



MOORE THAN ARTHRITIS | FREE RESOURCE

Fluctuating Conditions in the Workplace

Plan for variation without questioning credibility.



WORKPLACE INCLUSION Practical, respectful and evidence-informed guidance for sustainable work.

Supporting People | Raising Awareness | Building Community | Living Beyond the Diagnosis

Stronger together. Beyond limits.

General workplace information - not individual medical or legal advice | Version 1.0 | August 2026



Fluctuating Conditions in the Workplace

Plan for variation without questioning credibility.

KEY MESSAGE A person may need an adjustment on some days and not others. Variation does not make the need less genuine.

Daily variation Pain, fatigue and stiffness can change across a day.	Flares Symptoms may worsen temporarily and unpredictably.	Delayed effect A task may be completed now but require recovery later.
Invisible effort Appearance does not show the energy used to participate.	Flexible support Adjustment plans can include different levels of need.	Reliable process Clear contact routes reduce repeated explanation.

Scope This resource offers general workplace information. It cannot determine whether a person is legally disabled or what is reasonable in a specific case.



What can make workplace inclusion harder

Look beyond diagnosis labels to the interaction between the person, the role, the environment and workplace systems.

Snapshot judgement One good day is treated as the full picture.	Attendance rules Disability-related absence is not considered appropriately.	Rigid duties No route exists to vary task demand.
Repeated disclosure The employee must retell private information.	Manager changes Agreements disappear during handover.	Stigma Variation is misread as unreliability.

AVOID ASSUMPTIONS Individual experience, role demands and effective support vary.



Actions that may reduce disadvantage

Use a person-centred discussion and competent advice where needed. Adjustments should be effective, proportionate and reviewable.

Use a traffic-light plan Define steady, difficult and urgent work responses.	Record adjustments Keep a portable written agreement.	Agree communication Set a simple flare-day contact method.
Build alternatives Identify lower-demand tasks in advance.	Review absence approach Consider disability-related absence fairly.	Check confidentiality Share only what is needed.

Confidentiality Agree what information may be shared, with whom and for what practical purpose. Health information requires particular protection.



From first conversation to review

A consistent process improves trust, accountability and the chance that support works in practice.

1. Describe the range of functional effects
2. Identify predictable and unpredictable variation
3. Agree steady-day and difficult-day options
4. Set communication and decision routes
5. Record the arrangement
6. Review after change or at agreed intervals

Questions for the conversation

- What work outcome matters most?
- Which task, practice or environment creates the barrier?
- What has helped or made things harder before?
- Which options should be tried or assessed?
- Who will act, by when, and when will we review?

Keep it practical Record the decision, reason, action owner, target date, confidentiality agreement and review point.



Use this page to prepare or record action

Complete only the fields that are relevant. Keep personal health information secure and share it only through appropriate routes.

1. On a steadier day I can:

2. On a difficult day I may need:

3. A useful task alternative is:

4. The contact route is:

5. Information that can be shared is:

6. Review trigger/date:

Action record Decision: _____ Owner: _____ Target date:

Review date: _____ Measure of success:



Use the right route for the issue

Workplace inclusion can involve equality law, employment rights, health and safety, data protection, HR policy and medical care. One conversation may not resolve every part.

Important Managers should not diagnose, demand unnecessary medical detail or assume that visible ability on one occasion cancels an agreed need.

Appropriate next steps may include

- Review the adjustment or work plan with the employee and manager
- Use HR, occupational health, health and safety or Access to Work where appropriate
- Seek medical advice for new, severe or worsening health symptoms
- Use a union, Acas, Citizens Advice or independent legal advice for employment concerns
- Call 999 for a life-threatening emergency or use NHS 111 for urgent medical help that is not an emergency

Jurisdiction Equality Act 2010 information in this resource applies to England, Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland has separate disability-discrimination legislation and support routes.



Trusted workplace information

Use current primary guidance and obtain professional advice for the facts of an individual case.

[1] **GOV.UK - Definition of disability.** The Equality Act 2010 definition and long-term effects. [Open source](#)

[2] **Acas - Supporting disabled people at work.** Inclusive conversations, language and confidentiality. [Open source](#)

[3] **Acas - Reviewing adjustments.** Adjustment reviews and passports. [Open source](#)

[4] **Acas - Disability-related absence.** Managing absence and return fairly. [Open source](#)

[5] **ICO - Workers health information.** Protecting special-category health data. [Open source](#)

Evidence checked: 21 August 2026. Review sooner if UK employment, equality, health or data-protection guidance changes.

Related Moore Than Arthritis workplace resources

- Talking to Your Employer About Arthritis
- Reasonable Adjustments in Practice
- Managing Pain, Fatigue and Flare-Ups at Work
- Line Manager Support Toolkit
- Workplace Accessibility Self-Assessment Toolkit

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Disclaimer This resource provides general educational information and is not medical, occupational-health, employment or legal advice. Moore Than Arthritis does not determine disability status, employment rights or the reasonableness of an adjustment. Obtain advice from an appropriately qualified professional about individual circumstances.

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