

Employment rights



Working together for better patient information

Having a long-term condition like chronic kidney disease (CKD) can affect many areas of your life, including your work.

This leaflet describes some of the rights you have as an employee.

For more information visit:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk





Do I have to tell my employer about my CKD?

No. Like all medical conditions this is private information and you do not have to share it with anyone else if you do not want to.

However, if you are asked about your health on an official employment document and you do not mention CKD, it could cause problems later on. Sharing information also means that your employer can help with any adjustments that you may need to help you manage your CKD alongside work.

Anything you tell your employer is confidential, so they cannot share it with anyone else without your permission. If you do not feel comfortable talking to your direct line manager, you can ask to speak to your company's Human Resources (HR) department, who are trained to deal with confidential medical information.

How might CKD affect my work?

If you have mild or moderate CKD (stages one to three), you may have very few symptoms and still feel well. Your kidney disease may therefore have very little effect on your work.

More advanced CKD (stages four and five) can make you feel very unwell, even when it is being actively treated. You may feel very tired, sick or in pain. This can make it hard to keep working and may mean that you have a lot of time off sick. You may also have to take time off work for hospital appointments or dialysis sessions.

As your CKD progresses, you may feel unable to work at all.

What are my legal rights?

The **UK Equality Act (2010)** is a law that protects you if you have a:

“physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on your ability to carry out normal daily activities.”

Many people on dialysis will fit this definition. This means that you are legally guaranteed certain rights and protections. This includes your employer having a duty to make reasonable adjustments to support you at work.

You may be entitled to benefits such as **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)** and **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** if your condition impacts on your ability to work. For more information, see our leaflet on **Welfare benefits**.

There are legal protections which prevent your employer from unlawfully discriminating against you, making you redundant or forcing you to retire because of a disability. However, this is a complicated legal area, as in some cases, employers can lawfully dismiss you on ill-health grounds after following a fair process.





How can my employer help me?

If you are struggling at work because of your CKD, ask to speak to your manager and/or HR department.

They can discuss how reasonable adjustments can be made to make your working life easier.

This will depend on your individual work situation, but could include:

- Conducting a **workplace assessment**.
- **Changing your hours** to suit your haemodialysis schedule.
- Allowing you to **work from home** for part of the week.
- Providing **adapted computer equipment** or better seating.
- Allowing you to **take more breaks** if you need them.
- **Changing your job responsibilities** – for example, to avoid heavy lifting if you are on dialysis, or have had a transplant.
- Providing **access to an occupational therapist**.

Where else can I go for help?

If you cannot reach an agreement about reasonable changes with your employer, you have the right to raise a formal grievance.

Talk to your HR department about how to do this.

You may also like to join a trade union – see www.gov.uk/join-trade-union for details.

Where can I find more information?

Kidney Care UK's FREE **Patient Support & Advocacy Service** provides one-to-one support and representation to people with kidney disease, their families and carers. Contact us to talk through the support we can provide. Call **01420 541 424** (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) or visit:

www.kidneycareuk.org/get-support/advice-support/

Other sources of information include:

- Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS): Disability at work: www.acas.org.uk/disability-at-work
- Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work
- NHS: chronic kidney disease: www.nhs.uk/conditions/kidney-disease



Contact us



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