

## Some Basic Notes:

### Accidents, illness and Disability

Most of us start off in life just fine, so it's no surprise to find that the majority of disabled people become disabled as adults – all too often whilst at work and quite often unexpectedly. It could be a sports injury or accident, or the onset of a disabling condition such as multiple sclerosis or stroke. It may not even be anything that your staff would think of as a major disability – but if it's a condition that has a 'substantial and long-term impact' on their ability to work they will be protected by the Disability Discrimination Act. Its aim is to outlaw discrimination.

**The Act has been extended in October 2004 to apply to employers no matter how small. It also applies to anyone offering goods and services to the public.**

AbilityNet's experience is that most employers would like to keep skilled employees on staff if they can, and most employees would like to keep earning. The Act requires you to make 'reasonable adjustments' – and what could be more reasonable than an adjustment to a PC that won't cost much and will enable someone to use it despite their disability. If you need advice or DDA training, AbilityNet can provide either or both.

### The Disability Discrimination Act: 4 key facts

- You must not treat anyone less favourably (without justification) than other employees, job applicants or service users because of a disability
- You must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a disabled person's needs
- It is anticipatory....for example a service provider of IT cannot suggest that 'no disabled customers so far' is sufficient reason for turning someone away.
- It applies to websites: your organisation's website is required to be accessible for disabled people.

### Want to know more?

There is no clear definition of 'reasonable adjustment', and it will vary dependent on the size of an organisation. All in all quite a complex issue and something you need to familiarise yourself with. There is much more information for employers and service providers at [www.disability.gov.uk/dda](http://www.disability.gov.uk/dda).