



Hampshire and Isle of Wight



EDNA

Employee Disability and Neurodivergent Advice

Hidden Disabilities

Presented by: Lisa Richardson and Alice Morris, EDNA Senior Disability and Accessibility Advisors

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Aims of the session

- » Provide an understanding of the meaning of 'Hidden Disability' to include a video on casting light on invisible disabilities
- » Explore some types of 'Hidden Disabilities' (non-visible)
- » To understand what we should do to support our colleagues, and how we must act positively as a workforce, and within society as a whole
- » To explore what reasonable adjustments can be made
- » Quiz

What is the meaning of a Hidden disability?

A non-visible disability, also referred to as a 'hidden' disability or an 'invisible' disability, is a term used to describe any disability which has no, or little visible signs to others.

(Homecare, 2024)

HIDDEN
disabilities 



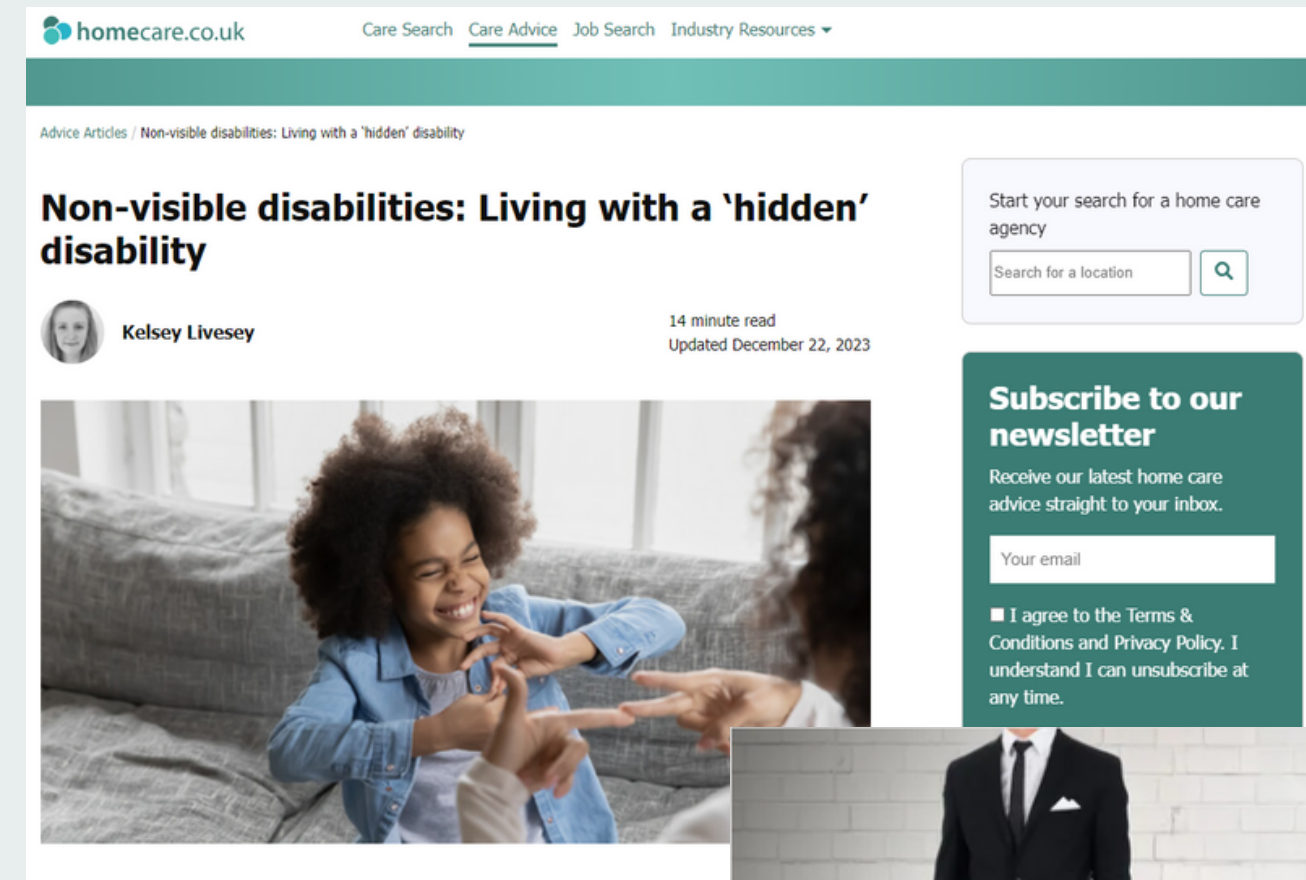
Hidden disabilities

There are several terms used to describe disabilities that are not visually obvious, these include:

- » Non-visible disabilities
- » Invisible disabilities
- » Less-visible disabilities
- » Hidden disabilities

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC, GOV.UK,2023) has decided to standardise on the term 'non-visible disabilities' after the following concerns were expressed:

- » Hidden disability implies that people are purposefully hiding their disability
- » Invisible disability implies that the disability is in that person's head, and doesn't really exist
- » Less visible disability implies that the disability is partially visible, whereas in most cases it's not visible at all



The screenshot shows a webpage from homecare.co.uk. The page title is "Non-visible disabilities: Living with a 'hidden' disability" by Kelsey Livesey. It includes a search bar for home care agencies, a newsletter subscription form, and a photo of a young girl with curly hair smiling and interacting with an adult.



