

PRESS CUTTING

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New standards aim to help businesses comply with DDA

It has been reported that a new independent organisation is to establish business-wide standards aimed at helping employers to comply with, and understand, disability discrimination legislation.

After consulting with businesses the UK Council for Access and Equality (UKCAE) will establish independently audited standards to certify that organisations are complying with the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act, particularly when it comes to having 'inclusive' employment practices.

The UK Accreditation Service has been appointed by the Government to assess organisations providing certification, testing and inspection services, for the new standards.

The UKCAE claims that businesses which meet the new standards could be eligible for lower insurance premiums.

The move comes shortly after the Government announced new more inclusive measures designed to return one million people, currently receiving incapacity benefit, to work. Linked to this, private sector companies and public sector bodies will also be expected to introduce more inclusive employment policies for disabled workers.

Peter Carr, the Chairman of UKCAE, commented:

"Disabled people no longer have to put up with second-class service. If they can prove they have been discriminated against they can start civil proceedings and serve an injunction and, from December, this will apply if they can prove inclusion is not a policy.

"The Disability Rights Commission has stated it will rigorously pursue those 'dragging their feet' through the courts. However, litigation does not bring about inclusion, it simply allows for legal redress. Litigation does not help disabled people achieve their aspirations or gain access, nor does it help the community achieve these goals."

He added that the Council will be offering training packages to employers and set independently audited standards to certify that businesses are complying with the requirements of the DDA.

UKAS certified auditors are expected to be in place by the end of next year to allow the scheme to start.