

Spina bifida



Reasonable Adjustments

Spina bifida occurs when a fault in the development of the spinal cord and surrounding bones (vertebrae) leaves a gap or split in the spine. The spinal cord has not formed properly and may also be damaged.



About 700 babies a year are diagnosed with open spina bifida.

Closed spina bifida is estimated to affect between 5-10 per cent of the UK population.

There are several different kinds of spina bifida, with different symptoms, varying considerably in severity. Typical symptoms include:

Mobility symptoms

Weakness or paralysis in the lower limbs which means ankle supports, crutches or a wheelchair may be needed.



Bladder symptoms

Bladder and bowel control problems resulting from nerve damage in the spinal column.



Mental functions

Damage resulting from too much fluid on the brain and symptoms can include: short attention span; problem-solving difficulties; reading difficulties; problems with planning; and difficulty following some spoken language, particularly fast conversation.



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Work Place Reasonable Adjustments: what you and your colleagues can do at your workplace



1. Make your physical building easier to access. This may include: altering stairs, doorways entrances and exits; or adding toilet signs, lighting and ventilation. It may also mean altering the size of your property.



2. Provide easy access to facilities and breaks. Properly fitted wet rooms nearby are ideal.



3. Many individuals do not have a mental impairment. Always be respectful and do not talk down to people.



Where there are problems related to hydrocephalus or a Learning Disability, be aware that a person may have a short attention span, problem-solving difficulties, reading difficulties, problems with planning and difficulty following some spoken language, particularly fast conversation.

1. Speak clearly in straightforward language.



2. Support individuals to problem-solve and plan using Easy Read or check lists. Reminder signs that can be created with the individual (and are appropriate for their level of impairment) can be useful.

3. Hold shorter focused appointments and allow for breaks. Check understanding