Living with Non-Visible Disabilities

What is a non-visible disability and what are the ways in which they can affect daily life?

The Disability Unit / Dec 17, 2020

Casting light on invisible disabilities



Colleagues experiences on hidden disabilities



The image shows a YouTube video player interface. At the top left is the logo for 'PHU Partnerships Institute University of Hull'. The video title is 'PHU colleagues talk about visible and hidden disabilities...'. To the right of the title is a 'Share' button with a share icon. Below the title is a dark bar with the text 'From a UK healthcare provider' and a right-pointing arrow. The main video area shows a woman with brown hair, wearing a blue polo shirt with white piping, smiling and looking to the right. A large red play button is centered over the video. At the bottom left, there is a 'Watch on YouTube' button with the YouTube logo. At the bottom right, there is a subtitle: 'So even if I felt terrible, I would say'.

PHU Partnerships Institute University of Hull

PHU colleagues talk about visible and hidden disabilities...

Share

From a UK healthcare provider >

Watch on  YouTube

So even if I felt terrible, I would say

Let's emphasise

Lets pause for a moment and have a think about the following:

In our everyday lives you may instantly recognise that a person is disabled, for example, they may:

- » Use a wheelchair
- » Have difficulty walking
- » Be using a cane

You might notice that a person has a visible disability however, as you look around there might be equally as many, if not more disabled people that you cannot see or recognise.

To put this into context a person might have autism or be living with significant chronic pain.

It is important to remember that having a hidden disability can be just as life-affecting for a person who has a visible disability.



DPTAC position statement on non-visible disabilities

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Embrace different abilities



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Employee Disability and Neurodivergent Advice

“ THERE'S A LOT OF
ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHAT
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
CAN AND CAN'T DO ”

Amy Long, Inclusion and Belonging Consultant,
University Hospital Southampton



How do I know if a person has a non-visible disability?



Reasonable Adjustments



Understanding workplace adjustments in

Access our infographic to find out about the different adjustments that can help support disabled staff in the

NHS Employers

Understanding workplace adjustments

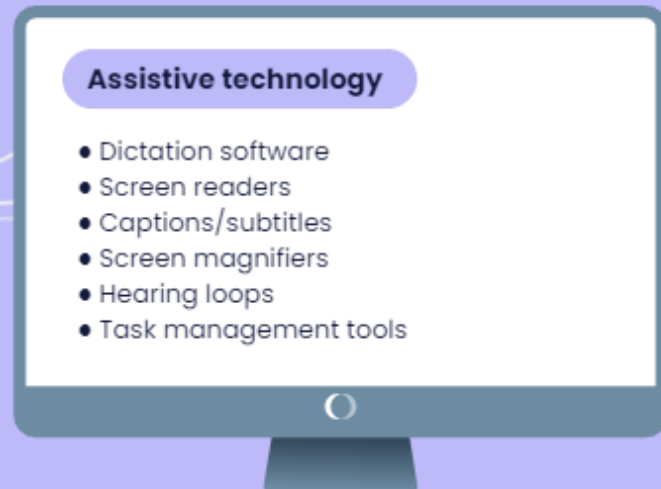
Physical environment

- Ramps
- Lifts
- Handles
- Accessible toilets
- Accessible parking
- Wide enough corridors/space at the office
- Quiet rooms, dimmer switches, visual alarms



Assistive technology

- Dictation software
- Screen readers
- Captions/subtitles
- Screen magnifiers
- Hearing loops
- Task management tools



Accommodations & recommendations



Physical environment

Ramps, Handles, Quiet rooms, Visual alarms



Assistive technology

Hearing loops, Task management tools, Screen magnifiers, Readers, Dictation software and use of Captions/Subtitles



Human support

Personal assistants, Job coaches, British Sign Language interpreters



Animal support

Hearing dogs, Guide dogs



Flexible working hours

Working from home, Flexible start and Finish times, Frequent breaks, Allowing time off for medical appointments



Ergonomic equipment

Desks, Chairs, Mouse/Keyboards, Monitors

Impact/negative result of not implementing reasonable adjustments

An employer's failure to make reasonable adjustments for a worker or applicant suffering with a disability will constitute discrimination under the 2010 Act. In most cases, the individual is likely to make an informal complaint or raise a formal grievance about the employer.

It affects retention of staff, reduces positive turnover, affects trust reputation, staff are subject to bullying, low morale, de-valued and most importantly affects their overall health and wellbeing.

How can I support my colleague at work?

