

Hidden disabilities

Sickle cell

Reasonable Adjustments

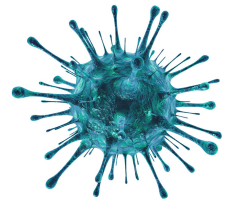


About 15,000 people in the UK have sickle cell. It mainly affects people with African or Caribbean family background, although it is also found in people who originate in Asia, the Middle East, or the Mediterranean.

Sickle cell is the name for a set of inherited conditions which affect red blood cells. The most serious is sickle cell anaemia.

The main effects of sickle cell are:

- anaemia, which causes tiredness and shortness of breath;
- an increased risk of serious infections; and,
- episodes of pain known as 'sickle cell crises' when small blood vessels become blocked.



A sickle cell crisis can cause mild to severe pain in one part of the body. It is usually controllable at home with over the counter or prescribed pain killers, and warm pads, but in severe cases, hospital may be necessary.

A crisis can last up to a week. Many people only have one bad crisis a year, but some people have them much more often, even every few weeks.

The triggers are unclear, but dehydration, stress, strenuous exercise, and bad weather may be factors.



Leg ulcers and inflammation of the hands and feet are also common symptoms.



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Treatment needs to be lifelong, and most people need to take antibiotics every day.



A sickle cell crisis can be treated with over the counter painkillers, although sometimes something stronger including morphine is required.

It helps prevent crises to drink plenty of fluids, keep warm and avoid sudden temperature changes.

People with sickle cell are at risk of serious complications including stroke.

If anaemia is particularly severe, treatment with hydro carbamide or even blood transfusions may be necessary.



Substantial adverse effects may include:

- Difficulty waiting or queuing because of pain or fatigue when standing.
- Difficulty going up and down steps, stairs or gradients because movements are painful or fatiguing.



Long-term effect Sickle cell is a lifelong condition.

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



Always consult the individual.

Depending on the nature and severity of their condition, reasonable adjustments could include:

1. Access to water and tea-making facilities.



2. A well-heated work environment.



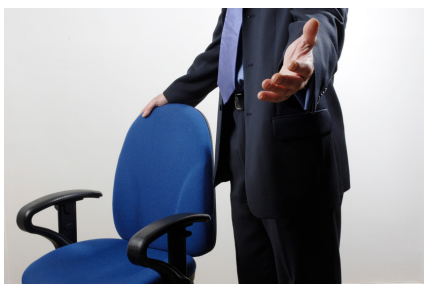
3. Flexible working hours.



4. The option to home-working if necessary.



5. The option for an employee to sit down.



6. Time off for hospital appointments

