

## WHO ARE WE?



Robert Hunter (Trustee), a solicitor advocate. In the course of 30 years in the City, Robert has been a partner in a magic circle firm and a specialist litigation boutique. (Robert is also profoundly deaf).



Liz Dawes (Trust Officer), previously deputy general counsel for an asset manager, now responsible for the day to day work of City Disabilities (and mother of two children with disabilities.)



Kate Rees-Doherty, (Trustee) a lawyer with over 20 years of experience in charity and private wealth law who has extensive experience of working with and enabling colleagues with disabilities.



Kayleigh Farmer, (Trustee) started her career as a legal PA and was promoted to Executive Assistant, before moving over to an IT Programme. Kayleigh has extensive experience of working with and enabling colleagues with disabilities.

### CONTACT DETAILS

If you have a disability or long term health condition, and would either like our support or to offer your help as a mentor, then we would love to hear from you.

You can contact us:

- via our website at [www.citydisabilities.org.uk](http://www.citydisabilities.org.uk)
- by email on [info@citydisabilities.org.uk](mailto:info@citydisabilities.org.uk)
- by phone on **07955 244048**.

*city*  
**DISABILITIES**



**SHOULD I TELL MY  
EMPLOYER ABOUT  
MY DISABILITY?**

*city*  
**DISABILITIES**

---

## THE “DISCLOSURE” DEBATE:

At City Disabilities we meet and mentor many different people, with a variety of disabilities and long term health conditions. One of the questions we are most frequently asked is whether they should tell their current employer, or a prospective employer, about their disability.

This debate is often framed as a question of “disclosure”. We dislike this word for its negative connotations: disability is not a guilty secret to be revealed, but rather a practical issue to be solved. Yet of all the people we mentor, very few choose to discuss a disability with an employer that they could otherwise hide.

So how do we answer this question? The simple answer is that you are not obliged to inform an employer of your disability or long term health condition, but this is only the start. You have the choice - what next?

Employers will tell you to “disclose”. They say they cannot make reasonable adjustments during the selection process if you don’t, meaning you will not be enabled to do your best. For many employers this is true. They genuinely want to assess everyone fairly, find the best candidates, and enable them to do their job. For others, this advice is an excuse to prejudge what a candidate can and cannot do, and weed out the ones they don’t want from the outset. As harsh as that sounds, it is undoubtedly an attitude still held by some.

Given that it’s hard to tell which camp an employer falls in, what should you do?

City Disabilities does not give blanket advice – it is patronising and sometimes damaging to do so. Rather, we recommend you consider the following:

---

### 1. HOW WILL YOUR DISABILITY AFFECT YOUR DAILY WORKING LIFE, IF AT ALL?

Consider your career carefully - can you do the job once reasonable adjustments are made? Be optimistic, aim high, and be honest. Our Trustee and founder, Robert Hunter, is profoundly deaf. No amount of adjustment or political correctness will make him a telephone operator (he is, however, a partner in a law firm and an experienced solicitor advocate).

---

### 2. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT KEEPING YOUR DISABILITY A SECRET?

Will hiding your difference cause you additional strain at work? Will your mental health suffer if you cannot be yourself? Do you want to be an advocate for employees with disabilities and get involved with raising awareness in your workplace? Think about you, and who you want to be at work.

---

### 3. HOW WILL PEOPLE REACT BOTH TO DISCLOSURE AND NON-DISCLOSURE?

Just as 90% of the population believe they are better than average drivers, almost everyone believes that they are free from prejudice. Sometimes it’s safe to assume that they are, because many potential employers and colleagues are open minded. On other occasions, the reverse is true. We have encountered cases of employers who undoubtedly think they are ‘doing someone a good turn’ by catering for the disability. We have even encountered a situation where the extension of facilities for disability were treated as a bargaining chip for financial performance. Against this, you need to consider the risks of failing to discuss your disability. For example, if you are deaf, but not so profoundly deaf that you cannot conceal it, would your colleagues think you are inattentive or absent minded? If you have dyslexia, might they think that you are just reluctant to read documents? Remember: this is not prejudice on their part or even reprehensible. They cannot be blamed for misinterpreting behaviour that you have not explained. There are no easy answers, although many people find that the best decision is made on the most complete information. It can therefore be useful to ‘sound out’ a

potential employer on the basis of reports from others who work there (see below). A word of caution: different disabilities can be treated differently by different people.

---

### 4. DO YOUR RESEARCH

Look for disability and inclusion policies and find out if the employer has a disability awareness group. Be cautious, however, of being too impressed by shiny brochures and convincing web pages. For some employers, sound policies and awareness groups represent genuine steps in the direction of inclusion. For others they are no more than lip service to what an employer feels it must be seen to do. Some of the best employers we know do not champion disability and inclusion - they just get on with the job of enabling all of their employees to do their best. Policies and groups are a good thing, but they are not the whole answer.

---

### 5. SPEAK TO WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

Get in touch with alumni, friends, family, charities, anyone you can think of who has a disability and works either at the employer, or in the field you have chosen. Find out what they know. If you do hear a story of prejudice, dig deeper. Did they feel able to report the incident? How did the employer react? Was it resolved appropriately?

---

### 6. GET IN TOUCH WITH US

We have mentors with disabilities in many different professions and with many different experiences. They might be able to give you some guidance.

This may seem like a lot of work – and it is. But the honest answer to the question “Should I discuss my disability” is: It depends; both on you and on them.

Our advice would be: think about who you are, research who they are and make the most informed decision that you can.

