

Hidden disabilities

Heart impairment

Reasonable Adjustments



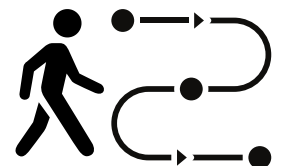
says almost 1 in 8 people have been diagnosed with a disease of the heart or circulatory system.



There are many different types of heart condition and the symptoms will vary in each.

In severe cases, a person may find various activities such as:

- mobility;
- ability to lift things;
- difficulty going up steps or gradients;
- ability to only walk a short distance without difficulty;
- less substantial effect could ability to walk that sets in only after 1 mile; and,
- difficulty carrying objects of moderate weight.



Someone who has had a heart attack and is at a greater risk of another attack, may not demonstrate a substantial adverse effect on such activities if their condition is progressive.

It is worth remembering in this context that discrimination against someone because they have had a disability in the past is unlawful.



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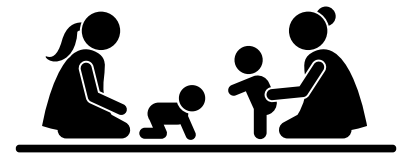
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Questions that employers and services should consider or ask their employee or service user could include:

- how far they can walk or use stairs, at what pace, and whether it is with breathlessness;
- whether the person finds public transport difficult;
- whether the individual needs to sit down and rest after certain activities;
- how often the person needs to take any emergency spray and in what circumstances;
- whether the person play with children;
- whether the individual get very tired; and,
- the type of medication the person is taking and how do they think they would feel without it.



Remember that people with a progressive disease will be protected even if the effects are not initially substantial.

On the other hand, someone who has had a heart attack may have experienced the worst effects in the first 3 - 6 months and be improving.



A person with a heart impairment will usually be on preventative as well as symptom-relieving medication.

The test of how substantially the heart condition affects a person is the effect on the worker were they not taking the medication. This can be hard to prove as consultant cardiologists tend to be reluctant to speculate on the particular person's capabilities if they were not taking the medication.

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



Always consult the individual.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- **reducing stress;**
- **reducing physical activity; and**
- **reducing activities that cause fatigue.**

Employers can do this by:

- **reducing the amount of lifting;**
- **reducing the amount of walking/movement;**
- **reviewing and adapting duties that cause stress;**
- **reviewing the amount of work hours;**
- **increasing the number of rest periods.**

