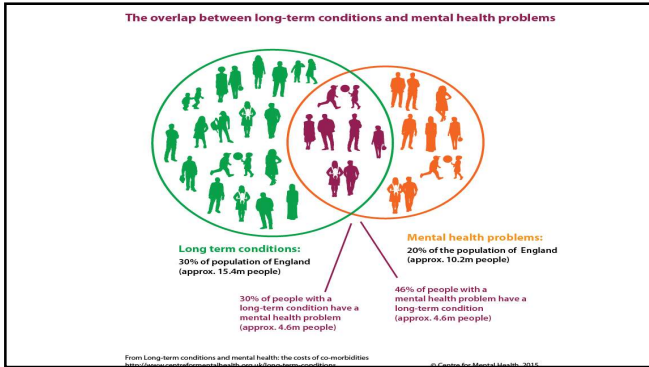
**Jacque believes for us to put "patients first", we must firstly put our staff first. She believes, if we look after our staff, we will have less sickness, reduced turnover of staff, therefore creating a more inclusive workforce.**

**We want our staff to be able to do their roles alongside their colleagues along a level playing field.**

On her joining Solent she discovered that there wasn't a staff network to support staff with disabilities and worked with the EDI and another disabled member of staff to organise one and this launched back just before the pandemic hit.

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