

Arthritis

Arthritis can be a debilitating condition that effects many people, but is more commonly found in older people. Arthritis may affect your daily activities, and therefore your ability to work.

Your employer will need to understand how your condition affects you in the workplace so that they can make reasonable adjustments to ensure your wellbeing while you are at work. To assist your employer, it is important that you communicate your condition at the earliest opportunity to allow your employer the chance to obtain assistance through any specialist assessment or person/body who may provide suggestions on any adjustments that could be made to offer support and assistance in the workplace.

Adjustments may include a more flexible approach to working such as:

- a phased return to work if you have been absent due to your condition
 - flexible working hours, such as being able to start / finish late
 - help with transport to and from work
 - working from home
- time off work for treatment or rehabilitation
 - dispensation for time off
 - greater time to complete tasks
- allowances for performance issues

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Your employer may also get advice from an occupational health practitioner who can offer suggestions about returning to work after an absence and other adjustments that could be made to your workplace such as a wrist rest, ergonomic keyboard and trackball mouse if you work with computers and arthritis affects your hands. Help is also available from Access to Work through Job Centre Plus.

Making a claim

If your employer does not consult with you, carry out the necessary checks and investigations and make any reasonable adjustments required, your work may suffer. In some circumstances you may find that you are dismissed on the basis that you are unable to carry out the role. If this is the case then you may be entitled to claim against your employer for disability discrimination.

There is no minimum length of employment required to bring a claim at the Employment Tribunal, but it is important to lodge your claim with ACAS within 3 months of the act of discrimination occurring. It is therefore essential that you take legal advice on your situation at an early stage and as soon as possible.

Contact Ashley Hunt & Carrie-Ann Randall on 01858 445 480 or Vaishali Thakerar & Alex Reid on 0116 212 1000 if you have been discriminated against because of a mental health condition.