- » Listen
- » Signpost
- » Reach out
- » Implement
- » Review

Lets work together to breakdown any barriers!

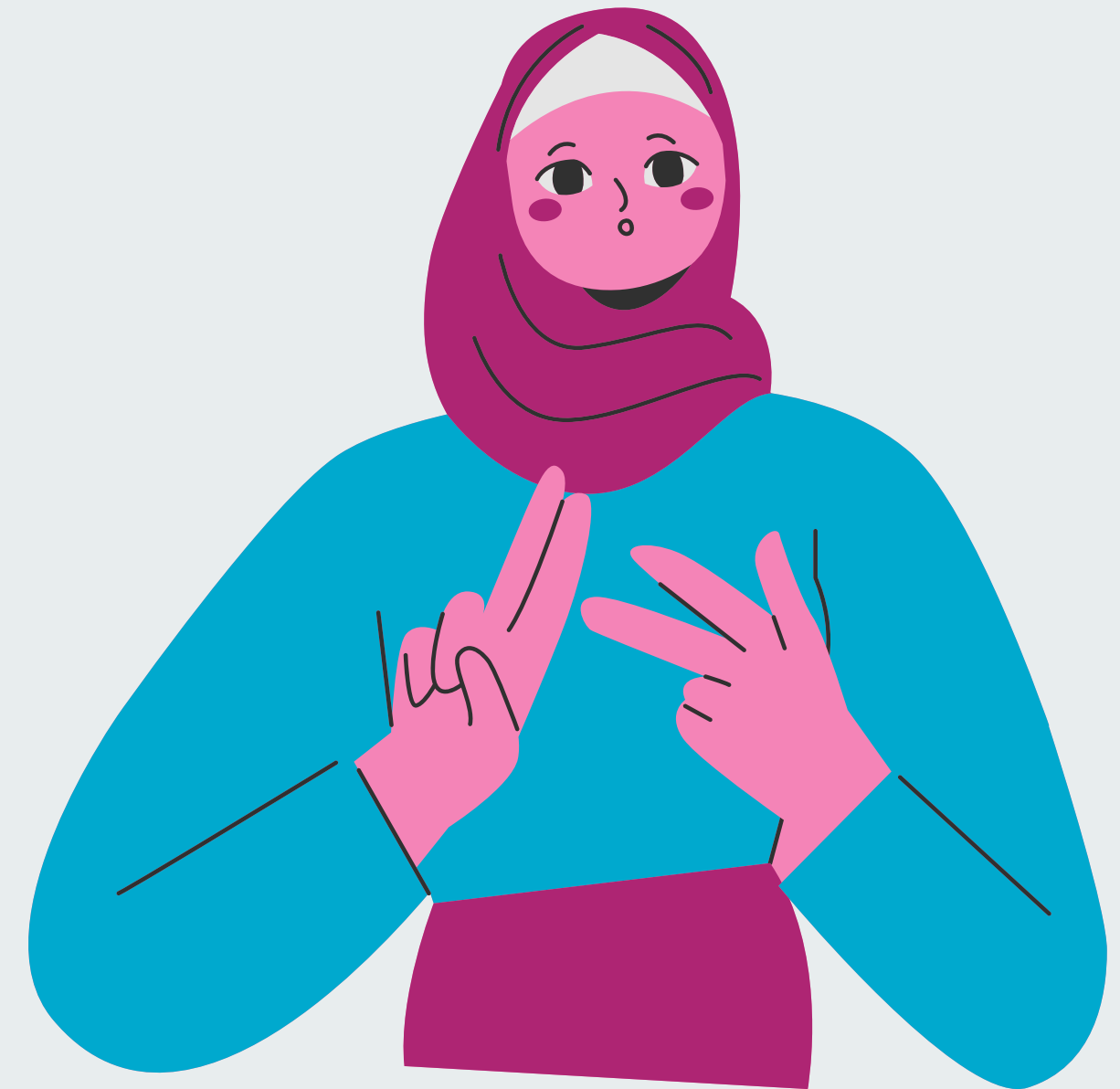


Raising awareness



We can provide better support the more we understand about non-visible disabilities

- » Everyday things can be difficult for people with non-visible disabilities these include: travel, work, shopping and socialising.
- » Making sure not to judge someone based on whether their disability is visible or not.
- » It is important to listen to disabled people and make sure that accessibility remains inclusive, this will help improve the lives of people with non-visible disabilities.



Quiz

Q1

What is the most common hidden disability?

Q2

How many people have a hidden disability, percentage wise?

Q3

Do you have to disclose a disability to your employer?

Q4

What is the goal of the sunflower?

Q5

People with disabilities always need help true or false?

What is a hidden disability?

By Hidden Disabilities Sunflower | News

Share





You guys are amazing! You really helped ease my anxiety and really help support to my learning needs. More NHS Trusts should have this service, as it's so valuable!



Thank you

Please email us at EDNA@solent.nhs.uk